



MINUTES

OF THE **REGULAR BOARD MEETING** OF THE **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025, 2:30 p.m.

1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT, HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025, AT 2:30 P.M. AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE BUILDING IN ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY, LOCATED AT 1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

LOIS BETTY
BELVA BARE
DAVID NEMETH
CANDY TALLEY

PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:

ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER
RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER
TRACY ISAAK – OFFICE TECHNICIAN
STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST
SHARON CREAMER – TRUSTEE PROSPECT
MICHAEL FRANKLIN – TRUSTEE PROSPECT
MARK PERUCH – TRUSTEE PROSPECT

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Lois Betty called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF BOARD:

Chairperson Lois Betty took roll of the Board. Trustees Candy Talley, Lois Betty, Belva Bare, and David Nemeth, were present. The fifth trustee slot was open at the time of the meeting.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Trustee David Nemeth led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

No public comment. Chairperson Lois Betty asked the members of the public to introduce themselves. Mike Franklin, Sharon Creamer, and Mark Peruch introduced themselves.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

District Manager Arthur Gardner distributed revised, corrected minutes to the trustees. Trustee Candy Talley made a correction to wording on p. 4. Trustee David Nemeth corrected the yield of an investment listed on p. 5.

Trustee Belva Bare questioned why the expenditures total in the County report was different from the number given on the Expenditures report. District Manager Arthur Gardner said he would look into this.

Chairperson Lois Betty asked about some line items from the Trial Balance. DM Gardner said he would speak with the auditor. He said further that he would look at the account numbers in the trial balance and see if any need to be changed or deleted.

The next board meeting will be the 25th of March, 2025.

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion to approve the consent calendar, Trustee David Nemeth seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Chairperson Lois Betty asked for a closed session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:

Chairperson Lois Betty reported that no action was taken in closed session.

The trustees requested that the district manager continue including a manager's letter with the board packets.

DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported to the Board that a health-check of the main well at Arbor Vitae had just been completed. The motor ran for a couple of hours and pulled up no sand. Converting the well to a lower horsepower pump may have solved the problem we've had in the past. The more powerful pump may have stirred up too much sand which would then shred the pump. If the new pump cannot fill the tank quickly enough to maintain water pressure, a small pump can be added to the outflow to increase the pressure. This decision will be made later after observing the pump's performance.

Mr. Ramirez said a solar light has been attached to the North Fork flagpole so the flag can stay up all the time. If this light works well, he will install one on the Oakhurst flagpole as well.

Mr. Ramirez reported on the annual Safety Meeting held in conjunction with GSRMA on February 5. Around 80 people from 13 cemeteries attended. The subjects

covered were Wood Chipper Safety, Slips, Trips & Falls, and a class on de-escalation presented by a psychologist.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said the solar company claimed they were waiting for a response from the City of Madera before they could proceed. He went to the Building Department and discovered this was true. The permitting process is almost done.

Gardner pointed out that each trustee was given a copy of the RDA agreement in anticipation of a discussion on the topic in the March Regular Board Meeting. Catherine Nainoa of the County Auditor/Controller's Office found the document and provided it to Gardner.

REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF MCD ORGANIZATIONAL CHART:

A current version of the MCD organizational chart was provided to each trustee.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON PROPERTY TAX:

A summary table of revenue and expenditures, as reported by the County, will be included in the financial section of each board packet. District Manager Arthur Gardner said that tracking these numbers is what tipped him off that revenues were down in 2024 which led to the discovery that the Auditor-Controller's Office had made a mistake in the revenues paid to MCD for many years. The County started taking back the overpayments in 2024 without notifying MCD.

Sales & Service revenue is down for this fiscal year.

