

**Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 5, 2023

8:00 a.m.

A meeting of the governing Board of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District (CVPCD) was held at Best Best & Krieger, LLP, located at 74760 CA-111 STE 100, Indian Wells, CA 92210 on Friday, May 5, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, May 1, 2023, at the following locations:

1. CVPCD Executive Office – 82847 Avenue 52, Coachella, CA 92236
2. The CVPCD website – <http://coachellacemetery.org>
3. Best Best & Krieger, LLP – 74760 CA-111 STE 100, Indian Wells, CA 92210

**CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

Chair Ernesto Rosales called the meeting to order at 8:13 a.m., those in attendance were as follows:

Trustees present:

Ernesto Rosales, Chair

Judy Vossler, Vice-Chair

John Rios, Trustee

Bruce Underwood, Trustee

Trustees absent:

Marcos Coronel, Trustee (Excused, Board action Rios/Vossler, 4-0)

Additional participants:

Josh Bonner, General Manager

Sherry Winder, Finance Analyst/Clerk of the Board

Enda Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant

Carlos Campos, General Counsel

Matt McCue, Consultant

Additional participants for public comment:

None

**FLAG SALUTE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was received via email from Ms. Linda Pierce and distributed to all present.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

## 1. PRESENTATIONS:

- 1.1 Presentation by Joshua Bonner  
Review of the 2022-2023 District operating year with key indicator reports.

GM Bonner noted a great job was done in meeting the mission of our District and shared accomplishments. Chair Rosales speculated that we may see a decrease coming in terms of interments. GM Bonner stated that pre-needs are not decreasing and suggested this may be due to people visiting loved ones and then choosing to be at our Cemetery. Chair Rosales would like to see a comparison of social media between Desert Memorial Park and our Cemetery.

- 1.2 Presentation by Matthew McCue  
A review of the 2022-2023 District Finances with key indicator reports.

Consultant McCue reviewed the presentation, mentioning Chandler will continue to provide updates twice a year to the Board. GM Bonner noted we need to move funds to the Capital Outlay Fund within Chandler to correctly show what investments we have available in the General Fund within Chandler.

- 1.3 Presentation by Joshua Bonner  
Key process review for Board meetings and action items

GM Bonner reviewed the presentation and Trustees present agreed this is a good format for requested action items. Trustee Rios stated he believes this process will be helpful by giving the Board time to process. Counsel Campos noted this is typical handling and helps alleviate time spent by staff and legal.

- 1.4 Presentation by Joshua Bonner & Sherry Winder  
2023-2024 Draft Operating Budget

GM Bonner reviewed the draft operating budget, noting that it includes the second phase of the rate increase which takes effect September 2023. Chair Rosales suggested a talk tract regarding the upcoming rate increase, highlighting that pricing had not significantly increased in twenty years and the increase was phased over two years for less impact; noting that we are the only Cemetery in the area that allows two full body burials plus an additional cremation able to go in the same lot. GM Bonner stated we will again do a public notice in advance of rate increase to allow a chance to purchase at current rates. Per prior Board suggestion, GM Bonner has requested competitive quotes for insurance and will present them to the Board once received.

- 1.5 Presentation by Joshua Bonner and Matthew McCue  
2023-2024 Capital Budget and 10-Year Capital Budget Outlook

GM Bonner reviewed the \$3.12 million 10-year projection; noting that \$1 million is due to our aging fleet, stating he would like the District to be more proactive than reactive with maintaining and replacing vehicles and equipment. Consultant McCue suggested financing could be considered as

an option to help with the initial cost of pre-setting vaults in new sections. GM Bonner noted that 60% of the capital budget projection will be realized between the years 2022-2025. Trustee Rios questioned how long staff can utilize their current offices, to which GM Bonner noted that the Customer Service team in the Administrative building is fine but that the Administration team in the Executive may need further evaluation in the future.

1.6 Presentation by Chair Rosales & Vice-Chair Vossler (and staff)  
Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

GM Bonner reviewed what the Master Plan Committee was tasked with and the key decision points. The committee recommends removing the Maintenance and Executive buildings to create a grand entrance with a parking lot, as we cannot use the land where buildings currently are for burial due to infrastructure underground. The new entrance would include turning the pond into a land feature while keeping its use as a retention pond. The Customer Service building would remain the same, and the Maintenance building would be moved to the back of property. Recommendation is to contract with a Landscape, Architecture & Cemetery designing company to develop a master plan to provide estimated costs and visual presentations. Vice-Chair Vossler questioned the cost of consultant, to which GM Bonner responded he will publish a RFQ and bring quotes back to the Board.

1.7 Presentation by Chair Rosales & Trustee Coronel (and staff)  
Memorial Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

GM Bonner reviewed the idea of another memorial and suggested placement in Section 27. A public safety memorial has been suggested with memorial walls where families pay to have names engraved on the walls. Vice-Chair Vossler approves of a public service memorial but was not in favor of a COVID memorial; Chair Rosales echoed this. GM Bonner will get quotes for a public safety memorial.

**2. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- 2.1 Trustee Minutes
  - a. Regular Board Meeting – April 7, 2023
- 2.2 Finance and Administration
  - a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks 26599 – 26646, and ACH transactions as detailed
  - b. Investment Report
  - c. Budget to Actual

Motion: Vossler – Move for approval of consent calendar  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Rios, Underwood  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: Coronel

Motion passed.

A recess was called at 9:56 a.m.  
The meeting resumed at 10:08 a.m.

**3. ACTION ITEMS:**

**3.1 Board Meeting Schedule for 2023-2024**

Consider and recommend a Board meeting schedule for July 2023 through June 2024

GM Bonner suggested avoiding the first week of the month due to the short time frame to prepare financials for the Board packet. The second Friday of the month was recommended, except for Holidays, where it would be held on the third Friday of the month. The Board gave direction to return with a resolution at the June meeting.

**3.2 Board of Trustees Officer Selection**

Consideration of process to designate officers of the Board

GM Bonner stated the Board had requested to bring this item back to determine if the Board would like to rotate Officers. Vice-Chair Vossler stated she is not in favor of rotation. Chair Rosales, Trustee Rios and Trustee Underwood concurred. No action taken.

**3.3 Annual Review of Ad Hoc Committees**

Dissolution or Renewal of Ad Hoc Committees for 2023/2024

GM Bonner reviewed Ad Hoc committees and noted that they need a time frame and specific direction. LAFCO committee was created for review process, which has not happened or been calendared. Memorial and Master Plan committees provided their recommendations during this meeting. Employee Education committee is not needed as Trustees can work together outside of being a committee. Staff recommends eliminating all current Ad Hoc committees to be brought back as needed; with a reminder that they are to be for limited timeframes.

Motion: Vossler – Suspend all Ad Hoc committees

Second: Rios

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Rios, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Coronel

Motion passed.

**3.4 Ordinance and Resolution Tracking**

Consideration of tracking system utilized for Resolutions and Ordinances

GM Bonner noted this was requested by Trustee Coronel to be brought back for consideration. Vice-Chair Vossler questioned if there was a log on file to track them and GM Bonner confirmed there is. No action was taken.

3.5 Emergency Cemetery Closure Procedures  
Consideration of District's response to high wind and other emergency declarations

GM Bonner reviewed the current lack of an emergency procedure for the District, with the main concern being high wind and requested that the Board allow for staff to work on a policy for emergencies, specifically when to close the cemetery. The Board gave direction to staff to work on a policy and present at a future meeting.

3.6 Participation in State Disability Insurance (SDI)  
Consideration of District's voluntary participation in the EDD SDI program

GM Bonner noted that this item was requested to be brought back by Trustee Coronel. GM Bonner reviewed the SDI program and the alternative options presented by other employers. There is no cost to the District to administer SDI as it is employee funded. Alternative is to offer another disability insurance option for employees to participate in; however, a concern noted was that staff may opt out due to trying to save funds and then would not be covered should something happen. Board prefers to leave as is. No action taken.

3.7 Cafeteria Plan Application Variances  
Consideration of misapplied funds related to the District's employee Cafeteria Plan

Per Staff Report - Staff has identified three possible, and most likely, course correction actions:

1. Back charge employees for benefits erroneously covered under the cafeteria plan and immediately implement the plan as drafted per policy.
2. Provide amnesty to all affected employees for benefits erroneously covered under the cafeteria plan to date and immediately implement the plan as drafted per policy.
3. Provide amnesty to all affected employees for benefits erroneously covered under the cafeteria plan to date and change the cafeteria plan policy to allow for coverage of the voluntary supplemental insurance.

Finance Analyst Winder reviewed the staff report as presented, stating that as of January 2023, PEMHCA contribution has been corrected and noted the supplementary email from legal counsel recommending providing two affected employees with a settlement payment for benefits not provided, along with signing an agreement to waive liability for the District. GM Bonner noted that, other than PEMHCA funds, all benefits covered were in line with the budgeted expense for the Cafeteria Plan approved by the Board. Board discussion ensued.

Motion: Vossler – Remedy PEMHCA for two employees per legal review. Amnesty for all prior benefits coverage to employees. Adjust policy to allow voluntary supplemental insurance benefits to be included in monthly benefit allowances - staff is to work with legal to bring back the required policy adjustments to codify.

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

3.8 County-wide Oversight Board Nominations and Election  
Consideration of District Nominations for the County Oversight Board

GM Bonner reviewed and stated the Board has the option to participate. There was no interest from the Board members present. No action taken.

3.9 Vendor Insurance and Release of Liability  
Consideration of how insurance and release of liability requirements are applied to vendors

GM Bonner reviewed staff report as presented. Board is in favor of having a policy for this. Direction was given to staff to develop and bring back a policy for consideration to a future board meeting.

3.10 Creation of District Foundation  
Consideration of creating a District Foundation to support community outreach and activity

Vice-Chair Vossler would like clarification of what the Foundation would encompass. Chair Rosales stated this was envisioned to allow for help with funds without utilizing District funds to assist. Trustee Underwood suggested creating a fund within another foundation that could allow for this as an alternate option. Vice-Chair Vossler stated that the only options for funds to come into a foundation are through a grant writer, family donations, or sponsorships. GM Bonner reminded the Board they had previously agreed they were not in favor of sponsorships. The Board gave direction to bring this item back to next year's planning session.

3.11 Trustee Board Meeting Absence  
Consideration of process to excuse Board meeting absences

GM Bonner stated this was a Board requested item. Currently, absences are reviewed and excused by Board vote at each meeting. Vice-Chair Vossler stated it is fine the way it is now; Trustees concurred. No action was taken.

3.12 Columbarium Niche Vase  
Consideration of District authorized niche vase

GM Bonner reviewed staff report as presented. Chair Rosales questioned how the niche vases would be attached and GM Bonner referred the Board to Exhibit D that shows an example of an option that will go into the current hole that exists on niche. Board requested a markup be

included for labor in the pass-through cost of the vase to families. Board directed staff to conduct a mini-fee study to determine labor costs and bring back to board after study is complete.

### 3.13 Employee Education Reimbursement Program

Consideration of developing a policy to support employee education assistance

GM Bonner stated this action item was being returned to the Board for consideration per their direction. Trustee Underwood stated no progress has been made on this to date through the prior ad-hoc committee. Vice-Chair Vossler voiced that she is in favor of training staff for their current positions but not for educating them to move on to a different industry, as it is not the best use of Cemetery funds and education should be related to what we do. The Board gave direction to staff to prepare a proposal to present to the Board at a later meeting that contained language ensuring education funds would be spent on learning opportunities/degrees that were specific to job.

## 4. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS:

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

Chair Rosales has a California Association of Public Cemeteries (CAPC) meeting in June and is excited to be apart of the CAPC Board. Commented that he is concerned about our upcoming rate increases.

Vice-Chair Vossler commented that the minutes were good and she was impressed with the two binder Board packet. Visited Santa Barbara cemetery while traveling and it made her proud of our Cemetery. She will miss June meeting as she will be out of town.

Trustee Underwood requested that in Staff Reports a financial analysis should always be presented with the scope of work. Reported that he attended the GCVCC Legislative Breakfast with Ken Calvert, the CAPC meeting at Palo Verde Cemetery where organic fertilizer usage was discussed, and the Indian Wells State of the City event. Trustee Underwood stated he is happy for Chair Rosales' CAPC role and to see us helping other districts to grow and do well like ours.

Trustee Rios had no comments.

### 4.2 General Manager Report

GM Bonner noted he is working with PS Air Museum for a flyover during Memorial Day ceremony; District would be charged for fuel only at a cost estimate of \$2,500. Office security improvement in Administrative building is underway. Congratulated Trustee Coronel on completion of his master's degree and Enda Rodriguez on her proclamation from the City of Indio. Noted he will be attending the Legislative Days in Sacramento with Trustee Underwood and will be teaching a class on effectively using events to communicate with the public at the upcoming California Special Districts Association Annual Conference.

Adjourned to closed session at 11:11 a.m.

## 5. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS:

### 5.1 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Title: General Counsel

5.2 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Title: General Manager

5.3 CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS

Property: APN 780010011

Agency Negotiator: General Manager and General Counsel

Negotiating Parties: To Be Determined

5.4 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

Re: Anticipated Litigation, Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)

Number of Cases (1)

The Board reconvened from closed session at 11:51 a.m. and Counsel Campos reported: Received direction, no action taken.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION**

Friday, June 2, 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.