



MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, MARCH 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, MARCH 24, 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
MIGUEL MARTINEZ – GROUNDS I
PUBLIC PRESENT: YVONNE MILLER, KIM MORENO

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 Betty, Bare, Nemeth, and Talley were present at the commencement of the meeting. Trustee Franklin arrived at 2:50 and had given prior notice that he would arrive late due to a doctor's appointment.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Yvonne Miller led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

After a couple of general questions, Trustee Belva Bare moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PLACEMENT OF VASES ON MARBLE NEAR GLASS NICHEs AT CALVARY:

Chairperson Lois Betty asked Yvonne Miller if she would like to speak on this agenda item before closed session in the interest of her time. Miller agreed.

Ms. Miller shared an idea for placing vases on marble she'd seen at Chapel of Light funeral home. Trustee David Nemeth stated he'd spoken with a vendor at the CAPC conference who suggested using Tough as Nails glue. Chairperson Lois Betty suggested installing a metal bracket from floor to ceiling next to the niches and attaching the vases to that metal strip. Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve Chairperson Betty's design, Trustee Candy Talley seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez will get back to the Board on costs and ideas and District Manager Arthur Gardner will contact Ms. Miller regarding prices.

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Prior to entering into closed session, Chairperson Lois Betty asked Groundskeeper I Miguel Martinez if he would prefer meeting with the Board in open session or closed session. Martinez opted for open session.

Mr. Martinez stated he likes working for the District and that he works with a good team. He learns new things all the time and likes the work hours. He thanked everyone and then left.

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 construction of the wall behind the Arbor Vitae mausoleums has begun. He is looking into putting the MCD logo on the new gate from the mausoleum to the shop area but will have to check the price first.

Board Chair Lois Betty said that the grounds at North Fork are looking good and she's pleased with the progress of cleaning the grounds across the road. Mr. Ramirez agreed that Foreman Rob Ellis is doing a great job. Chairperson Betty asked Ramirez to let Mr. Ellis know that his work has been recognized.

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the District got a check from the District's insurer, GSRMA, for scoring 100% on the RMAP program, which encourages and rewards special districts for compliance with safety laws and GSRMA

requirements. Scoring 100% gives the District a 20% reduction in its insurance premium.

Gardner also reported the District is changing the format of its checks from a duplicate check to a single page.

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez discussed the Raymond beautification project. So far, only one out of two vendors has provided a proposal and he's waiting for a third. There will be a paved walkway from the parking area to the pedestrian gate so that people don't have to deal with the large rocks in the current dirt parking lot. 10 cars will fit in the paved parking lot.

Ramirez stated the total cost for the fence and the parking lot should be under \$120,000, which includes the 3-rail oil pipe fence with a no-climb fence and a *critter* fence attached to it. Trustee Mike Franklin voiced concerns about how a fence like this would look and asked Ramirez if he could get a picture so the Board can see it first.

Ramirez said that Superintendent Cruz Magdalleno will go to Raymond to spray the weeds for the second time this year and then the grounds will be leveled and leaning headstones set upright. Trustee Franklin said he would contact CSU Fresno again to check on their abilities to use ground penetrating radar.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON FORM 700 FOR TRUSTEES AND MANAGER:

Chairperson Lois Betty and Trustee Candy Talley haven't filed their forms yet. There is a \$100-a-day fine for not filing on time.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that Greenday Finance had sent him a document from PG&E to sign regarding prevailing wages on the Arbor Vitae solar project. He has consulted Atty. Bob Hunt for counsel.

The PG&E true-up is coming for Calvary's solar system, which is undersized and not providing enough electricity. Chairperson Lois Betty asked if more panels could be added to power one of the well pumps. Mr. Gardner said he'd look into it.

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

An online search was done after the February Board Meeting to check all the addresses of persons in default to do due diligence and help ensure letters were sent to correct addresses. District Manager Arthur Gardner said the contracts on the list would be cancelled on April 3. Trustee Michael Franklin asked whether a letter would be sent out notifying of the cancellation. It was agreed that letters should be sent out. Anyone who wishes to repurchase their interment rights must do so at current prices.

