



MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 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, JULY 22, 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
MIKE FRANKLIN

PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Lois Betty called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF BOARD:

Chairperson Lois Betty took roll of the Board. Trustees Lois Betty, Belva Bare, David Nemeth, and Mike Franklin were present. Trustee Candy Talley had notified the Board in June she would not be present at the July meeting.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Trustee Mike Franklin led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

Alejandra Martinez petitioned the Board of Trustees to reinstate the contract that the Board had cancelled at the June 24, 2025 meeting due to non-payment. The plot is next to family members. Chairperson Lois Betty thanked her for coming and let her know the issue would be discussed later in the meeting and she would be notified of the decision.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

The Board reviewed the District's end-of-fiscal-year financial performance, looking at expenses versus budget. Trustees had a discussion with District Manager Arthur Gardner about the cause of overages in certain budget categories. The discussion covered methods for determining budget levels, the auditor's involvement and comments on the budget, the idea of a written statement explaining overages, and why part-time wages were over budget while temporary worker wages were under budget.

Gardner told the Board he intends, as technology allows, to involve cemetery managers in the budget process more. They would be given a budget and would be expected to manage their expenses to keep within their limits. The Board discussed briefly with Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez his process for approving expenditures by his superintendents and foreman.

Trustee David Nemeth made a motion to approve the consent calendar, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor, 4-0.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board will be August 26, 2025.

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 said no action was taken in closed session.

DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez said that the solar panels for Arbor Vitae's installation were delivered today. The solar contractor will be installing them rather than the construction company that erected the carport structure.

Mr. Ramirez said he'd addressed the concerns that Samantha expressed in the June 24, 2025 board meeting.

The roof of the North Fork Cemetery office/shop has been replaced and the sign with a QR code for finding plots is ready to hang on the North Fork gate. Foreman Robert Ellis cleaned and organized the office interior to create a more open and accessible space.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

All follow-up matters are in the agenda.

REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF MCD BYLAWS REGARDING PROCESS TO ADD AN ITEM TO THE AGENDA IN CASES OF EMERGENCY OR URGENCY:

The Board discussed Section C.10 of the Madera Cemetery District Bylaws, which addresses the process for adding an item to the agenda in cases of emergency or urgency. Chairperson Lois Betty asked District Manager Arthur Gardner to look into this to make sure the District's process is in compliance with the Brown Act.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner presented to the Board a list of preneed contracts to be cancelled. The persons whose names were on the list had not made any payments after receiving a collections letter in October, 2024 a second notice in May, 2025, and a final notice in June, 2025. Trustee David Nemeth moved to cancel the contracts on the list, Trustee Mike Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor.

Regarding Alejandra Martinez who had addressed the Board earlier in the meeting, the Board discussed whether, if the contract were reinstated, it would be done at the original price or at current pricing. Trustee David Nemeth moved to reinstate the contract, so long as it would be paid in full. Trustee Mike Franklin seconded and all voted in favor.

Any future appeals would be treated on a case-by-case basis.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN COUNTY & MCD REPORTING OF REVENUE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the difference between MCD's revenue reports and the County's is explained by a timing issue. Office Technician Tracy Isaak stated that the problem stems from revenue taken in near the end of the month. Credit card payments may be recorded by the District at the end of the month but payment isn't received into County coffers until the beginning of the next month. Bounced checks can also cause mismatches.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed a document, written by Atty. Robert Hunt, that formalizes an agreement between Chowchilla and Madera cemetery districts regarding residents of the Country Club area in the City of Madera. Both districts had agreed in 2021 that residents of the area would be allowed to be buried in MCD cemeteries without being charged a non-resident fee. Mr. Hunt wrote this document to put the understanding in writing. Gardner said that, with the Boards approval, he would submit the agreement to Chowchilla for review and approval by their board of trustees. The Board agreed for him to move forward.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON POLICY SETTING STANDARDS FOR PICTURES ON GRANITE MAUSOLEUMS:

The mausoleum and niche structures are property of Madera Cemetery District, so the District can dictate what can be done to the fronts of mausoleum crypts. Current policy does not allow for pictures to be placed on the granite mausoleums, yet there many crypts with pictures of the deceased occupant on the fronts.

The question of what should be allowed on crypts and niches was discussed. If pictures are allowed, how would the District exert control to ensure standards and uniformity on the type and size of pictures and frames? It was suggested that the District could either sell the pictures directly to the public or give one or two options of approved vendors that members of the public could use.

Chairperson Lois Betty requested that a proposed policy be drawn up and presented at the August, 2025 board meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON POLICY REGARDING SERVICE OR ASSIST ANIMALS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed with the Board the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) definition of *service animals* and the restrictions placed on District employees when inquiring about animals brought onto the grounds by members of the public.

Current policy allows for both *service animals* and *assist animals*.

According to the ADA, only dogs are classified as service animals, and service animals are trained to perform specific tasks to help persons with disabilities.

Trustee David Nemeth made a motion to allow only service animals on District property in compliance with the ADA, trustee Mike Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor. A resolution will be presented at the August Board meeting to formalize this change in policy.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PRICING FOR ENGRAVING NAMES ON VETERANS MONUMENT AT ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY:

The Board decided to make no change to the \$300 currently being charged for engraving names on the veterans memorial.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON PG&E BILLS & CALVARY SOLAR SITUATION:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the solar company that owns the Calvary solar system, Greenday, had told him that the system was working according to specs. Gardner stated that he believes that may be true but that the system is still undersized. Greenday suggested MCD contact PG&E to find out about the true-ups.

Greenday requested a change in the solar contract for Arbor Vitae to make up for the additional costs they incurred when they discovered hardpan when drilling holes for the carport structure's posts. Gardner said he will not agree to changes to the contract and may seek legal counsel if needed.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON MCD CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR 2026 CALENDAR YEAR:

HR Generalist Stephen Cloeters presented the 2026 health insurance premiums to the Board. The new prices are higher than originally estimated. Most employees are on the United Healthcare plan and the monthly premium for 2026 will be \$950.99. The District is currently paying a maximum of \$948.53 per employee.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to cap the employer healthcare contribution at \$950.99 per employee for CY 2026, Trustee Mike Franklin seconded the motion and all voted in favor. All trustees present signed Resolution No. 163-2025, RESOLUTION FIXING THE EMPLOYER'S CONTRIBUTION FOR EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS FOR 2026.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON INSTALLING TRAFFIC SPIKES AT CALVARY AND ARBOR VITAE CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported that he had received no further bids from other vendors for this project. The bid he'd received for installing traffic spikes at Arbor Vitae and Calvary cemeteries was \$22,000. Ramirez said he'd spoken with Larry Moore of Berry Construction and he'd suggested the District do the work in-house.

Mr. Ramirez said he'd be more confident with having an outside company do the work than doing it using District personnel. He suggested doing one cemetery at a time.

Trustee Belva Bare made a motion to have traffic spikes professionally installed at Calvary, Trustee David Nemeth seconded the motion and all voted in the affirmative.

Chairperson Lois Betty requested that this item be on the August, 2025 agenda for further discussion and to add the expense to the budget.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CAPC EDUCATION SEMINAR/AREA MEETING TO BE HELD OCTOBER 10-11, 2025 IN VENTURA, CA:

All five members of the Board plan on attending the CAPC conference.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Nothing to report.

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

Trustee David Nemeth reviewed actions taken with \$185k of Endowment Care principal and \$445k of Preneed funds.

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

Photos on granite mausoleums and niches, adding something to the ends of the newest Arbor Vitae mausoleums, and enhancements of the Raymond Cemetery.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:07 p.m.