

**Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District**  
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes  
Friday, January 10, 2025  
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, January 10, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, January 6, 2025, 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 *(arrived at 8:04 a.m.)*  
Bruce Underwood, Trustee  
John Rios, Trustee

**Additional participants:**

Josh Bonner, General Manager  
Sherry Winder, Finance Manager/Clerk of the Board  
Carlos Campos, General Counsel *(via Zoom)*

**FLAG SALUTE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

**1. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**1.1 Trustee Minutes**

Board Meeting – November 8, 2024

**1.2 Finance and Administration**

**November 2024:**

- a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed
- b. Investment Report

c. Budget to Actual

**December 2024:**

- a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed
- b. Investment Report
- c. Budget to Actual

**1.3 Disposal of District Documents**

Annual disposal of District documents to comply with Retention Policy

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff recommends the Board direct staff to destroy and dispose of the documents as described in Exhibit A.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known financial impact resulting from this action.*

**1.4 Approval of GIS Mapping Contract**

Contract to provide digital mapping of underground infrastructure

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff is recommending the Board approve the contract attached as Exhibit C with Coachella Valley GIS LLC to perform underground utility mapping for the District.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The winning bid total project cost was \$15,433.17. The project will also result in a recurring annual fee of \$250 for software licensing (subject to future increase).*

**1.5 Approval of Information Technology Management Services Contract**

Contract to manage District IT support

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff is recommending approval of a three-year contract for services with AIS for Information Technology Management Services. The contract is attached as Exhibit D. Staff further recommends adding an additional \$6,936.90 to the 2024-2025 Budget line “6155 – IT Support Services” to account for additional cost.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The agreement will cost the District \$2,156.15 per month, or \$25,873.80 per year. This is an increase over the previous contract of \$1,156.15 per month, or \$13,873.80 per year. The agreement with AIS will cost \$77,621.40 over the full three-year course of the agreement. The agreement contains a provision for two additional years if mutually agreed to by both parties, with the potential for another \$51,747.60 in expenses over the two-year period.*

*The cost above does not include potential special “project” cost, which could increase the spend but cannot reasonably or accurately be projected at this time (“as needed”).*

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

## 2. ACTION ITEMS

### 2.1 Election of Board Officers

Nominate and elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2025 calendar year

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff recommends the Board nominate and select officers to serve in the capacity of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson/Secretary as required by District bylaws.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known financial impact resulting from this action.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner reviewed the available positions, noting they were held by Trustees Rosales and Vossler in 2023/2024. Vice Chair Vossler recommended that each nomination be handled through a separate motion.

1<sup>st</sup> Motion: Vossler – Nominate Trustee Rosales for Chair  
Second: Underwood  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

2<sup>nd</sup> Motion: Rosales – Nominate Trustee Vossler for Vice Chair  
Second: Coronel  
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

Chair Rosales expressed gratitude to the Board, acknowledging their competence and contributions while emphasizing the strength of the team.

### 2.2 Mission Statement Review

Review of current Mission Statement and consideration of possible revisions

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff has drafted the following for the Board to consider:*

#### **Mission Statement**

*The Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District provides affordable cemetery services to Riverside County residents within our District boundaries. By operating with transparency and sound governance, and serving the needs of our diverse community, we ensure that our District remains a meaningful space for remembrance, reflection and celebration, designed to serve generations in perpetuity.*

#### **Core Values**

*Dedication: We provide services in a manner that is competent, courteous, and responsive.*

*Excellence: We strive for excellence through measurable, documented achievements.*

*Fiduciary Responsibility: We provide the highest quality service at a fair and equitable fee.*

*Integrity: We act ethically and honestly.*

*Professional Development: We are continuously learning best practices, while developing and implementing innovation.*

*Respect: We treat constituents, partners and employees with mutual respect, sensitivity and empathy.*

*Teamwork: We support, trust, value, and empower our colleagues.*

*Transparency: We believe in an open government where information and documents are easily accessible to the public.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known significant financial impact from adopting these changes.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner noted that this item originated from the May planning session, emphasizing that the current mission statement does not clearly define the District’s functions. Staff presented a draft mission statement to initiate discussion and introduced the concept of Core Values, sharing a preliminary draft with the Board. The Board discussed potential revisions, suggesting replacing 'affordable' with a more neutral term such as 'reasonable,' removing pronouns in favor of 'the District' or 'Cemetery,' and revising 'Riverside County' to 'cemetery services within our boundaries.' A question was raised regarding the need for a vision statement, with a suggestion to revisit the topic at the May planning session. The Board requested that staff return with a revised draft incorporating the suggested changes.

**2.3 CalPERS 457 Plan Adoption**

Consideration of additional employee retirement savings account option

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff is recommending the Board adopt Resolution 132 approving participation in the CalPERS 457 plan and authorize the General Manager to execute the Employer Adoption Agreement. Staff further recommends the Board approve participation in the optional employee loan program by authorizing the General Manager to execute the “Employer Loan Provision Form”. Both of these provisions will bolster the available benefits to employees at no additional cost to the District, further strengthening the District’s ability to recruit and retain employees.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The 457 Plan is administered by CalPERS at no cost to the District. Further, the District has confirmed that the current payroll provider will charge no additional money for the payroll management aspect of money disbursement/transfer to CalPERS from employee payroll accounts.*

*The possibility exists that the Board (or future Boards) could elect to institute a “match” or other form of District funded contribution to the program on behalf of employee(s). While this would represent a cost to the District, it would be at the sole discretion of the District’s governing body and cannot be reasonably anticipated by staff for financial impact projection at this time.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner noted that this item was discussed at the May planning session and the November meeting and is now being presented for adoption. The fund allows employees to contribute additional voluntary funds toward their retirement at no cost to the District. Participation is optional, and staff is not proposing a District match. The Board expressed support for the program and inquired about the loan option. GM Bonner clarified that loans can only be taken from an employee’s existing balance and must be repaid within five years, as outlined in the program documents.

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

## 2.4 March 2025 Board Meeting Date

Possible change to March Board meeting date due to scheduling conflict

**Staff Recommendation:** *Staff is recommending the Board move the March Board meeting to the subsequent Friday, on March 21, 2025.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known financial impact resulting from this action.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner noted that the Board calendar was released with meetings scheduled for the second Friday of each month and informed the Board that the California Association of Public Cemeteries (CAPC) Annual Conference is scheduled for March 13-15, 2025. He highlighted a potential quorum issue, as both staff and trustees are interested in attending the conference.

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

## 2.5 Development of New Section

Plan to address future cemetery inventory needs

**Staff Recommendation:** *Due to the immediacy of need and owing to the lack of a completed Master Plan, staff is recommending the Board approve the opening of Section 27 when required. The section does not need to be opened right away, just knowing that it will be opened is sufficient to both allay concerns regarding lot inventory exhaustion and a potential timing crunch on the development of a new section. Based on current sales models, staff would likely open Section 27 up for sales after the 2025 Dia de los Muertos celebration. This would provide both the Board and staff with sufficient time to develop plans to accommodate future DDLM entertainment area placement, while also exploring options for alternative future monument sites.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There would be no financial impact (expenses) from opening Section 27 as the area has already been developed for future interment use.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner provided an update on lot projections for Cemetery availability, noting that the primary challenge is with full lots. Given the current run rate, the Board must decide whether to open Section 27 or begin developing a new section. Opening Section 27 would extend availability by an additional 3–4 years. The Board discussed ¼ lot numbers, the potential for a community event space, and the timeline for developing a new section. Following the discussion, the Board directed staff to proceed with utilizing Section 27 after DDLM 2025.

## 2.6 Quarterly Budget Review

Review of the 2024-2025 budget and recommended adjustments

**Staff Recommendation:** *Adjust the Operating and Capital Budgets for 2024/2025 as recommended by staff.*

**Financial Analysis:** *Total adjustments to Operating Budget: \$9,000 / Total adjustments to Capital Budget: \$0*

**Discussion:** Finance Manager Winder reviewed the year-to-date budget and requested increases of \$1,500 for Computer & Software Expense, \$2,500 for Headstone Setting & Repair, and \$5,000 for Overtime Expense. She also

presented financial projections, noting reserve balances and the transition to accrual accounting in January 2025, cautioning that the shift would initially appear drastic due to the prior cash basis model. GM Bonner emphasized that the change will provide a clearer view of available funds and prepaid expenses.

The Board approved the recommended budget increases, including a request to increase Headstone Setting & Repair to \$5,000 (instead of \$2,500) and add \$10,000 to Board Training & Travel for increased conference participation. GM Bonner recommended the Board manage the training budget informally, rather than dividing it equally, prompting a discussion on fund oversight, with responses focusing on trust and relevance to Board work.

- Motion: Coronel – Move to approve with recommended increases and informal agreement for Trustee Training
  - Second: Rios
  - Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios
  - Abstain: None
  - No: None
  - Absent: None
- Motion passed.

**3. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**3.1 Day-of Services Payment**

Payment for property or services the day-of by funeral homes

**Discussion:** GM Bonner reviewed the current policy requiring payments at least 24 hours prior to services, noting that funeral homes have been treated as exempt, which conflicts with the policy. He suggested either revising the policy or applying the same requirements to funeral homes as to families. Board discussion followed, questioning why funeral homes cannot pay a day in advance. It was clarified that they can, and the original policy was implemented to prevent NSF issues. The recommendation was that for direct burials, permits and payments should be required 24 hours before services, while funeral homes could provide permits and payments by the day of service. The Board directed staff to bring back revised policy recommendations at the next meeting.

**4. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

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

Chair Rosales expressed appreciation for the New Year, District staff, and the District attorney.

Vice Chair Vossler stated she had no updates to report.

Trustee Coronel congratulated Chair Rosales and Vice Chair Vossler on their appointments, emphasizing the importance of consistency within the District. He attended the SHRM California Law Conference in San Diego and recommended GM Bonner and Finance Manager Winder consider attending, noting it was highly beneficial, particularly on leave policies for District employees. Trustee Coronel also took an online class on tax credits for hiring veterans and attended an ASPA event on leadership, which he found informative.

Trustee Underwood reported attending two CVEP meetings since the last Board meeting. He also completed updated Ethics and Sexual Harassment trainings. Trustee Underwood met with the PSUSD foundation, noting that its staff is made up of School District employees rather than dedicated foundation staff, which he found to be an interesting operational model. He commended the District's efforts on GIS mapping and suggested considering

strategies for managing cemetery plot inventory.

Trustee Rios reported completing the two-day SDLF Module 4 training and earning his Special District Leadership Academy certificate. He expressed confidence in the Board, crediting its effectiveness to the exceptional staff and strong trust among members. Trustee Rios thanked the Board for the opportunity to be part of such a supportive and cohesive group.

#### **4.2 General Manager Report**

- a. January 1, 2024
- b. December 1, 2024
- c. DDLM Special Report

GM Bonner provided an update on the roads and reported that Chandler Asset Management reviewed the investment policy, confirming no updates are needed this year. Vice Chair Vossler commended the quality of GM Bonner's reports.

***Adjourned to closed session at 9:35 a.m.***

#### **5. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS**

##### **5.1 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Title: General Manager

##### **5.2 CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS**

Agency Designated Representatives: Carlos Campos, General Counsel

Unrepresented Employee: Josh Bonner, General Manager

The Board reconvened from closed session at 10:21 a.m. and Counsel Campos reported: no reportable action.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

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

Friday, February 14, 2025

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: \_\_\_\_\_ BOT Mtg.