



# MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 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, NOVEMBER 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:**

BELVA BARE  
DAVID NEMETH  
CANDY TALLEY  
MICHAEL FRANKLIN

**PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER  
TRACY ISAAK - OFFICE TECHNICIAN  
STEPHEN CLOETERS - H.R. GENERALIST  
IGNACIO BECERRA - SUPERINTENDENT

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chairperson Belva Bare called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL OF BOARD:**

Vice Chair Belva Bare took roll of the Board. Trustees Belva Bare, David Nemeth, Candy Talley, and Michael Franklin were present. Chairperson Lois Betty was away on a planned absence.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

The agendas provided to the Board in their packets had a typo in the spelling of January on p.1, which had been caught and corrected prior to the meeting. On page 3 of the Minutes, the date for the Managers Round Table should be changed from 2025 to 2026. On page 4 of the minutes, a reference to a "town hall meeting" should be struck from the minutes on the Raymond beautification project.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

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

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Trustee Candy Talley said it was nice that the Madera Tribune gave a heads-up to the District about a letter to the editor about Calvary Cemetery's handling of Día de Muertos. The author contacted the District directly and District Manager Arthur Gardner wrote her a response, which the Board reviewed.

Gardner had written another letter to a neighbor of Arbor Vitae Cemetery regarding their tossing dog feces over the cinderblock wall. Arbor Vitae Superintendent Ignacio Becerra informed the Board that there had been no more issues with feces over the wall since the letter was sent.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

No announcements

**RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:**

Vice Chairperson Belva Bare asked for a closed session.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:**

Vice Chairperson Belva Bare said no action was taken in closed session.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON 2026 LEASE AGREEMENT WITH D&D AG SERVICES, LLC**

Dennis Meisner had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the 2026 lease but was apparently unable to attend.

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

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez was unable to attend the meeting due to a medical issue.

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the Arbor Vitae shop breakroom is undergoing renovation. He said the project will go over budget due to the replacement of the water heater, which was moved from inside the superintendent's office to the loft above and due to the replacement of the old refrigerator.

Arbor Vitae Superintendent Ignacio Becerra has overseen the cleanup of the loft. Many old items have been discarded and the records stored up there will be reviewed and non-essential ones destroyed per the Records Retention Policy.

Tire spikes were installed today at Calvary Cemetery. Trustee David Nemeth suggested warning signs in English and Spanish and Trustee Michael Franklin advised that lights be placed to shine on the signage and the spikes.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner said all the follow-up items are included in the agenda.

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

Nothing to report until January.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON STATUS OF 2024-25 AUDIT:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the digital era makes preparing for the audit much easier and that the auditors (Adair & Evans) are very thorough. Plotbox was helpful because it made reporting easier. Everything seemed to have gone well.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON WHETHER TO CHARGE FOR INTERMENT RIGHT FOR EACH BURIAL:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner discussed with the Board an article written by attorney Bob Hunt about interment rights. Mr. Hunt had suggested that cemetery districts are able to charge for interment rights for each burial rather than charging just once for the plot. Mr. Gardner stated he did not support charging for each interment and asked for the Board's input. Trustee Belva Bare voiced that the District is here to serve the public. Trustee Michael Franklin said that charging per burial would generate additional revenue if needed. The consensus was to charge for interment rights for each burial space and not for each burial. Trustee Candy Talley moved to write a policy to make charging for one interment right per grave space the standard, Trustee Michael Franklin seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

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

Trustee Michael Franklin reported to the Board about his meeting with around 10 residents of Raymond. They discussed Trustee Franklin's ideas for beautification and gave input about improvements they'd like to see. Although the Raymond residents are contributing ideas, the decision on action and budget is up to MCD's Board of Trustees. A second meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2025.

Trustee Franklin will also be talking with the Fresno State about ground penetrating radar to discover the location of any unknown graves. The beautification project will likely be a two-year process. Mr. Franklin will work out the budget as more information is gathered.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON SB707:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed recent legislation regarding public meetings. Most of the new law does not affect MCD, but the District must improve its website accessibility and there will be small changes to the agenda format in the near future.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RESOLUTION 168-2025 TO FURTHER  
LIMIT THE HEIGHT OF UPRIGHT HEADSTONES:**

The Trustees discussed a proposed resolution to change the maximum allowed height of upright headstones to 36 inches with a maximum base height of 12 inches, for a total combined maximum height of 48 inches, effective January 1, 2026. Upright headstones run the risk of tipping over if the adhesive connecting the die to the base fails, and Calvary Cemetery has had a couple of headstone tip over recently.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the resolution, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and a poll of the Board was unanimously in favor: Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee David Nemeth, aye; Trustee Candy Talley, aye; and Trustee Michael Franklin, aye.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION TO ALLOW THE INSTALLATION OF VASES IN  
GRANITE STRIP NEXT TO CALVARY'S GLASS NICHE:**

A family member of a person inurned in a glass niche at Calvary Cemetery has asked for vases to be installed in a marble strip that separates the corner glass niches from the nearest mausoleum crypts. The family would pay for the vases.

The Trustees reviewed photos of the area. The glass niches were not designed to have vases. It was suggested that four vases be placed for the eight niches. H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters volunteered to talk to Calvary Superintendent Cruz Magdaleno to see if this would be possible.

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion to approve the installation of four vases, pending verification that such an addition is possible, Trustee Michael Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON MANAGEMENT OF PRENEED FUNDS:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that MCD is currently leaving all monies paid towards a preneed contract, minus Endowment Care, in the Preneed Account until the contract is fulfilled. At the time of transfer, the amount transferred out will be the same amount as was paid in at the time of purchase, with no adjustments for inflation.

H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters is reviewing all preneed contracts to calculate the total value of all contracts and, thus, give MCD the ability to see what it's preneed liabilities are. It looks like there are excess funds in the account, but we should know better by January's board meeting.

Gardner will work on a policy to set the parameters of managing preneed funds. He will also work on a policy stating the rules on how MCD will handle transfers of burial rights from one plot to another and cancelling contracts

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON MCD WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY:**

The idea of working with college students to revamp the MCD website was discussed. It is possible to get a grant to pay interns from the university. Streamline costs \$250 to \$500 a month, which is quite a lot of money, but they know what they are doing and would alleviate any concerns about being out of compliance with the ADA and potential lawsuits.

Trustee Belva Bare suggested management check with other districts to see who developed/runs their websites.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON METAL SCULPTURE TO GO ON SIDE OF MAUSOLEUMS C&D AT ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner shared with the Board his idea for the northern mausoleum to have mountains, trees, and the sun on the west side and the southern mausoleum to have grapevines and the moon. The northern mausoleum's art would resemble the MCD logo, with the swoosh being portrayed as a river which would continue to flow to the southern mausoleum.

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

No updates to report.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON SCULPTURE ATOP ARBOR VITAE'S VETERANS MEMORIAL:**

After a brief discussion on options, the Board decided to look into a bronze eagle and directed management to look for a prefab eagle to mount on the Veterans' Memorial.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:**

Tire spikes were installed today at Calvary Cemetery. Signage is supposed to be installed tomorrow.

The Board viewed the new hat for Gatekeeper/Security Ruben Guerra. The bodycam is working well.

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

Trustee David Nemeth reported the District put \$250k in Eaton Corp, \$250k in Kenvue, Inc., \$70k in Treasury notes, and \$230k in Bridgewater BK. All bonds being issued now have a call provision.

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

Trustee Michael Franklin asked about the trees at Calvary Cemetery.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 5:13 p.m.

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CHAIRPERSON

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TRUSTEE

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