



# MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 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, AUGUST 26, 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  
MIKE 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 2:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL OF BOARD:**

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

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:**

H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Trustee Mike Franklin asked whether the District allows the public to put their own cameras out on the grounds. Trustee Belva Bare asked several questions about expenditures. Chairperson Lois Betty discussed briefly the email that District Manager Arthur Gardner had sent to Samantha, who had addressed the Board in the July

Regular Meeting of the Board. Trustee Candy Talley pointed out a word in the July Minutes was erroneously written twice in a row.

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

The next Regular Meeting of the Board will be Sept 23, 2025.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said he'd emailed a response to Samantha, who had addressed the Board in the July board meeting regarding her son's plot at Calvary, but hadn't heard anything back from her.

**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 things are running smoothly. Solar panels for Arbor Vitae should be in around September 8. Trustee Candy Talley asked if there was a provision in the contract with the solar company regarding making the District whole if the solar installation is delayed. There is none.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed the Brown Act's requirements for adding an item to the agenda during a board meeting. He also informed the Board that a cancelled contract they had reinstated had been paid in full by the owner.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner said there is more work to do on this matter, but he had nothing for the Board this month.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON PCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN GRASS VALLEY:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the Public Cemetery Alliance conference held in Grass Valley was worthwhile. CPA President Cindy Summers, is retiring. SB777, which would have required cemetery districts to take over abandoned cemeteries without increasing their property tax revenue, has died in the state assembly.

Brian Hughes from the law firm Best, Best & Krieger LLP gave a presentation on reclaiming abandoned plots. He put forward a novel idea of including language in

contracts that stipulates that if no designated successor is named, the interment rights to unused plots automatically revert back to the cemetery district. Further, if the person named as designated successor does not complete a form to name their designated successor, the interment rights to any unused plots revert back to the cemetery district. The idea was well received by the Board and will be explored further.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ENGAGING WITH ADAIR & EVANS FOR AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 6/30/2025:**

The Board reviewed the Engagement Letter received from Adair & Evans to perform the audit for FY 2024-25. The cost would be \$22,800. Trustee Belva Bare suggested District Manager Arthur Gardner look for alternative auditors and that Chairperson Lois Betty be empowered to make the decision. Trustee Candy Talley moved to have Gardner look for other proposals and to allow Board Chair Lois Betty make the decision on which firm to use. Trustee David Nemeth seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Chairperson Lois Betty added that the Board ought to interview the potential auditors before moving forward. Trustee Bare pointed out that cemetery audits are different from regular audits and there are special requirements that many auditors are unfamiliar with. Chairperson Betty said that if Adair & Evans is in the ballpark with other proposals, the District should just stay with them. This year would be Adair & Evans fifth year with MCD.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON GROUND SQUIRREL PROBLEM AT OAKHILL CEMETERY:**

Foreman Robert Ellis has reported that ground squirrels are a big problem at Oakhill Cemetery this year. He has suggested the District purchase a pellet gun or a Rodenator to control them. The consensus of the Board was that they did not want guns or explosives used on the grounds. Trustee Mike Franklin recommended the purchase of a trap called The Squirellinator. Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the purchase of the trap as a solution, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON AGREEMENT WITH CHOWCHILLA CEMETERY DISTRICT REGARDING COUNTRY CLUB AREA:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner has been in contact with the manager of the Chowchilla Cemetery District. She presented to her board the agreement drafted by Attorney Bob Hunt that formalizes the understanding between the two districts that residents of the Country Club area would not pay nonresident fees if they are buried in an MCD cemetery. The Chowchilla board was not familiar with the agreement and the CCD manager has invited Mr. Gardner to attend their September board meeting to

explain. Gardner will be going on September 9. Board Chair Lois Betty said she would attend also, if she's able.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION RESOLUTION 164-2025 WHICH SETS POLICY ON STANDARDS FOR PICTURES ON GRANITE MAUSOLEUMS:**

Madera Cemetery District has a policy that prohibits the placement of photos on the fronts of its outdoor mausoleums. This policy has not been followed and there are a number of crypts with porcelain pictures on them. Most were applied by the monument dealer Accent Monuments and all of Accent's pictures are uniform in appearance and dimensions. There are, however, several pictures that were applied either by a different monument dealer or by families themselves and do not match the frames placed by Accent. Trustee Candy Talley suggested that families be contacted before the District removes any pictures from the mausoleums.

District Manager Arthur Gardner proposed a resolution that establishes that all pictures must be purchased through vendors approved by MCD and sets forth the specifications for the size and style of the pictures and frames.

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

The public should be advised of these rules when then either purchase a crypt or at the time of interment.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION RESOLUTION 165-2025 WHICH SETS POLICY ON SERVICE OR ASSIST ANIMALS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY:**

In the July Regular Board Meeting, the trustees voted to allow only service animals (dogs) on District cemetery grounds. The Policy and Procedures Manual mentions animals in three places. This policy would replace the extant wording in those three places.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the resolution, Trustee Mike Franklin seconded the motion, and all voted in favor in a poll of the Board: Chairperson Lois Betty, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee David Nemeth, aye; Trustee Candy Talley, aye; Trustee Mike Franklin, aye.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PROPOSED RESOLUTION 166-2025, AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF EV UTILITY CARTS FOR ARBOR VITAE AND CALVARY CEMETERIES:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner informed the Board that a utility vehicle used at Arbor Vitae is not running and parts are unavailable. Calvary Cemetery has a Gator that is nearing the end of its life. He presented a resolution to purchase two electric utility vehicles to replace the aged ones. With rebates from the San Joaquin Valley Air

Pollution Control District, the net cost to the District would be \$0. The vehicles' batteries have a ten-year warranty.

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

### **REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON BEAUTIFICATION OF RAYMOND CEMETERY:**

Trustee Mike Franklin reviewed with the Board his findings about the conditions at Raymond Cemetery and the actions he would like to take to improve it. He has visited the cemetery three times and found that both visitors and ground squirrels were active there. Many graves have fresh flowers and there are many holes in the ground. Trustee Belva Bare offered to look into the history of Raymond and stated that the land owned by the District may be greater than what is believed.

Mr. Franklin said that identifying graves, leveling headstones, addressing squirrel holes, erosion, water issues, a new fence, and identifying unknown graves using ground penetrating radar and marking them as some possible courses of action.

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez told the Board that the cemetery is currently maintained just twice a year. Mr. Franklin said that maybe local people could be enlisted to help with any improvements.

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion for MCD staff and Trustee Mike Franklin to develop a list of proposed options, with their approximate costs, for the Board to consider to enhance and improve Raymond Cemetery. Trustee David Nemeth seconded and all voted in favor.

### **REPORT/DISCUSSION ON NEXT NICHE PROJECT AT ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY AND BEAUTIFICATION OF MAUSOLEUMS C&D:**

The Board discussed the need at Arbor Vitae for more niches. There are three options: 1) niches on the east sides of the newest mausoleums; 2) converting the old office into a glass-niche columbarium; and 3) creating a raised-bed urn garden in the northwest corner of the cemetery. The Board also discussed installing some kind of metal sculpture on the west side of the newest mausoleum structures. The Madera County Arts Council, high schools, Fresno State and Community Colleges may be good sources for artists. Niches could also be installed inside the arches of the older outside mausoleums.

Chairperson Lois Betty asked how much was in the budget for niches. Niches were not included in this year's budget but Arbor Vitae has no companion niches.

District Manager Arthur Gardner has been in touch with Rico's Memorial Stones regarding niches, who should soon be providing him with a quote.

This item will be on the September agenda.

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

Nothing new to report at this time.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ALLOCATING FUNDS IN THE BUDGET FOR TRAFFIC SPIKES AT CALVARY CEMETERY:**

The Board approved in the July Regular Board Meeting the purchase of tire spikes to be installed at Calvary Cemetery. District Manager Arthur Gardner requested the Board approve the addition of \$11,000 to the Capital Expenditures Budget to account for the expense.

The District will observe the installation of the spikes at Calvary to see if it's something District employees can replicate at Arbor Vitae.

Trustee Belva Bare motioned to add the funds to the current budget, Trustee Candy Talley seconded and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:**

There have been no recent issues to report. There was a discussion on installing more cameras at Calvary Cemetery to provide better coverage, greater deterrence, and to capture video of license plates at all gates and of persons entering through pedestrian gates after hours.

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

None to report.

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

Enhancements of the Raymond Cemetery.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 5:10 p.m.