

**Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 13, 2023

8:00 a.m.

A meeting of the governing Board of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District (CVPCD) was held at the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District Executive Office, located at 82847 Avenue 52, Coachella, CA 92236 on Friday, January 13, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, January 9, 2023, at the following locations:

1. CVPCD Executive Office – 82847 Avenue 52, Coachella, CA 92236
2. The CVPCD website – <http://coachellacemetery.org>

**CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

Chair Ernesto Rosales called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m., those in attendance were as follows:

Trustees present:

Ernesto Rosales, Chair

Judy Vossler, Vice-Chair

Marcos Coronel, Trustee

Bruce Underwood, Trustee

John Rios, Trustee

Trustees absent:

None

Additional participants:

Josh Bonner, General Manager

Sherry Winder, Finance Analyst/Clerk of the Board

Carlos Campos, General Counsel

Matt McCue, Consultant (via Zoom)

David Farnsworth CPA, Auditor (via Zoom)

Additional participants for public comment:

Deanna Mendoza – Indio, CA (RE: Agenda Item 3.1)

**FLAG SALUTE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deanna Mendoza of Indio spoke regarding Agenda Item 3.1 Cemetery Public Access. Ms. Mendoza asked the Board to reconsider the closing time and requested an adjustment to the pick-up or drop-off times on pre-mowing days.

Chair Rosales thanked Ms. Mendoza for coming and commenting. He expressed the sunset closing time is due to liability and the fact that it gets dark. Chair Rosales stated the Board will revisit the issue, noting that liability, cost, and community needs are all taken into consideration and everything possible will be done to accommodate the community.

Trustee Underwood thanked Ms. Mendoza for coming and stated that public comment is needed.

Ms. Mendoza expressed her thanks to the Board for their time and consideration.

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

GM Bonner requested a Closed Session item "Conference with Legal Counsel Re: Anticipated Litigation, Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)" be added between Item 1 and Item 2. This item was approved for Board consideration by General Counsel.

Motion: Vossler

Second: Rios

Roll Call Vote:

Vice-Chair Vossler - Yes

Trustee Coronel - Yes

Trustee Underwood - Yes

Trustee Rios - Yes

Chair Rosales - Yes

Motion passed.

### **1. PRESENTATIONS**

- 1.1 Presented by David J. Farnsworth A review of the District's 2022 Audit Review and Report and GFOA Award Submission

Trustee Coronel thanked staff and David Farnsworth for the good work as audits continue to improve. Trustee Rios stated audits have become clearer and more concise since David Farnsworth came on board. Trustee Underwood thanked David Farnsworth; echoed by Vice-Chair Vossler and Chair Rosales.

Chair Rosales adjourned the meeting to closed session at 8:44 a.m.

### **2. CLOSED SESSION**

- 2.1 Conference with Legal Counsel Re: Anticipated Litigation, Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)  
Number of potential cases (2)

The Board reconvened from closed session at 9:02 a.m. and Counsel Campos announced there was no reportable action taken.

### 3. CONSENT CALENDAR

#### 3.1 Trustee Minutes

a. Regular Board Meeting – December 16, 2022

#### 3.2 Finance and Administration

Approval of Expenditures – Checks 1506, 26354-26398, 26400-26440, 50175-50178, and ACH transactions as detailed b. Investment Report c. Budget to Actual

#### 3.3 Approval of 2022 Audit

Motion: Vossler

Second: Coronel – pull 3.2a and 3.2c; second the rest

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

Comments regarding 3.2a Expenditures and 3.2c Budget to Actual:

Trustee Coronel questioned bankcard fees and requested that payroll transactions be shown in a single line rather than individual employee transactions. GM Bonner noted that by not accepting cash payments and moving towards online payments, the bankcard fees will continue to rise, and stated payroll transactions can be condensed moving forward.

Trustee Coronel expressed concern over cost of California Special Districts Association (CSDA) membership and the benefit we receive as members for the cost. GM Bonner suggested we could ask for a presentation to be made to the Board by the CSDA. Trustees agreed that would be beneficial. Trustee Vossler questioned what the negative side of not rejoining CSDA membership would be. Trustee Coronel stated that a major one is we would not be eligible for insurance through SDRMA. Trustee Underwood suggested we invite SDRMA to come and speak to the Board as well.

Trustee Coronel questioned the below Budget to Actual report expense items due to balances being close to, or over budget:

6050 Workers Compensation – GM Bonner explained this is overbudget due to being underbudgeted.

Actual cost is consistent with prior years for this item.

6160 Insurance – Consultant McCue explained this item is all non-employee insurance coverages and is paid once a year, so the cost will not increase.

6172 Small Tools – GM Bonner explains this fluctuates and it should not go over.

6168 Membership – GM Bonner clarified this was overbudget due to CSDA membership increasing and new GFOA membership for Finance Analyst.

Motion: Coronel – approve 3.2a and 3.2c; with direction to request CSDA presentation (in person), review insurance options and have payroll condensed to single line item on reports.  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

#### 4. ACTION ITEMS

##### 4.1 Cemetery Public Access A review of current cemetery public access hours

GM Bonner noted this item was added at the request of the Trustees. Reviewed report and presented options of opening gates at 6:30 a.m. instead of 7:00 a.m., or installing lights. Board discussion ensued. GM Bonner reviewed option of opening at 6:30 a.m. on pre-mowing days during winter, which would create a financial impact due to moving maintenance schedule and incurring approximately 18-20 hours a month in overtime. Chair Rosales would like a notice printed in English and Spanish for security to handout. GM Bonner suggested a sign at front of Cemetery that states exact “sundown” closing times observed throughout year.

Motion: Rosales – During winter when cemetery closes at 5:30 p.m., modify opening times prior to mowing days to accommodate community, hand out flyers in both languages to notify community of change and post specific closing times  
Second: Rios  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

Trustee Coronel noted he requested this item. Chair Rosales thanked Trustee Coronel and at the suggestion of GM Bonner, stated that when a Trustee requests an agenda item, they would like it noted.

##### 4.2 Sponsorship Policy Review and consideration of a District policy to govern sponsorships for District events

GM Bonner stated this was brought back per Board request at November meeting. Sample sponsorship policy presented based on feedback as a starting discussion point for Board. Board discussion ensued. Chair Rosales stated there is no current need for sponsorship support.

No action taken.

4.3 County Designated Zoning of District Property Review and consideration of recommendation to submit current District property for zoning review

GM Bonner reviewed report as presented and noted an initial capital budget of \$50,000 will be needed should we move forward. Board discussion ensued. Chair Rosales stated it is reasonable and needs to be done. Counsel Campos stated we must have proper zoning.

Motion: Coronel  
Second: Vossler  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

4.4 Contract for Services with HV Entertainment Review and approval of contract for stage and lighting services for Día de los Muertos event(s)

GM Bonner reviewed contract as presented and noted it was being brought before Board due to a required 30% deposit on entire contract being requested up front. Board discussion ensued. Due to the nature of securing talent in advance, the Board is agreeable to the up front payment in this case.

Motion: Coronel  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

4.5 Formation of Standing Committees

GM Bonner stated this was an item requested by Trustee Coronel.

A recess was called at 9:52 a.m.  
The meeting resumed at 10:00 a.m.

Trustee Rios left meeting during recess.

Trustee Coronel expressed there is a need for structure with Board involvement that can be achieved by forming committees. He proposed that staff work on establishing job descriptions for three to four committees to bring back for Board approval. Board discussion ensued.

Trustee Underwood stated he is in favor of a Standing Finance Committee. Trustee Vossler stated a proposal for a finance committee with guidelines is reasonable; broad policy for sub-committees she is not in favor of, as she is not in favor of creating work for staff. Chair Rosales echoed the concern of staff time.

Motion: Vossler – Ask Staff to return to Board with parameters for Finance Committee  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Vossler, Underwood  
Abstain: None  
No: Coronel, Rosales  
Absent: Rios  
Motion failed.

