MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 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, AUGUST 25, 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:	***PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:***
LOIS BETTY	ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER
BELVA BARE	RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER
DAVID NEMETH	STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST
CANDY TALLEY	STEVE KING
MICHAEL FRANKLIN	

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:

Trustee David Nemeth led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

The nomination of Board Chair Lois Betty to be an honorary member of the CAPC must be added to the agenda. Ms. Betty said it would be added as item P.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Trustee Michael Franklin asked why the Miscellaneous/Interest line item on the budget was so high. District Manager Arthur Gardner said he would look into it.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the consent calendar from June 2026. Trustee David Nemeth seconded and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

There was no closed session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:

There was no closed session.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON SCULPTURE FOR ARBOR VITAE MAUSOLEUMS:

Steve King presented mock-ups of the five sculptures to be installed on the mausoleums C & D at Arbor Vitae. Some possible changes were discussed and it was agreed that each sculpture should bear the name of the cemetery. A plaque for each sculpture will also be installed listing the date of the first burial and the date the cemetery became part of the District.

DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported that work on the Calvary Cemetery main entrance will begin soon. The road will be replaced and medians constructed. Replacement of the asphalt at the Arbor Vitae shop area will be done after that.

Decomposed granite will be laid at the Raymond Cemetery in October, after things have cooled off and the labor is available. There was a brief discussion about the monument that is to be installed at Raymond.

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that he'd received a response from PG&E about the 50-foot easement at the northwest corner of Arbor Vitae Cemetery.

After some discussion, it was determined that the date of the board meeting in December will be on the 17th. No board meeting was held in December, 2025 and it was agreed that that was too much time between meetings.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS, INCLUDING SOLAR:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that he'd received a response from PG&E about the 50-foot easement at the northwest corner of Arbor Vitae Cemetery.

The solar contractor who installed the carport structure at Arbor Vitae is no longer in business. Another company has stepped in to try and complete the startup process. Their CEO contacted Mr. Gardner to tell him that they may have figured out a solution to the problem. Gardner told him that he would have to consult with legal counsel before signing any documents.

After some discussion, it was determined that the date of the board meeting in December will be on the 17th. No board meeting was held in December, 2025 and it was agreed that that was too much time between meetings.

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

The same names that were presented in the July Board Meeting were presented again to the Board for their action. All the names had been posted to the District's Facebook page in an extra effort to contact them but none responded.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to cancel all the contracts presented, with the exception of two individuals who had paid the majority of their contracts and owed a small amount of money. Trustee Candy Talley seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON REVISION OF RESOLUTION 2026-176 REGARDING MCD CONTRIBUTION TOWARD EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE:

Human Resources Generalist Stephen Cloeters presented several ideas to help offset the District's increased insurance cost. The District currently offers $300 a month to any employee who opts out of the District's health insurance and obtains their own. He suggested increasing that amount to $500 monthly.

Board Chair Lois Betty called for a poll of the Board: Trustee Candy Talley, aye; Trustee Michael Franklin, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee David Nemeth, aye; and Chairperson Lois Betty, aye.

Trustee David Nemeth suggested that the $500 opt-out idea be placed on the September agenda.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON VASES FOR NEW ARBOR VITAE NICHES:

The Board reviewed possible pricing options for the Mountain and Valley Niches. District Manager Arthur Gardner stated that it's his goal to offer affordable cremation options. Adding vases to the niches would increase the District's costs, which it would have to pass on to the public. Other, more expensive options will be available in future projects. Flowers in vases will encroach on neighboring niches and will affect the aesthetic of the columbarium's appearance.

Trustee Michael Franklin made a motion that vases not be offered on the new niches and that other options for the placement of flowers be explored, Vice Chair Belva Bare seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ORDINANCE 2026-01 REGARDING TRUSTEE COMPENSATION:

Ordinance 2026-01 increases Board compensation by 5% for each year since the last increase.

Board Chair Lois Betty called for a poll of the Board: Trustee Candy Talley, aye; Trustee David Nemeth, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; Trustee Michael Franklin, aye; and Chairperson Lois Betty, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON BOLLARDS FOR DISTRICT OFFICE:

Board Chair Lois Betty expressed her concern that a confused driver could step on the gas pedal rather than the brakes and drive into the front of the District Office Building. The district manager will do some research into options.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON LAWS, ETHICS, AND POLICY IDEAS REGARDING PRENEED FUNDS:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed emails from attorneys Bob Hunt, of Hunt Law Offices, and Brian Hughes, of Best, Best and Krieger about laws touching on the management of public cemetery preneed funds. The law places no restrictions on how a district may use its preneed funds. There was a consensus among the Board that, whatever policy is crafted, there needs to be a policy that prescribes how much should be held in reserve, and that preneed funds should be used for specific projects and not to cover day-to-day expenses.

This will be on the September agenda.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON SELECTING LEGAL COUNSEL:

Madera Cemetery District does not currently have a designated legal counsel. County Counsel and Atty Bob Hunt have been consulted with from time to time. Brian Hughes, of Best, Best, and Krieger is currently working with a number of cemetery districts and has been prominent at CAPC and PCA conferences. Trustee Candy Talley moved to engage Brian Hughes as MCD's legal counsel, Trustee David Nemeth seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON MEMORIAL DAY ESSAY THEMES:

The trustees were given the homework assignment of coming up with theme options for the student essay contest for the 2027 Memorial Day program. They are to bring some ideas to the September board meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Nothing of note to report.

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

Trustee David Nemeth said he had Stifel move $100k from the Endowment Interest account into a CD earning 4.1%

$100k came due in the Endowment Principal account into a vehicle earning 4.132%. $33k from the Preneed account was put into a bond yielding 4.468%.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON NOMINATING LOIS BETTY TO BE AN HONORARY MEMBER OF CAPC:

Vice Chair Belva Bare made a motion approving the nomination of Board Chair Lois Betty to be an honorary member of the California Association of Public Cemeteries, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all voted in favor.

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

NONE

ADJOURNMENT: 5:28 p.m.

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CHAIRPERSON

_____	_____
TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE
_____	_____
TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE