

Kern River Valley Public Cemetery District
Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting – Monday June 17th, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Monday June 17th, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

District Administrative Office: 8441 Burlando Road Wofford Heights, CA 93285 County of Kern

Present: Harry Schustz, Chairperson/President, Board of Trustees
Kathy Agapiou, Vice Chairperson/Vice President, Board of Trustees
Esteban Olivares, Member, Board of Trustees (*via phone*) *
Michael Ryan, Member, Board of Trustees
John Blythe, District Administrative Assistant

Guests: Tim Unruh, Former District Manager – Kern County Cemetery District
Joel Bauer, Former District Manager – West Side Cemetery District
Kendra Graham, Assistant Attorney – Kern County Attorney’s Office

Absent: Danny Brown, Interim District Management Consultant
(*One seat on the Board of Trustees is currently vacant*)

- A. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Schustz at 10:00 AM
- B. ROLL CALL – QUORUM PRESENT (4 Trustees Present; 1 Seat is Vacant).
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION: Chairperson Schustz gave the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.
- D. PUBLIC COMMENT, REQUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS: There were nine members of the public present, two were from the news media. The following gave comments:
Tamela Ashlock: She was interested in applying for the district office secretary position and submitted her resume to the board and shared her work experience.

Bill Becker: From Kern River Radio. Shared that he felt district management was replaced prematurely and they should have been given retirement to allow their replacements to be properly trained.

Catherine Stachowiak: Reporter for the Kern Valley Sun.

Jerry Moffatt: At the June 11th meeting, asked whether Trustee Ryan was employed at Paradise Cove which Assistant Blythe is a minority owner in. Assistant Blythe indicated at that meeting that Trustee Ryan has volunteered bartending, but is not an employee. Trustee Ryan then responded after given permission from Asst. Attorney Graham, that he has known the Williams family for over 40 years and is retired probation and has volunteered on and off for years. Mr. Moffatt said that while there is nothing wrong with that, something it can appear to look like a grey area. Mr. Moffat again brought up additional hours given to Assistant Blythe. Assistant Blythe responded that as per Mr. Brown, interim consultant, recommended additional hours for a temporary period of time, to expediate the audits and minutes that are delinquent and to get the district back into legal compliance and the purpose of this meeting was to start getting an office secretary hired.

Orion Sanders: Feels the board needs to address immediate concerns with the burials and hopes the consultants at today’s special board meeting can help answer questions and get this resolved as soon as possible. He also states that the district’s policies and procedures should be reviewed.

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Kevin Kyt: He is Randy's cousin. He shares that this has been an emotional time for Randy and the Kyt family. He moved back to the valley shortly after the Erskine Fire in 2016. Randy should have done a lot for the district over the years and should be given a severance package. He shares Randy has gone through a lot over the years including the fires, flooding, Laura's accident and has tried his best to deal with the problems correctly. Randy was about to retire anyway and feels he should be given some kind of recognition. He shares that there are resources for finding replacements for the district.

- E. PRESENTATION – RECRUITMENT AND TURNAROUND PLAN FOR DISTRICT'S OPERATIONS: Chairperson Schustz introduced Tim Unruh, former District Manager of Kern County Cemetery District and Joel Bauer, former District Manager of West Side Cemetery District. Danny Brown, Interim Management Consultant was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Unruh and Mr. Bauer were recruited by Mr. Brown, at the request of Kern County and to help evaluate the status of the district and to make recommendations/improvements. Mr. Unruh and Mr. Bauer also gave the Board input on developing an immediate turnaround plan including getting staff hired for the district. Both Mr. Unruh and Mr. Bauer have over 60 years of combined experience in the cemetery business as well as district law, public policy and administration experience in California. Mr. Unruh and Mr. Bauer shared that since they were brought into the district last week, they have been unable to locate certain files including plot maps and keys to the backhoe to get internments back in process. Some discussion from the public included Mr. Unruh and/or Mr. Bauer reaching out to former District Manager Randy Kyt for locating these particular items.
- F. CLOSED SESSION: The Board adjourned into closed session at 10:28AM to discuss the following items:
1. Public Employee Appointment/Recruitment – District Manager (Gov. Code 54957)
 2. Public Employee Appointment/Recruitment – District Secretary (Gov. Code 54957)
- G. CLOSED SESSION REPORT: The board came out of Closed Session at 12:11 PM. As per assistant attorney Graham reporting to the public, in closed session, a motion was made by Trustee Ryan to appoint Tamela Ashlock as District Secretary/Office Clerk and was seconded by Trustee Agapiou and passed. (Trustee Olivares was unable to participate in closed session). No other action was taken.
- H. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 12:14PM

Respectfully submitted by
John Blythe

John Blythe
District Administrative Assistant

**Trustee Esteban Olivares observed, listened via phone, but due to work commitments was unable to participate.*