



MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 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, JUNE 23, 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
STEPHEN CLOETERS - H.R. GENERALIST
JOE RIOS - GROUNDSKEEPER II
ARNOLD SERRANO - GROUNDSKEEPER I
KERRY SMITH - OFFICE ASSISTANT
STEVE KING

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, Talley and Franklin were present.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Vice Chair Belva Bare led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Trustee Candy Talley asked why the expenditures for the audit were higher than budgeted. District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the delay in the previous year's audit pushed back the payments made to the auditor, which meant that the

current budget carries payments towards both the current and the previous year's budgets.

Trustee Talley moved to approve the minutes and the checks from May 2026. Trustee Michael Franklin seconded and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner read aloud two letters from members of the public that addressed the attractiveness of the grounds and the courteousness of the staff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Chairperson Lois Betty asked the employees in attendance if they preferred to speak with the Trustees in open or closed session. Groundskeepers Joe Rios and Arnold Serrano decided to meet with the Board in open session and discussed how their jobs were going and answered their questions. Office Assistant Kerry Smith opted to meet in closed session, so Chairperson Betty called for a closed session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:

Chairperson Lois Betty said no action was taken.

DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Rodriguez reported that the new fence at Raymond Cemetery was complete and looked good. There was a short discussion about laying gravel rather than asphalt in the parking area. Trustee Michael Franklin said he'd found a company that rents out ground penetrating radar.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD

MEETINGS:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said the application for purchasing an EV was a little more complicated than anticipated but was moving forward.

H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters said he'd been in contact with consultants regarding a Prop 218 election for annexing eastern Madera County into the District. The consultants weren't sure it would work out. He said he'd found that MCD can ask the Madera County Board of Supervisors to redistribute property taxes from the regions outside District boundaries.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CANCELATION OF CONTRACTS IN

DEFAULT:

The Board reviewed a list of persons who will be receiving a letter notifying them of their default.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON METAL SCULPTURE ON WEST END OF ARBOR VITAE MAUSOLEUMS C & D:

Sculptor Steve King presented a mockup of a sculpture. He proposed making five panels to be mounted on the west end of Arbor Vitae's mausoleums C & D. Each panel would represent a cemetery within the District. The Board expressed their approval of the design and concept.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON NICHEs ON EAST END OF ARBOR VITAE MAUSOLEUMS C & D:

District Manager Arthur Gardner presented a new design for the niches to be placed on the east of the mausoleums. The Board liked the design. Gardner will have pricing for them at the next board meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CREMATION GARDEN AND EXPANSION AREA DEVELOPMENT AT OAKHILL CEMETERY:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed key points of the proposal from the landscape architect firm Lees+ Associates for a cremation garden and initial development of the expansion area at Oakhill Cemetery. Lees proposes five different phases for the project. Trustee Michael Franklin moved to approve proceeding with all five phases, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON AUDITOR TO PERFORM 2025-26 FINANCIAL AUDIT:

The Board reviewed bids from three accountancy firms to perform the 2025-26 audit. The gap between the lowest and highest bids was \$800. Trustee David Nemeth moved to accept the bid from Adair & Evans, the incumbent firm and lowest bidder, Trustee Candy Talley seconded and all Trustees voted in favor. A different member of the Adair & Evans team will lead the audit.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON MEMORIAL DAY, 2027:

Vice Chair Belva Bare said she'd received several negative comments about the Memorial Day ceremony at Arbor Vitae Cemetery. The VFW's small program seems to grow shorter every year. District Manager Arthur Gardner will reach out to the local high schools regarding an essay contest and musical performances to supplement the VFW's honor guard. The Board wants District administrators to take on a larger leadership role in planning and carrying out Memorial Day events.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON INVESTMENT POLICY:

Trustee David Nemeth said presented changes to the Investment Policy were acceptable. A resolution will be presented at the next meeting to codify the new policy.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Gatekeeper Ruben Guerra is out for a few weeks due to a health issue. Regular employees have been taking care of gate and security duties in his absence.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON INVESTMENTS FOR ENDOWMENT CARE & PRENEED FUNDS:

Nothing to discuss.

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

None.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:28 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE

TRUSTEE