Item opened back up for discussion and Trustee Coronel expressed he felt it was important to create this structure for committees with more processes for structured board involvement. Board discussion ensued.

Motion: Vossler – Ask Staff to return to Board with parameters for Standing Finance Committee  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Underwood  
Abstain: None  
No: Coronel  
Absent: Rios  
Motion passed.

## 5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

5.1 LAFCO Ad-Hoc Committee Rosales/Coronel

Trustee Coronel stated there will be two vacancies for Special Districts on LAFCO Board. GM Bonner stated when election letter is received from LAFCO, he will get it out to the Board.

5.2 Master Plan Ad-Hoc Committee Rosales/Vossler

GM Bonner stated proposals will be presented at May board meeting.

5.3 Monument Committee Rosales/Coronel

Trustee Coronel had meetings with local Cities and businesses. Will present at May board meeting.

5.4 Annual Interment Totals General Manager

GM Bonner noted he brought this forward as an information item in the interest of transparency and reviewed report as presented. Historical annual interment totals will be adjusted as needed.

## 5.5 Vehicle Use Report

General Manager

GM Bonner reviewed report as presented. This report will be presented on an annual basis. GM Bonner noted that Maintenance Manager will no longer be using the 2021 Ford F-150 as an on-call vehicle, so mileage will be down next year.

## 5.6 Operations Vehicle Use Report

General Manager

GM Bonner reviewed report as presented. This report will be presented on an annual basis with the intent of better monitoring fuel use as a matter of sound oversight.

## 6. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

### 6.1 Trustee Comments and Event/Function Report Out

Trustee Underwood noted he is waiting to hear about map for Board room, to which GM Bonner replied he has been trying to find a map maker. Trustee Underwood stated he received a question from someone who applied for the PR contract and would love to see the process be available to the Board. GM Bonner explained process and stated we normally accept the low bid, which was the outcome in this case. Trustee Underwood would like to see quote response on all items received for bidding processes, which GM Bonner committed to supply to him. Trustee Underwood mentioned receiving a public e-mail letter regarding security but did not see if a response was sent, as well as receiving a separate verbal comment that was not made in writing, despite his request. GM Bonner stated he did respond to e-mail letter regarding security and CC'd Chair Rosales on his response, while noting he always asks if they would like to make a public comment. Trustee Underwood attended an online course from CSDA in Diversity and Inclusion, the Luncheon for Staff at the end of December and a meeting with Coachella Valley Engineers, by invite of Coachella Valley Engineers, regarding the paving of the Cemetery. Trustee Underwood noted the absence of financial information on an item previously approved by the Board, he requested that all financial impacts be added to staff reports in the future. Trustee Underwood verified that Chair Rosales was attending the California Association of Public Cemeteries meeting to accept his Board nomination.

Vice-Chair Vossler attended the Staff Luncheon at the end of December; food and camaraderie were great, and awards presented were fun. Local TV news coverage of transparency award was excellent. Vice-Chair Vossler asked if we were aware of TV coverage in advance, GM Bonner responded that we were not. GM Bonner will ensure the Board is added to the press release distribution list.

Trustee Coronel went to Sacramento on invitation of Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia for opening and swearing into State Legislature; represented District and had conversations related to LAFCO. Trustee Coronel gave a tour of the District to local Special District Board Members. Noted that through redistricting, there is a new State Senator, Steve Padilla working out of Indio, and we are in the outskirts of his district; Trustee Coronel is trying to set up a meeting. Trustee Underwood added that we also have a new US House of Representatives for part of our district as well. Mentioned that he connected GM Bonner with Desert Recreation District to look at some of our space. Trustee Coronel stated he would like for us to explore the continuing need to have a Financial Consultant and Teaman and Ramirez as well, while requesting that we pay more attention to details. GM Bonner responded that we are in the process of preparing financial flows process for the next meeting. Trustee Coronel had requested of GM Bonner that we get a professional

translator service for signage to which GM Bonner noted we are working with Gengo, stating there were three separate options for Spanish translation. Trustee Coronel mentioned the VOIP phone system “Press 1 for Spanish” takes you to a placeholder, there is no way for you to leave a voicemail and it rings seven to ten times. GM Bonner stated this is in the works to be corrected with a menu of options and notices in both languages, and we will be moving forward with hiring Assistant position which will help with phones.

