MINUTES

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

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 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, SEPTEMBER 22, 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	TRACY ISAAK – OFFICE TECHNICIAN
CANDY TALLEY	STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST

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. Trustee Michael Franklin was ill.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Trustee Candy Talley led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

The date in the minutes from the Public Hearing needed to be corrected.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the consent calendar from August 25, 2026. Trustee Belva Bare seconded and all voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Board Chair Lois Betty asked for a closed session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:

Chairperson Lois Betty stated there was nothing to report from the closed session.

DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF MCD CEMETERIES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported that things have been going well. The well pump at Arbor Vitae has been pumping less water than it should. It may be solved by installing a filter at the bottom of the pump.

Ramirez showed pictures of the completed road and medians at the entrance to Calvary Cemetery. He will try to have the trees and foliage done and headstones reset in time for Dia de Muertos on November 2.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS:

A. **Solar –** PG&E has waived the requirement to sign their document regarding prevailing wages. This should allow electrical services to begin at Arbor Vitae. Work on replacing the asphalt in the shop area should begin next Tuesday, 9/29.
B. **Alcohol ordinance** – District Manager Arthur Gardner met with a contingent of men from the County. They believe the County ordinance that prohibited alcohol consumption on MCD property was probably dropped because the County has no purview over MCD property. They stated that city laws that prohibit alcohol consumption should cover Arbor Vitae and that trespassing laws can be used to enforce District policy at all other cemeteries. Gardner spoke with an undersheriff and he agreed with the County's appraisal of the situation.

Trustee David Nemeth spoke with County Supervisor Bobby Macaulay about developing a cemetery along the Hwy 41 corridor. Nemeth suggested we talk with David Braun of LAFCO. HR Generalist Stephen Cloeters has spoken with Braun. Cloeters suggests MCD ask for a higher property tax allocation factor from Madera County.

C. **Niche progress –** The Mountain and Valley niches should be ready near the end of the year.
D. **Cremation garden progress –** This will be covered under agenda item E. Chairperson Lois Betty asked about the columbarium at the old district

office at Arbor Vitae. Boxes of old documents that had been stored in the office have been just shredded, so now we can better access the building so Larry Moore of Berry Construction can see how the roof was constructed.

E. **PG&E easement progress** – Nothing new to report.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RATIFYING BOARD ACTIONS TAKEN IN 2026:

Due to an administrative oversight, Trustee David Nemeth's name was not submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for reappointment to the Board of Trustees prior to the end of his term in January, 2026. Under advisement from legal counsel, the Board needs to take action to ratify all Board motions and resolutions passed in 2026 in which Nemeth participated.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to ratify all actions taken by the Board from January 2026 to August 2026, Trustee Belva Bare seconded. Chairperson Betty called for a poll of the Board and all voted in favor: Chairperson Lois Betty, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; and Trustee Candy Talley, aye.

David Nemeth cannot vote on District actions until his reappointment by the Board of Supervisors is approved in early October.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON REAPPOINTING DAVID NEMETH AS TRUSTEE:

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion to reappoint David Nemeth as a trustee, retroactive to January, 2026. Vice Chair Belva Bare seconded and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING PROJECTS AND THEIR PROGRESS:

There was a discussion about priorities. The improvements at Oakhill are in the design stage, but should the District do both the cremation garden and the expansion road at the same time? Vice Chair Belva Bare asked which project is needed the most. Oakhill definitely needs cremation space. Building an attractive urn garden may keep people from using up ground space for cremations. We will wait until plans come back from Lees+ Associates and then decide how to proceed.

District Manager Arthur Gardner said cremation space is needed both at Oakhill and Arbor Vitae. Vice Chair Belva Bare wondered whether it would be less expensive to remodel the old office or just tear it down and build a new one. Input from Berry Construction is needed to determine the answer.

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

A list of names presented to the Board represents the last of the delinquent contracts that have not been entered into PlotBox because of the severity of their

delinquency. Many names on the list represent contracts for companion burial services in graves that are already occupied. If the contracts are cancelled, fewer grave spaces will re-enter inventory than in previous collections lists. Letters will be sent out soon.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON INCREASING THE INSURANCE OPT-OUT FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES TO $500:

Resolution 2026-178, increasing the payout to employees who choose to opt out of District health insurance, was presented to the Board. Vice Chair Belva Bare asked how many employees were likely to choose to participate in the offer. District Manager Arthur Gardner speculated that three or four would choose the offer.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the resolution, Vice Chair Belva Bare seconded, and the board was polled. Approval was unanimous: Chairperson Lois Betty, aye; Vice Chair Belva Bare, aye; and Trustee Candy Talley, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON INSTALLING BOLLARDS IN FRONT OF DISTRICT OFFICE:

Rather than placing bollards in front of the district office, it was proposed that concrete parking barriers be placed instead. American Seal Coating can install them for about $750 at the same time they redo the asphalt at Arbor Vitae's shop area.

Trustee Candy Talley made a motion to approve the installation of concrete barriers, Vice Chair Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON PRENEED FUNDS MANAGEMENT:

The Board reviewed a snapshot of current preneed funds and discussed general ideas on how funds should be managed. David Nemeth floated the idea of keeping some preneed funds in a money market account to allow for easier access, if needed. The consensus of the Board is that interest in the preneed fund should only be used on a limited basis for specific projects. No motions were made and no action taken to draft a policy.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON UPDATING DISTRICT'S WEBSITE:

The company that maintains MCD's website has proposed updating it. A new website would be 100% ADA compliant and would allow District staff to update agendas and other items themselves, rather than relying on an outside vendor. The Board expressed interest and wants this to be on October's agenda.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION THEMES FOR STUDENT 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. Trustee

Mike Franklin had submitted several suggestions pertaining to the symbolism of the bald eagle. Trustee Candy Talley suggested "What Is Memorial Day and Why Do We Celebrate It?" or "What Is A Veteran?" The Board decided forgo any responsibility and left the matter up to the district manager.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Nothing of note to report. Ruben Guerra is getting better but still not able to work.

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

Trustee David Nemeth reviewed recent investment moves.

Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the actions, Vice Chair Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor.

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

CAPC conference. Preneed management policy will be left until the next planning meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:06 p.m.

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CHAIRPERSON

_____	_____
TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE
_____	_____
TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE