

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 13, 2025
8:00 a.m.

A meeting of the Governing Board of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District (“District”) was held at the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District Administrative Building at 82847 Avenue 52, Coachella, CA 92236 on Friday, June 13, 2025, at 8:00 am.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, June 9, 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 8:00 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 Manager/Clerk of the Board
Carlos Campos, General Counsel
Joshua Bernsen, E. Lees+Associates

Additional participants for Public Comment:

Jason Dafforn, Valley Sanitary District

FLAG SALUTE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment was received from Frances T. Arroyo via letter and was distributed to the Board of Trustees.

Jason Dafforn of Valley Sanitary District addressed the Board regarding his candidacy for the CSDA Board Seat B election (Item 3.7).

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

1. PRESENTATIONS

1.1 Presentation by Joshua Bernsen

Proposed District 10-Year Master Plan

Joshua Bernsen of E. Lees + Associates presented the final 10-Year Master Plan. GM Bonner noted that, according to the Plan, the District has capacity for growth through approximately 2045, rather than 2070 as initially projected four years ago. In response to Board questions, GM Bonner clarified that developing a new section would take approximately 18 months, cost around \$3 million, and must begin within six (6) months to stay ahead of anticipated sell-out. Board discussion emphasized the importance of listening to the public as the District continues to grow.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

2.1 Trustee Minutes

- a. Board Meeting – May 3, 2025

2.2 Finance and Administration

- a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed (May 2025)
- b. Investment Report (May 2025)
- c. Budget to Actual (May 2025)
- d. Investment Report (April 2025)
- e. Budget to Actual (April 2025)

2.3 2025-2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Approval of Resolution 135

Staff Recommendations: *Staff recommends that the Board adopt Resolution 135 as presented.*

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

2.4 Resolution to Adopt Endowment Care Interest Policy Change

Approval of Resolution 136

Staff Recommendations: *Adopt Resolution No. 136, formalizing Board direction related to the management and use of Endowment Care Interest funds, as originally approved by the Board at its April 2025 meeting.*

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

Discussion: Trustee Coronel requested minor edits to Item 2.1 Trustee Minutes, including the following:

- **Informational Item 4.1:** Clarified that the towing ordinance referenced should be a parking ordinance.
- **Trustee Comments Item 6.1:** Clarified that he inquired about AB requirements for holding a public hearing prior to posting the budget.
- **Closed Session Item 7.1:** Noted that positive comments were made and should be reflected.

Trustee Coronel provided written notes to Clerk Winder for reference.

Motion: **Coronel – Move for approval with corrections**

Second: Vossler

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

3. ACTION ITEMS

3.1 Approval of 10-Year Master Plan

Board adoption of the 10-Year Master Plan as presented by LEES+Associates

Staff Recommendations: *Staff recommends the Board adopt the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District's 10-Year Master Plan as presented. It is important to note that the plan is intended as a framework for future action. The plan may be amended as operational needs evolve, and additional opportunities or challenges present themselves.*

Financial Analysis: *There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with adoption of the plan. However, implementation of the recommended capital improvements, staffing strategies, and financial policies will have budgetary implications and will be considered separately through future budget processes and Board actions.*

Discussion: GM Bonner thanked the Board for its involvement in the 10-Year Master Plan process, sharing that E. Lees + Associates has completed their part and the District is ready to move forward. The Board thanked GM Bonner for leading the effort and acknowledged the support from staff and legal counsel. GM Bonner noted that items related to the plan may start coming to the Board as soon as next month.

Motion: **Coronel – Move adoption of Master Plan**

Second: Vossler

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

3.2 Leased Office Space for Administration

Authority to act on real estate lease agreement

Staff Recommendations: *Authorize the General Manager to negotiate a contract lease for 44801 Village Court, Suite 102, Palm Desert, with terms not to exceed the price as presented in Exhibit D.*

Financial Analysis: *The annual lease cost will be (not to exceed) \$82,716 in year one, \$85,068 in year two, and \$87,516 in year three (base + triple net). The total cost of the property over the three-year period will be \$255,300. Staff also recommends a build-out budget of \$20,000 to cover all IT wiring and routing cost.*

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed that the Board had previously discussed moving to a remote office to better serve the west end of the District and support future development. A potential site was identified in Palm Desert that offers a three-year lease, at an estimated cost of approximately \$80,000 annually. Board discussion ensued and the Board authorized staff to move forward with lease negotiations and proceed with the relocation as soon as practical.

The Board discussed the potential benefits of establishing a presence in Palm Desert, particularly as part of long-term planning for a columbarium in that area. GM Bonner recommended adding this concept to the Master Plan and launching a public outreach campaign following relocation.

Motion: **Coronel – Move for approval to delegate authority to GM to negotiate lease**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

Motion: **Coronel – Move to reconsider Item 3.1**

Second: Vossler

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

Discussion: The Board discussed adding a long-term plan to build a columbarium on the west side of the District to the 10-Year Master Plan.

Motion: **Underwood – Add development of columbarium into the Master Plan for the western part of the District**

Second: Vossler

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None
No: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

3.3 Approval of Contract Award – Fence Replacement

Approval of RFP contract award and capital budget adjustment

Staff Recommendations: *Staff recommends that the Board:*

- *Approve the award of contract for the Fence Replacement and Installation Project to Sam's Fence, Inc. in the amount of \$98,164.00; and*
- *Approve a capital budget adjustment increasing the project allocation from \$100,000 to \$173,980.04 to cover all associated costs, including brush removal contract (previously approved by the Board) and required engineering fees (estimated), with an additional allocation to cover any change orders that may arise.*
- *The Board should grant the GM authority to approve change orders within 10% of the awarded price as per the District's Purchasing and Contracting Policy.*

Financial Analysis: *The initial capital budget for the project was \$100,000, which was a preliminary estimate. The full cost of the project is now projected at \$160,000, broken down as follows:*

\$98,164 – Construction contract with Sam's Fence, Inc.

\$45,000 – Separate contract for brush removal and site prep

\$15,000 – Engineering fees, surveying, and contingency (~15%)

Staff recommends reallocating funds within the capital budget to accommodate the updated project total. No general fund dollars are anticipated to be impacted.

Discussion: GM Bonner reported that two bids were received for the fence replacement RFP. The RFP Committee recommended awarding the contract to Sam's Fence for \$98,164 and approving a capital budget increase of \$73,980.04 to cover the full project, including brush removal and engineering fees.

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

3.4 Authorization to Purchase New District Truck and Decommission Existing F-150

Procurement of new commuter vehicle and trade-in of existing vehicle

Staff Recommendations: *Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees:*

- *Authorize the General Manager to approve the purchase of a new Mid-Size Light Duty Truck from the selected vendor as recommended by the RFP evaluation committee;*

- *Execute a purchase agreement with the selected dealer, consistent with the capital budget not to exceed \$50,000 (net of trade-in value); and*
- *Approve the decommissioning and trade-in of the District's 2021 Ford F-150 (VIN: 1FTEX1CP6MKE89479) as part of the vehicle transaction.*

Financial Analysis: *This acquisition is included in the FY 2024–2025 capital improvement budget at a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000, net of trade-in. The final price and selected vendor will be presented during the meeting.*

Discussion: GM Bonner reported that the RFP process resulted in two qualified proposals. The RFP Committee recommended purchasing the Chevrolet Silverado at a cost of \$21,756.25 plus taxes and fees after trade-in, citing its longer warranty and standard white color as key factors.

He noted that the new truck will serve as the General Manager's vehicle but will also be available to the Maintenance Team as needed. The current Ford Explorer will be reassigned for use by staff and Trustees.

Motion: **Coronel – Move approval for staff recommendation**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

3.5 District Organizational Restructure

Review and recommended adjustments for new and existing positions

Staff Recommendations: *Approve the proposed organizational restructuring of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District as outlined in Exhibit B – District Salary Schedule.*

Financial Analysis: *Groundskeeper to Maintenance Technician (additional expense)*

6010 · Payroll Expenses - \$7,196.80

6020 · Payroll Taxes - \$550.56

6030 · Retirement Expense - \$572.86

6530 - Other Benefits - \$539.76

TOTAL - \$8,859.98

Maintenance Specialist to Maintenance Supervisor (additional expense)

6010 · Payroll Expenses - \$4,193.28

6020 · Payroll Taxes - \$320.79

6030 · Retirement Expense - \$674.28

6530 - Other Benefits - \$453.12

TOTAL - \$5,641.47

Both positions (additional expense)

6010 · Payroll Expenses - \$11,390.08

6020 · Payroll Taxes - \$871.35

6030 · Retirement Expense - \$1,247.14

6530 - Other Benefits - \$992.88
TOTAL - \$14,501.45 (net expense)

Elimination of the Maintenance Manager position (savings)

6010 · Payroll Expenses - \$96,277.00
6020 · Payroll Taxes - \$7,366.30
6030 · Retirement Expense - \$7,664.80
6530 - Other Benefits - \$53,888.88
TOTAL - \$165,196.98

Total Savings (net): \$150,695.53

Discussion: GM Bonner proposed reorganizing staff into two teams: Cemetery Services and Finance/Administration, with the Maintenance Team reporting to the Cemetery Services Manager. He recommended promoting the Maintenance Specialist to Supervisor, extending and rehiring the CRM Project Manager for two years, reassigning the Administrative Assistant to Cemetery Services, and converting the vacant Groundskeeper position to a Maintenance Technician.

The Board preferred posting new roles over reclassifying staff to ensure fairness. GM Bonner suggested an internal-only recruitment first, with external posting if needed. The Board agreed and confirmed Manager roles remain equal on the Organizational Chart. No salary or budget changes were made.

Motion: **Coronel – Approve the following:**

- Open Groundskeeper position being converted to an open Maintenance Technician position
- Internal posting of a Maintenance Supervisor position with a report back to Board on any other required adjustments based on the outcome
- Eliminating the Maintenance Manager position with the Board recognizing the realignment of distribution of duties to the Cemetery Services Manager for the Maintenance Team
- Extending the vacant temporary CRM Project Manager position to August 2027

Second: Rios

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

3.6 2025-2026 FY Budget Approval

Review and adopt the proposed annual budget

Staff Recommendations: *Staff is recommending the Board approve the Budget as presented in Exhibit A, and the Capital Budget as presented in Exhibit B.*

Financial Analysis: *The proposed budget projects total income for the 2025-2026 operating year at \$4,076,800.00. The budget projects total non-capital expenses to be \$4,047,111.39. The net revenue*

projected for the year (non-capital) is a surplus of \$29,688.61, most of which is deferred pre-sale income.

The proposed budget represents a year over year (“YOY”) projected decrease in revenue of 10% over the current 2025–2026 budget. However, if Endowment Revenue is excluded, the budget shows a 1% increase in operating revenue. The budget projects an increase in non-capital spending YOY of 5%.

Capital expenses for the year are projected to be \$1,571,808.16. Capital expenses are in line with the District’s 10-Year projection presented at the May 2023 Board meeting.

New Capital spending for 2025 includes:

7905.2 · Columbarium Leveling - \$20,000.00

7905.5 · Motorized Shop Doors - \$100,000.00

Prior Year budgeted Capital spending for 2025 includes:

7902.3 · Asphalt Replacement - \$1,294,808.16 (carried forward from 2024)

7904.8 · SW Property Line Security Fence - \$157,000.00 (carried forward from 2024)

Note - The capital expenses are funded from the Capital Outlay account (existing funds).

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed that the proposed budget was initially presented at the May planning session. In line with Board direction, staff separated the Capital Budget from the main budget. He noted that any revisions approved at this meeting would be incorporated accordingly.

Trustee Coronel reminded staff of his request to create a policy for compensating exempt staff who work events, noting that it is not currently reflected in the budget. GM Bonner added that the scope of work for the upcoming year may result in additional budget impacts as related items are brought forward.

Motion: **Coronel – Move approval for 3.6**

Second: Rios

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

3.7 CSDA Board of Directors Election Ballot

Southern Network, Seat B (2026–2028 Term)

Staff Recommendations: *Provide direction to the General Manager regarding the District’s vote in the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Board of Directors election for Southern Network – Seat B for the 2026–2028 term.*

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

Discussion: GM Bonner noted that the District is eligible to participate in the CSDA Board of Directors election. An informational packet and candidate video were provided, and one candidate addressed the Board during Public Comment. The Board discussed and expressed support for candidate Jason Dafforn.

Motion: Coronel – Motion to vote for Jason Dafforn
Second: Underwood
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios
Abstain: None
No: None
Absent: None
Motion passed.

3.8 Agreement and Election to Prefund OPEB Through CalPERS

Approval of Resolution 137 to pre-fund Other Post Employment Benefits

Staff Recommendations: *Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees:*

- 1. Approve Resolution No. 137, authorizing the District to enter into an Agreement and Election to Prefund OPEB through the CalPERS CERBT program.*
- 2. Provide direction on which CERBT Strategy (1, 2, or 3) should be selected for the District's initial investment.*

Financial Analysis: *The Board-approved allocation of \$451,848.96 from the Endowment Care Interest account will be transferred to the CERBT Fund upon completion of enrollment.*

There is no cost to join the CERBT program. Ongoing participation is subject to an all-inclusive annual administrative fee of 8.5 basis points (0.085%), based on the District's asset balance in the trust.

