



# MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 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, MARCH 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  
MICHAEL FRANKLIN

**PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER  
RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER  
TRACY ISAAK – OFFICE TECHNICIAN  
STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Lois Betty called the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m. (Start was delayed due to portraits being taken of trustees.)

**ROLL CALL OF BOARD:**

Chairperson Lois Betty took roll of the Board. Trustees Candy Talley, Lois Betty, Belva Bare, David Nemeth, and Mike Franklin were present.

**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.

**DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:**

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez said the new mausoleums at Arbor Vitae were done. The landscaping is being completed.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

A typographical error was corrected and Chairperson Lois Betty asked that a word on page four be changed from “said” to “suggested”. Trustee Belva Bare had requested in the February meeting that the minutes contain an explanation of why she voted nay to the hiring of another full-time employee for Calvary Cemetery.

Trustee Belva Bare asked about a check paid to Accent Monuments. District Manager Arthur Gardner responded that it was to comply with an agreement MCD had with Accent regarding placing orders for bronze plaques and names on mausoleums and niches. Gardner said further that the agreement was no longer necessary and no further payments would be made to the vendor for this purpose.

Chairperson Lois Betty asked that the name for an account on the Trial Balance be changed because MCD no longer holds any funds with Dean Whitter.

Chairperson Lois Betty brought up the subject of MCD following suit when Madera County takes a special holiday when the federal government declares a date to be a holiday. Chairperson Betty asked that this be an item on the next agenda.

Items to be place on the Planning Meeting agenda are: Oakhill expansion, Arbor Vitae niches, and a new cemetery in eastern Madera County.

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion to approve the consent calendar, Trustee Belva Bare 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.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that all action items are on the agenda.

**REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF DEATHS IN MADERA COUNTY AND MCD BURIAL COUNT:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that his concern about a decrease in burial counts in 2024 while Madera County did not show a decrease in deaths was

unfounded because the report he'd referred to only showed deaths in the county through 2023.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF CAPC CONFERENCE HELD MARCH 13-15 IN SEASIDE, CA:**

Chairperson Lois Betty commended District Manager Arthur Gardner for the brilliant presentation he gave on Madera Cemetery District.

Trustee David Nemeth talked about CAPC Executive Director Carol Griesse retiring and the idea of CAPC and PCA combining. There was some talk of Zoom training to help keep costs low.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON ROSENBERG'S RULES OF ORDER:**

Attorney Bob Hunt had discussed Rosenberg's Rules of Order at the CAPC conference but couldn't find the publication. District Manager Arthur Gardner and HR Generalist Stephen Cloeters had both found it online and sent it to Mr. Hunt and Carol Griesse of the CAPC.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF MADERACEMETERY.ORG:**

Three students from CSU Fresno worked on MCD's website as a project for their class. They made some updates to the website but also made some changes that were not satisfactory. The District's website vendor had step in to repair some things and restore some things that had been deleted.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION OF RDA HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS:**

Catherine Nainoa of the Madera County Auditor-Controller's Office was able to locate the agreement regarding the Redevelopment Agency. MCD had paid higher fees up front to avoid paying fees for a longer period. This saved the District money.

Chairperson Lois Betty expressed concern that the District had possibly not been paid the right amount. District Manager Arthur Gardner was tasked with looking into it and also finding out what the school district's percentage was. He is also to look into discrepancies between revenues reported by the County and what MCD's own records show.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON DATE OF PLANNING MEETING:**

It was decided that the 2025-26 Planning Meeting will be held on the same day as the April Regular Meeting; April 22, 2025. The Planning Meeting will start at 9:00 a.m., followed by a lunch, followed by the Regular Meeting.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RESOLUTION 157: DOCUMENTS FOR THE SALE, TRANSFER, CANCELATION, AND RELINQUISHING OF INTERMENT RIGHTS:**

New documents regarding the sale, transfer, cancelation and relinquishment of interment rights were reviewed. Questions about issuing credits and purchasing a new plot at current prices, rather than doing a transfer of interment rights, were addressed. The objective is to keep records clean rather than creating a confusing trail of records.