Trustee Belva Bare directed Mr. Gardner to look into why expenditures on the County reports do not match his reports. Chairperson Lois Betty said this should be discussed in the next board meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RESOLUTION 156: RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER ENDOWMENT CARE FUNDS FROM MADERA COUNTY TO STIFEL:

In the January, 2025 meeting of the Board, the Board voted to moved all Endowment Care funds out of the County and into Stifel. The County advised that this action requires a resolution. Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve Resolution 156, Resolution to Transfer Endowment Care Funds from Madera County to Stifel. Trustee David Nemeth seconded and all voted in favor: Lois Betty, aye; Belva Bare, aye; Candy Talley, aye; and David Nemeth, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON HIRING FT EMPLOYEE FOR CALVARY TO REPLACE TEMP HELP:

Calvary Superintendent Cruz Magdaleno has requested an additional full-time employee for his cemetery and is willing to forgo summer help. District Manager

Arthur Gardner said that Calvary has an Arbor Vitae employee on loan, another employee out on FMLA leave and another employee who will soon be out on FMLA leave. Gardner talked about the increased work at Calvary and the need to keep the grounds looking good. A discussion ensued about the workload at Calvary, the number of burials, time spent in the office working with families, the cost and turnover rate of temporary employees, and what the cost would be of paying temps the equivalent of a full year of work. Hiring a full-time employee would impact the budget by increasing the budget for full-time employees but that will be offset by a decrease in expenditures for temporary employees.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the hiring of an additional full-time employee for Calvary, Trustee David Nemeth seconded. The votes were: Candy Talley, aye; David Nemeth, aye; Belva Bare, nay; and Lois Betty, aye. The motion passed and the new hire will be made as soon as possible. Trustee Bare's opposition to the motion was due to her position that the hiring should be delayed until the next budget year.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CHANGES TO THE AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE INTERMENT RIGHTS, MERCHANDISE, AND SERVICES:

After consulting with Atty. Robert Hunt, a revised *Agreement to Purchase Interment Rights, Merchandise and Services* was presented to the Board for approval. Accompanying the revised Agreement was a *Designation of Successor Owner(s)* form, a *Relinquishment and Designation of Interment Right* form, a *Sale of Interment Rights to Madera Cemetery District* form, and *Credit from Canceled Contract* form for review.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the new forms, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor. These will be presented to the Board in March as part of a resolution for formal ratification.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PRE-NEED FUND TRANSFER POLICY:

Earnings on funds in MCD's Preneed Fund have never been transferred out into the general fund. There is a question of how much can be safely transferred out of the Preneed Fund into the General Fund, and how often to transfer it.

Trustee David Nemeth suggested transferring out the earnings.

This item was tabled until March.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON SWAPPING LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY FOR CESAR CHAVEZ HOLIDAY:

February is a short month with two holidays. District Manager Arthur Gardner made the case for changing out Lincoln's Birthday in February for Cesar Chavez Day in March. This would help alleviate the 'holiday desert' that currently exists in March.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve swapping Lincoln's Birthday for Cesar Chavez Day, Belva seconded, and all were in favor. Because Lincoln's Birthday has already been observed in 2025, the change will take effect in 2026.

Chairperson Lois Betty said that if Madera County takes an unexpected holiday, MCD should follow policy and follow suit.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Nothing to report.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON INVESTEMENTS FOR E.C. & PRE-NEED FUNDS:

Trustee David Nemeth said MCD had \$346k in Preneed and \$160k in Endowment Care to reinvest.

\$250k put into Customers Bank CD maturing 2/2029 with a 4.25% yield and \$97k into Federal Home Loan Bond maturing 2/2023, yield of 4.5% for preneed.

\$160k into Flagstar CD with a yield of 4.25%, maturity of 8/2026 for EC.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON TRUSTEE TO FILL VACANCY ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Chairperson Lois Betty stated that the Board will recommend to the Madera County Board of Supervisors that Mike Franklin be appointed to the MCD Board of Trustees. The district manager will need to write a letter of recommendation the the Supervisors and Mr. Franklin will need to fill out an application online.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MONTH'S BOARD MEETING:

A discussion of the upcoming CAPC conference in Seaside, CA and the policy for transferring preneed funds.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:50 p.m.