Trustee David Nemeth made a motion to cancel the contracts in default highlighted on the list presented to the Board, Trustee Mike Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON FINANCING PRENEED CONTRACTS FOR PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY IN DEFAULT:

The Board reviewed a proposed policy that would prohibit persons who have defaulted on their contract from financing another contract until a year has passed since the cancellation. Trustee David Nemeth asked whether the policy should prohibit them from ever financing a contract again. It's not known how office staff would easily be able to ascertain an individual's cancellation status. Nemeth suggested moving forward with a one-year prohibition for now.

Trustee Mike Franklin moved to approve Resolution 2026-171 - Policy on Preneed Contracts for Persons in Default, Trustee Candy Talley seconded the motion, and all voted in favor: Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee David Nemeth, aye; Trustee Candy Talley, aye; Trustee Mike Franklin, aye; and Chairperson Lois Betty, aye.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner spoke with a sales representative from Mathews at the CAPC conference. They can customize a bronze eagle statue. Cold Spring also offers bronze sculpture. Gardner asked the Board for a price range and they asked him to get an idea of the size of sculpture that would look good on the veterans memorial.

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

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez showed AI-generated pictures of layout options for the entrance roadway at Calvary. He proposed three medians down the center of the road, each one 30 feet long and five feet wide. This would leave room for cars to park on the side of the road and still allow traffic to move through. Probably two crepe myrtle trees would be planted in each median. Water lines will be laid while the road is torn up for resurfacing. The asphalt company will pour the cement curbing along the edges and for the medians.

Trustee Candy Tally made a motion to approve the option presented with two trees per median, Trustee Mike Franklin seconded, and all voted in favor. The decision on the color of the trees will be up to Operations Manager Ronnie Rodriguez.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CREATION OF MEMORIALS POLICY:

There was a discussion on whether the District should continue to allow grave spaces to be taken up with memorials, with no casket placed in the grave. Chairperson Lois Betty and Vice Chair Belva Bare said the District is here to serve the public and some people need a place to go for remembrance and that allowing memorials is doing a service to the public. Trustee Candy Talley suggested the

creation of a memorial garden. District Manager Arthur Gardner said one could be incorporated into a mixed-use cremation garden, which could be developed in each cemetery. This will be discussed further in April's Planning Meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON INVESTMENT POLICY:

Trustee David Nemeth asked why an alternative to the current Investment Policy was being discussed. HR Generalist Stephen Cloeters said the current policy made reference to some accounts that don't exist anymore. Nemeth pointed out sections that need to be removed and some wording he didn't like and said that he'd like to spend more time going over this. Vice Chair Belva Bare said that if we revise the policy, it will have to be submitted to County Counsel.

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

Trustee Candy Talley and Vice Chair Belva Bare will need to take state-mandated Ethics training because they were not at the conference.

Several districts are sharing their intake forms with Madera to help gather information about applicants and ascertain whether they are authorized to sign interment orders.

Attorney Brian Hughes liked Chairperson Lois Betty's idea about a cremation-only cemetery.

Trustee Mike Franklin learned that it's not uncommon to pay \$150,000 as a settlement for burying somebody in the wrong plot.

The overall consensus was that it was a good conference.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON DATE OF PLANNING MEETING:

2025's Planning Meeting was held the same day as the Regular Board Meeting, which made for a very long day. This year, they will be held on different days.

The meeting was set for Tuesday, April 23 at 9:30 a.m., and the Regular Board Meeting will be the next Tuesday, April 28.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Sourdough sandwiches were requested.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON POLICY TO PRESCRIBE HOW TO HANDLE CONTRACT AND PLOT DISPUTES/ERRORS:

Fulfilling a request from the Board, District Manager Arthur Gardner presented guidelines of how contract and plot disputes/errors should be handled. The Board approved the language and asked for it to be presented for ratification in a resolution.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON GATE SIGNAGE AND POLICY ON AFTER-HOURS ACCESS TO GROUNDS:

The Board reviewed new signage posted on the Calvary and Arbor Vitae entry gates. The Board approved of the new posted hours, but they are different from what is described in policy. Changes to existing policy will be presented for the Board’s approval in the April Regular Meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

All is good. The body camera worn by the gatekeeper seems to change people’s behavior.

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

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

Preneed: \$446,000

Endowment Interest: \$32,799

Nemeth said the funds were put into a Prudential Corp bond, US Treasurys, and into an Ever Bank CD.

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

Cremation cemetery.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:14 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE