



MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026, 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 14, 2026, 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
ALEX COSIO – GROUNDS II
AURELIO RODRIGUEZ – GROUNDS I
PUBLIC PRESENT: YVONNE MILLER, KIM MORENO,
GARY LINDEMANN, JEANNE H.

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. All trustees 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:

Yvonne Miller addressed the Board about her request to place four vases next to the glass niches inside the mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery. She said they could be placed without drilling into the marble by using epoxy to stick the vases to the stone. She and her family have been sticking flowers into the gaps between the niches and the marble. She shared pictures and said she is willing to pay for the vases.

Chairperson Lois Betty thanked Ms. Miller for her request and stated that the Board cannot take action on the matter because it was not on the agenda. Trustee Candy Talley said that it should be investigated and placed on the next agenda.

Gary Lindemann then addressed the Board about his mother's ashes. She passed away years ago and he's now ready to place them somewhere. He said he was told years earlier that his mother's ashes could be placed with her parents in the Veterans Section, but now he's been told that's not possible. He asked the Board to allow him to place his mother's ashes with her parents.

There was a discussion about who is eligible to be buried in the Veterans Section. Current policy states that only military veterans and their spouses are eligible. Chairperson Lois Betty told Mr. Lindemann that this could be placed on the next agenda. He responded that he will go ahead and place her in the mausoleum where he is to be buried.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

The annual Planning Meeting should be placed on the next agenda. Trustees Belva Bare and Michael Franklin inquired about a couple of checks. Trustee Michael Franklin told the Board he will be a little late to the next board meeting. Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Trustee Michael Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

No announcements

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 attendance at the February Safety Meeting was one of the highest yet, with 85 people showing up. He shared with the Board the topics of the sessions and the games that were played for prizes at the event.

The solar project at Arbor Vitae is waiting on PG&E.

District Manager Arthur Gardner told the Board about the first annual Managers Roundtable hosted by MCD. About 15 people attended and Visalia Public Cemetery District will host the next meeting in August.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE:

All Trustees signed their names to the Oath of Office.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON FORM 700 FOR TRUSTEES AND MANAGER:

The County has sent an email to all persons required to complete the form. Not everyone has completed it.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

None

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

The Board reviewed a handout showing the list of unpaid preneed contracts from the previous month. Contracts for which payment had been received were marked in green. The Trustees discussed their options before cancelling. Trustee Michael Franklin suggested paying to use a website that provides up-to-date addresses to make sure all customers had received a collections notice. Franklin further suggested stamping the envelopes with a "Collections" stamp so that people don't simply discard the envelopes in future mailings.

Following a discussion, Trustee Michael Franklin made a motion to check for current addresses for any contract that had 70% of its balance paid, was less than 5-7 years old, and/or had \$2,000 or more paid into it. Trustee Candy Talley seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON BEAUTIFICATION OF RAYMOND CEMETERY:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez handed out proposals for the Raymond fence, which was much higher than originally projected. There was a discussion about how the critter fence should be attached to the rail fence. Trustee Michael Franklin stated that more bids were needed for the fence.

Mr. Ramirez then presented a bid for the paved parking lot and showed a plan that would avoid having to do anything with the granite rocks that protrude near the gate to the cemetery.

Decomposed granite should be laid and compacted on the grounds to help prevent erosion. Mr. Ramirez said that the spring weeds had been cleaned up and that more work may be needed.

Trustee Franklin asked whether the fence company he'd approached when he was putting the Raymond project together had ever come through with a bid. Mr. Ramirez said they hadn't yet but that he would call them again.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON OAKHURST WESTLAKE PROPERTY:

Chairperson Lois Betty said that the Westlake property would have to be offered first to all government agencies. Trustee David Nemeth said that there is a lot going on in the area of the Westlake property and that the value of the property will go up, so there's no reason to sell the property at a loss. Chairperson Betty reiterated Nemeth's comment and said the District had to jump through a lot of hoops to acquire it.

The Board instructed District Manager Arthur Gardner to tell Brad Ditton that the District is not interested in selling at this time.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON THE OFFERING OF PRENEED

CONTRACTS:

Tabled until next meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON MADERA COUNTY INQUIRY REGARDING NEW HOPE CEMETERY:

District Manager Arthur Gardner had spoken with Matt Skolnik from Madera County. The County does not have the means to maintain the abandoned cemetery and they approached MCD because we would know how to take care of it.

Wayne Padilla, whose family had voluntarily maintained the New Hope Cemetery for years said he and his family would be willing to pay the District to maintain it. District Manager Arthur Gardner asked whether the District would be allowed to contract with a private party. All trustees answered no.

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

The Board reviewed a quote from Southern California Bronze. Matthews also does bronze sculptures. District Manager Arthur Gardner will look into more options.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RESOLUTION 170-2026: POLICY ON TRANSFERRING INTERMENT RIGHTS AND CANCELING CONTRACTS:

This agenda item was mislabeled. The Resolution is entitled *Policy on Preneed Contract Cancellation*. The Board had approved the language of the document in the January meeting. Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the resolution, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and all voted in favor: Chairperson Betty, aye; Trustee Bare, aye; Trustee Nemeth, aye; Trustee Talley, aye; and Trustee Franklin, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON BEAUTIFICATION OF MAIN ENTRANCE INTO CALVARY CEMETERY:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez shared drone footage of the main entrance to Calvary Cemetery. The trees have all been removed and the edges of the road are in poor condition. He asked whether the Board would like trees along the edges or down the center of the road. If placed in the center, the trees would be in curbed islands with azaleas or some other plant surrounding them. Trees down the center of the road could obstruct the view of the mausoleum.

Chairperson Lois Betty suggested Mr. Ramirez go take a look with cars on the sides of the road to see what would work.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CREATION OF MEMORIALS POLICY:

Tabled.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON INVESTMENT POLICY:

The Board is supposed to review this policy annually. Trustee David Nemeth said to eliminate a specific paragraph on page three. A revised policy will be on the next agenda.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CAPC TRUSTEE REFERENCE MANUAL

Trustee Michael Franklin had three points of concern to discuss, two of which he'd already got answers to. The third point was the idea that trustees can get health benefits through the district. Human Resources Generalist Stephen Cloeters said that a trustee may receive dental, life, and vision insurance, but not health insurance. Trustee David Nemeth, who is on the CAPC Board, may check in with the board about the wording.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CAPC ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MARCH 19-21 IN ANAHEIM:

Trustee Candy Tally will not be attending. It may be time for new shirts with the new logo. Trustee David Nemeth suggested a polo shirt.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

All is good.

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

Trustee David Nemeth reported the following amounts came due to invest:

Preneed: \$771,900

Endowment Principal: \$138,000

Endowment Interest: \$41,000

Nemeth then explained where the funds were invested. He said he and Sandra Wheeler from Stifel Investments were able to get some good rates.

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

Planning Meeting

ADJOURNMENT: 6:10 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE