

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 13, 2023

8:00 a.m.

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

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, October 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 8:01 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

Additional participants:

Josh Bonner, General Manager

Sherry Winder, Finance Analyst/Clerk of the Board

Carlos Campos, General Counsel

Richard Cook, LEES+Associates *(via Zoom)*

Stewart MacMillan, LEES+Associates *(via Zoom)*

Josh Bernsen, LEES+Associates *(via Zoom)*

Alaynè Sampson, Chandler Asset Management, Inc. *(via Zoom)*

Mia Corral Brown, Chandler Asset Management, Inc. *(via Zoom)*

Additional participants for public comment:

None

FLAG SALUTE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was received from Brad Anderson via email and was read aloud by Chair Rosales.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

1. PRESENTATIONS

1.1 Presentation by LEES+Associates

Presentation on master plan proposal and related scope of work

GM Bonner reviewed this presentation was at the request of the Board at the September meeting. Josh Bernsen and Stewart MacMillan presented the benefits of the Master Plan and Richard Cook outlined the revenue program and financial projections for future phases.

1.2 Presentation by Chandler Asset Management

Review of District investment strategy and results

Alaynè Sampson and Mia Corral Brown presented the bi-annual review for the period ending August 31, 2023. GM Bonner requested Alaynè Sampson discuss longer term investments and she explained the current 5-year maximum investment policy, noting the option to exceed it through a Resolution and mentioned that this might include allowing the sale of securities, depending on the District's approach. GM Bonner clarified that the Investment Policy does not consider the Endowment Care Fund, to which Mia Corral Brown suggested considering long-term options since the funds are meant to be untouched. Alaynè Sampson inquired about the Endowment Interest account and its designated use to which GM Bonner noted this will be added to the November agenda.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

2.1 Trustee Minutes

- a. Regular Board Meeting – September 8, 2023
- b. Special Board Meeting – October 2, 2023

2.2 Finance and Administration

- a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed August 2023
- b. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed September 2023
- c. Investment Report
- d. Budget to Actual August EOM
- e. Budget to Actual September EOM

2.3 Request for Temporary Policy Variances

Temporary adjustment and or suspension to District policy to accommodate event activity

2.4 Preferred Vendor Request

Consideration of preferred vendor approvals

Clerk Winder stated that although Trustee Coronel's absence from the October 2, 2023, special meeting was verbally noted as excused, a formal vote to excuse the absence was not taken and is now required.

Motion: Vossler – Move to excuse Trustee Coronel's absence from October 2, 2023, meeting
Second: Rios

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

Trustee Coronel offered the following clarification for his Trustee Comments made during the September 8, 2023, meeting. Add the phrases "if I'm in compliance with policy" to his inquiry into writing a CSDA article and "if there is interest from the Board to increase it" to his mention that the Board hasn't received a raise in pay in recent years.

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

3. ACTION ITEMS

3.1 Vendor Requirements

Consideration of liability and insurance requirements for vendors performing work at District

GM Bonner reviewed this item was initially discussed during the May planning session, which concerned vendors providing services on District property, particularly those involved in additional services during events like horse and carriage rides or dove releases. Board discussion ensued.

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

3.2 Quarterly Budget Review

Review and adjustment to annual budget

GM Bonner stated that Consultant McCue was unable to attend the meeting and summarized the points Consultant McCue had prepared, noting the request for an adjustment to 7903.7 was being rescinded due to additional negotiations which should bring the costs for wiring within the anticipated budget.

GM Bonner also discussed a budget adjustment request for 7903.5, which is needed due to an increase in the cost of the lowering device. This would be the third such device purchased. Trustee Rios questioned the necessity of this purchase and GM Bonner explained that having a third lowering device would enhance operational efficiency and safety as it would eliminate the need to transfer equipment at midday, allowing for complete setup in the morning before opening.

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

3.3 Master Plan Proposal 10-Year Master Plan consulting proposal

GM Bonner presented the staff report, emphasizing the importance of undertaking a Master Plan process for the District. Board discussion ensued.

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

3.4 Employee Education Tuition Reimbursement Program Policy proposal

GM Bonner reviewed staff report and opened for Board discussion noting this was a request from Trustee Coronel and Trustee Underwood. Board discussion ensued. Trustee Coronel suggested \$2,500 per employee within GM discretion and an amount above that would need to come to the Board. GM Bonner stated that is in line with what we are currently offering, and reminded the Board they have the same option available to them with their training budget.

Motion: Underwood – Accept as presented
Second: Coronel
Yes: Underwood
Abstain: None
No: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Rios
Absent: None
Motion did not pass.

Recess called at 9:48 a.m.
Resumed at 9:51 a.m.

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4.1 Review of Meeting Scheduling and General Operations

Review of process for special meeting scheduling and operations

GM Bonner provided a staff report as requested by a Trustee, emphasizing the importance of specific requests from Trustees to assist staff. He reminded the Board that the May planning session is where the year's scope of work is reviewed. Trustee Coronel expressed gratitude to GM Bonner for including this item on the agenda. Board discussion ensued. Trustee Coronel explained that he doesn't frequently check his District email and prefers texts for urgent matters. GM Bonner stated that he's hesitant to have staff utilize individual communication preferences, noting email is the District's established mode of communication to Trustees. He emphasized the importance of Trustees checking email regularly and attending meetings. Chair Rosales noted that they go out of their way to ensure everyone is accommodated.

4.2 Dia de los Muertos Update

Review of upcoming event

GM Bonner provided an update on the Dia de los Muertos (DDLMM) event, noting that the County approval process was smoother this year, and he sent a letter of appreciation to the County acknowledging this. Additional restroom facilities will be placed at the front of the Cemetery, along with handwashing stations. All restrooms are ADA compliant. The stage remains in the same location, with an ADA lift in the back. Additional parking has been arranged, and the grounds have been leveled. Twelve extra light towers will be installed to improve visibility around the perimeter. Tops'N'Barricades is handling the traffic plan outside the Cemetery, and an Emergency Disaster Plan is in place. Security will address any instances of alcohol, and individuals found with it will be asked to leave. The entertainment lineup includes a screening of the movie "Coco" on November 1st from 5-7 p.m. There will also be main stage entertainment with Folkloric and Azteca dancers. Water, bags, and bread will be distributed to families.

5. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

5.1 Trustee Comments and Event/Function Report Out

Chair Rosales provided a summary of his attendance at the CAPC Area Meeting. He found it to be highly informative and encouraged everyone to consider attending the next meeting in March, which will be held in San Diego. The meeting covered legislative updates and reviewed the Brown Act, with interesting questions raised during the discussion. Practices related to interment and disinterment were also on the agenda. One of the major topics discussed was the growing popularity of the DDLMM event in many cemeteries. Additionally, the conversation touched on green burials in public cemeteries in California, which involves considerations of water quality, local reception, and funeral home requirements. The trustee expressed the belief that it might be some time before public cemeteries transition to green burials due to these requirements. The trustee conveyed gratitude for the support and guidance provided by legal counsel, especially after hearing about issues faced by other cemeteries.

Vice-Chair Vossler expressed anticipation for DDLM on November 2nd, mentioning that she would be volunteering during the day. GM Bonner noted that this year, there will be a prerecorded message in both English and Spanish for the phone system to assist with customer inquiries.

Trustee Coronel expressed a desire to have formal discussions about creating a foundation. In the next budget quarterly report, Trustee Coronel requested to include a discussion on the Trustee training budget. He also mentioned running into a staff member from Assemblymember Wallis' office, who expressed interest in discussing roads and improvements. Trustee Coronel attended the COD listening sessions as an individual and voiced concerns about special districts finding staff. He emphasized the need for community engagement to educate on more than just hospitality. He noted that CalPERS open enrollment is currently underway. Trustee Coronel reported that he attended a webinar on Workplace Investigations and will forward the information to the Board. He attended the La Quinta State of the City event and will be present at the Community Investment Awards by Lift to Rise at The Living Desert.

Trustee Underwood had the opportunity to attend an Economic Development Meeting where they discussed long-term planning for the next 50 years and emphasized the importance of forward-thinking. He also had a chance to meet with two individuals who presented on lobbying for the district.

Trustee Rios expressed his appreciation for the presentations that were given.

5.2 General Manager Report

GM Bonner presented an issue to the Board regarding a customer who purchased a lot that was inadvertently resold by the District. When the customer was made aware, they requested a refund of the lot cost and endowment care. GM Bonner speculated that due to the actions of the District, her contract would have been invalidated; while cautioning that this situation sets a precedent should any similar cases arise in the future. Counsel Campos and GM Bonner confirmed that he has the authority to issue a refund.

GM Bonner noted the addition of an extra data point in the GM report, which will show available plots and niches. Additionally, he mentioned that a funeral home survey was conducted, but the results were not as positive as expected. GM Bonner believes that sending the survey to generic 'info@' emails may have contributed to the issue. Efforts are being made to schedule informational meetings with all funeral homes to gather feedback and improve customer service.

Chair Rosales asked about requiring upfront endowment payments to which GM Bonner noted he had reviewed the policy and confirmed it was a misunderstanding and it should be a total of 10% of the contract amount, which is being corrected. This item will be discussed further in the November meeting.

GM Bonner noted per request of funeral homes, an item will be added to the May planning session regarding opening one Saturday a month for services. Due to fee planning, this will be addressed as a Board item.

GM Bonner reminded the Board that Trustees who attend events as representatives of the District to please sit at the District designated table.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION

Friday, November 17, 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.