Chair Rosales attended Staff Luncheon at the end of December, it was great and good for morale. Would like an update on assistant position for front office and also an update on the new property release. GM Bonner noted the assistant position is included in the current GM report and the new property will be included in the next GM report as he just got numbers this week due to annual audit. Chair Rosales reminded that as Trustee Rios mentioned, he would like us to be sensitive to the drop-off process for memorial items. Stated he would like to recognize Susie Del Toro’s effort, and GM Bonner noted it will be added to the next board meeting as a discussion item, stating we have some open benches that we are looking into as an option.

## 6.2 General Manager Report

GM Bonner reviewed report as presented. Turf is looking much better, and he will be working on frost condition signs. Trustee Coronel asked whether the Landscape employees had uniforms, as they were not wearing them when he conducted his tour the previous day. GM Bonner stated he believes they have uniforms, and he will follow up with the company. Trustee Coronel also noted their golf cart is loud due to being gas. GM Bonner stated he will ask if they have an electric option. GM Bonner noted that Chair Rosales, Trustee Underwood, and Trustee Rios were all reappointed to new terms by the County Board of Supervisors. Trustee Coronel connected GM Bonner with Desert Recreation District regarding their storage needs which we may have available; he will bring the proposal to the Board if it gets that far. GM Bonner requested he yield some time to Finance Analyst Winder for important updates.

Finance Analyst Winder reported that the District opted into State Disability Insurance (SDI), an employee funded program that public entities are exempt from, in the 1970’s, causing two separate Employment Development Department (EDD) numbers to be created for the District. This has created an issue with our payroll company as this is not typical and they are not able to handle reporting for two EDD account numbers. The District has been experiencing ongoing issues with CBIZ payroll attempting to handle this on our behalf, resulting in not filing the proper reports and filing reports incorrectly. Moving forward, the District will be withholding and submitting payments and reports to EDD rather than our new payroll company once we switch. GM Bonner noted that we can opt out of the SDI program but that it is best to do it at the start of the calendar year so that the employees can opt into a similar program. Trustee Coronel mentioned this was one of the optional government benefit items that he wanted the Board to decide if they wanted to provide. Finance Analyst Winder clarified that this is not a District funded program, it is employee funded.

Best, Best and Krieger is researching the Cafeteria Fund to determine whether the intention of the fund’s usage was solely for Dental, Vision, and Medical insurance premiums, or if it was intended to also offset the voluntary participation in supplemental insurances. This was a question that arose during the transition of payroll companies, as there is currently no clear guidance on this.

The audit showed the Endowment Funds have not been transferred monthly through November; starting with December, they will be transferred to Chandler monthly. Two lump sum deposits have been transferred to get caught up through June and for July through November.



Pre-Need Funds have also not been being transferred monthly as they used to be. Moving forward we will leave \$200,000.00 in Wells Fargo Pre-Need account monthly, and we will transfer any funds that became At-Need to the General Checking with the remaining balance being transferred to Chandler to earn interest.

Trustee Coronel stated Finance Analyst Winder was doing a good job, and clarified it was the legislative intent of the board for the Cafeteria Plan to be used for mandatory benefits and they have a 50% cash out provision for the cash value of the difference. GM Bonner stated it wasn't an issue with the intent of the Board but rather the way the policy is written that is being reviewed.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

### **NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION**

Friday, February 10, 2023

8:00 a.m.

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District Executive Office

82847 Avenue 52

Coachella, CA 92236

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sherry Winder  
Clerk of the Board

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ BOD Mtg.