Prefunding through CERBT is expected to enhance long-term financial sustainability by reducing the District's reported OPEB liability through improved discount rate assumptions.

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed the Board's prior direction to prefund the District's OPEB liabilities and recommended using the CalPERS California Employers' Retiree Benefit Trust (CERBT). Finance Manager Winder explained that CERBT is a Section 125 Trust offering three investment strategies—aggressive, moderate, and conservative. GM Bonner recommended Strategy 3 for its conservative approach and long-term stability.

The Board considered whether the funds would be better used to support capital development priorities outlined in the 10-Year Master Plan. After discussion, the Board opted not to proceed with prefunding OPEB at this time. GM Bonner recommended placing the funds into short-term investments within a Capital Development account to support future projects. No action was taken.

Motion: Coronel – Move to reconsider Item 3.6
Second: Underwood
Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios
Abstain: None
No: None
Absent: None

Motion passed.

Discussion: The Board proposed creating a Land & Infrastructure Development Fund and reallocating the previously approved \$451,848.96—originally designated for OPEB liabilities—to support initial costs for future development.

Motion: Vossler – Create a Land & Infrastructure Development Fund and fund it with \$451,848.96

Second: Rios

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood, Rios

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Motion passed.

4. COMMITTEE UPDATES

4.1 LAFCO MSR Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: Trustee Underwood reported that the committee met on June 12, 2025, and recommended moving forward with the annexation of Palm Desert properties into the District. The committee also plans to engage the cities of Indio, Coachella, and La Quinta to explore whether they wish to include the current cemetery property within their Spheres of Influence (SOI), which could result in faster emergency response services. There would be no tax benefit to the cities.

GM Bonner clarified that the committee was originally formed to address annexation related to District expansion only, and that Board approval was required to expand its scope to include annexation of the District's current property into other SOIs. The Board approved expanding the committee's scope to include this work but did not approve legal support for the expanded scope at this time. GM Bonner confirmed that staff and legal counsel will not proceed without Board direction.

5. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

5.1 Trustee Comments and Event/Function Report Out

Chair Rosales shared that he received a message from a community member commending GM Bonner's quick thinking during the Memorial Day event, which helped keep things running smoothly. He reported attending the mid-year CAPC meeting in San Luis Obispo and thanked everyone who attended the GCVCC Annual Installation Dinner, where he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Vice Chair Vossler reported attending the GCVCC Annual Installation Dinner and expressed appreciation that Chair Rosales brought visibility to the Death Care Industry through his recognition. She also attended the Memorial Day event at CVPCD and recommended that staff take on a larger role

in future events. GM Bonner noted that staff will work on improving the sound system for the next event.

Trustee Coronel reported attending the SDARC meeting, where he was officially voted in and nominated as Treasurer of the Board. He participated in the GCVCC Legislative Committee, the Memorial Day event at CVPCD—expressing support for staff taking on more aspects in the future—and a meeting regarding artificial intelligence, also attended by Trustee Underwood, where he emphasized the need for AI-related policies. He attended the GCVCC Annual Installation Dinner recognizing Chair Rosales and described it as a successful event. Trustee Coronel also participated in a CSDA webinar on prefunding OPEBs, which provided helpful insight. In recognition of Public Employee Appreciation Week, he sent a letter to all staff. He noted that this may be his final meeting, as his term concludes this month, but he anticipates being reappointed.

Trustee Underwood reported attending the GCVCC Annual Installation Dinner, where Chair Rosales was honored, and the Memorial Day event at CVPCD.

5.2 General Manager Update

GM Bonner informed the Board that an update on the recent bank fraud investigation has been included in the Trustee folders for review. He also shared an update regarding road funding, noting that Congressman Raul Ruiz’s office has provided a recommendation for support, which is also included in the Board folders.

He reported that the District is currently scheduling burials approximately four weeks out and mentioned a related comment received from a community member. Trustee Coronel requested an informational item outlining the interment process and consideration of options for expanding interment capacity.

GM Bonner also noted that 17 pre-scheduled office appointments resulted in no-shows last month and stated that he has begun tracking this trend. He announced that the new District website will be launched soon to improve ADA compliance.

Meeting was adjourned to closed session at 10:18 a.m.

6. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

6.1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

Significant Exposure to Litigation, Pursuant to Government Code Section
54956.9(d)(2)/(e)(1)
One (1) Potential Claim

Meeting resumed from closed session at 10:27 a.m. and Counsel Campos reported no reportable action.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION

Friday, July 11, 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.