A Designation of Successor Owner form will now be used with the sale of every interment right, which brings MCD into compliance with the Health & Safety Code.

Trustee Belva Bare questioned whether pre-need and at-need transactions need to be kept separate with different numbering systems for each. District Manager Arthur Gardner answered that all receipt/contract numbers are sequential and PlotBox tracks whether transactions are pre-need or at-need. Auditor Garry Riezebos had been consulted and saw no problem with the single, sequential numbering system.

A new form that allows a purchaser to relinquish interment rights and designate another person as the owner was presented. This allows someone to purchase burial rights for the benefit of another person without the purchaser retaining any ownership or control. This would be used in cases where someone simply wants to pay for a burial to help out another person.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve Resolution 157, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all voted in favor: Trustee David Nemeth, aye; Trustee Candy Talley, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee Mike Franklin, aye, and Chairperson Lois Betty, aye.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CANCELATION OF CONTRACTS IN DEFAULT:**

The cancelation process was reviewed. It was agreed that the letter sent to delinquent payers should be certified. Trustee David Nemeth made a motion that a second, certified letter should be sent to delinquent payers notifying them that their contract will be canceled at the next Board Meeting unless they pay, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON NON-RESIDENT FEE EXEMPTION FOR HEALTH RELATED REASONS:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner had consulted with Attorney Bob Hunt about waiving the non-resident fee for persons who moved from the District for health reasons. Mr. Hunt said the Health & Safety Code makes no allowance for a waiver in this situation.

Trustee Candy Talley asked whether a person who purchases interment rights while living in the District, but then moves and dies outside District boundaries would have to pay the non-resident fee. The Health & Safety Code allows for this, but MCD would need a policy to allow this.

A resolution will be presented at the April meeting of the Board to create this policy.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON LAFCO AND ADDING COUNTRY CLUB AREA INTO MCD'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE:**

This item was tabled for the next meeting of the Board. District Manager Arthur Gardner was tasked with finding a written agreement between Chowchilla Cemetery District and MCD regarding MCD's adopting the Country Club area into its sphere of influence.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON HIRING TEMP TO FILL SHORT-TERM FMLA LEAVE:**

An employee at Calvary Cemetery is going to be out on FMLA for up to 11 weeks. It was requested that an additional temp be hired to help out in his absence. Trustee David Nemeth moved that an additional temp be hired on to fill in, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON POLICY GOVERNING TRANSFER OF PRENEED FUNDS INTO GENERAL ACCOUNT:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that in the previous month's meeting, Trustee David Nemeth had put forward the idea of creating a Pre-Need Interest account. Gardner suggested MCD continue the District's pre-need transfer process, but that interest earned be swept into an interest account. Interest would be used for capital projects and development.

Trustees Belva Bare and David Nemeth expressed concern about what pre-need interest can be used for. The Board directed Gardner to consult with Atty. Mark Velasquez.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PURCHASING ROCK FOR FUTURE NEEDS AT OAKHILL CEMETERY:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said he would like to purchase rock to be used in future projects at Oakhill Cemetery. The quarry that provided the rock for the recently-built retaining wall there is closing.

Trustee Belva Bare asked that this be considered for FY 2025-26. The cost would be around \$12,000.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON PHOTOGRAPHS OF TRUSTEES AND STAFF:**

Perry Cooper of Studio 318 Photography took pictures near the beginning of the meeting. There was no discussion to report.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:**

Nothing to report.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON INVESTEMENTS FOR ENDWOMENT CARE & PRE-NEED FUNDS:**

Trustee David Nemeth reviewed recent investments.

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

Pricing for the new mausoleum. The Board would like to see several options.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 6:12 p.m. (Trustee Candy Talley left at 5:50 due to another appointment.)