

Kern River Valley Public Cemetery District
Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting – Wednesday June 5th, 2024 @ 12:00 PM

KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Wednesday June 5th, 2024 @ 12:00 PM

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

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

Guests: Danny Brown, District Manager – Tehachapi & South Kern Cemetery Districts
Ryan Brannon, Account Manager – GSRMA

Absent: Esteban Olivares, Member, Board of Trustees
(One seat on the Board of Trustees is currently vacant)

- A. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Schutz at 12:07PM
- B. ROLL CALL – QUORUM PRESENT (3 Trustees Present; 1 Absent; 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:
Robert Guidry of Lake Isabella Valley Mortuary was in attendance as an observer; former trustee **Jill Sloan Thurman** was in attendance via phone.

Jill Sloan-Thurman: She read the Grand Jury’s report, she felt that the current board had not followed the Brown Act as their recommendations seemed to relate to the board’s decisions and actions and was asking if anything was redacted from the official Grand Jury’s report released to the public on May 23rd, 2024. If anything was, she requested the board to address it at some point during this special board meeting.

- E. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE – John Blythe, District Administrative Assistant

Assistant Blythe prepared a written report that he read to the board and public recapping the current events at the district. He has been helping Board Chairman Schustz navigate through tying up some of the loose ends. He reached out to several associations and cemetery/funeral consulting companies to assist with resources in getting at least some kind of an interim management arrangement at the district as potential options. Assistant Blythe reports that due to the district being severely out of compliance with county and state laws with audits and minutes being behind for many years, he has been working to bring this back into compliance since there had been a change in district management. He feels the minutes from May 2020 through the present should be brought current within the next couple of months and should satisfy the Public Records requirements, the Brown Act and the Kern County Grand Jury’s recent investigative finds and recommendations. For the audits that are behind dating back to Fiscal Year 16-17, Assistant Blythe has been in communication with Financial Accountant David Bruner and Auditor Kevin Brejnak and the tentative plan is to have FY 16-17 and FY 17-18 and possibly FY 18-19 ready for audit by July as they feel comfortable at this point, aside from additional reconciliations on Mr. Bruner’s part. From there, everything should move forward fairly quickly and the other delinquent fiscal year audits should be completed through the remainder of the

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summer. Assistant Blythe has kept Joseph Yani of the Kern County Auditor/Controller’s office updated and has been in communication with county legal counsel as well. Assistant Blythe feels the board needs to recruit and appoint a District Manager and office staff as soon as possible and apologized to the public if the recent events have disrupted any services or arrangements for the loved ones in the valley that have recently passed away or those already buried here. The district is trying to ratify this situation as soon as possible.

F. PRESENTATION – Danny Brown, District Manager – Tehachapi and South Kern Cemetery Districts

Mr. Brown formally introduced himself to the Board. He understands the circumstances due a recent change in district management and the crisis that the district is facing right now. He shares he would be a valuable resource to the district and the board of trustees and utilize his years of experience. He will do whatever he can to assist the district in getting through these series of events that have happened recently.

G. GRAND JURY REPORT – Released May 23rd, 2024

Chairperson Schustz indicated that the Grand Jury Report of its investigation into the Kern River Valley Public Cemetery District was made public on May 23rd and was on the agenda for any additional public input or comment. From the public, Jill Sloan-Thurman reiterated her earlier comments about if anything was redacted. Chairperson Schustz indicated that nothing was redacted and the investigation apparently went on for several months and they had interviewed a handful of people associated with the District. Ms. Sloan-Thurman felt that the Board had over-reacted to the Grand Jury’s recommendations when it came to making a decision of letting former management go. Chairperson Schustz mentioned that there were other issues in Closed Session that they could not discuss in public session regarding personnel matters and also subsequent to the Grand Jury’s report. Mr. Brown stated that the Grand Jury is made up of volunteer citizens and do not fully understand the CA government codes and they only make recommendations, however he felt that some of their recommendations were valid.

H. RESOLUTION 21-01: CHANGE FROM EVERY OTHER MONTH BOARD MEETINGS TO ONCE A MONTH BOARD MEETINGS

Mr. Blythe reports that this was requested by the board at a previous board meeting held on May 14th, 2024 to return to once a month board meetings to be held the second Tuesday of every month at 1:00 PM and needed to be passed by a resolution.

Trustee Ryan motioned to adopt Resolution 21-01; seconded by Trustee Agapiou and passed (Trustee Olivares absent).

I. CLOSED SESSION: The Board adjourned into closed session at 12:31PM to discuss the following items:

1. Public Employee Appointment – District Manager (Gov. Code 54957)

J. CLOSED SESSION REPORT: The board came out of Closed Session at 1:32 PM. In action taken by the Board, a motion was made by Trustee Ryan to allocate a capped amount of 32 hours a week to the District’s Administrative Assistant John Blythe should his schedule permit (Assistant Blythe had declined the District Manager position on an interim basis due to his work schedule

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outside the district) and to appoint Danny Brown as an Interim Manager Consultant for the District until an Interim or Permanent District Manager is appointed. The motion was seconded by Trustee Agapiou and passed (Trustee Olivares absent). No other action was taken and no other items were discussed.

K. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:33PM

Respectfully submitted by
John Blythe

John Blythe
Administrative Assistant

Addendums:

1. Resolution 24-01 (Page 4)

**Trustee Apagiou participated via phone from:
11208 Sheldon Street
Sun Valley, CA 91352*

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RESOLUTION NO. 24-01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
 KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT
 DECLARING A CHANGE FROM EVERY OTHER MONTH
 BOARD MEETINGS TO ONCE A MONTH BOARD MEETINGS**

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT as follows:

WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT HAS BEEN MEETING EVERY OTHER MONTH ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MEETING MONTH AT 1:00 PM AT THE DISTRICT’S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING; AND

WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FEELS IT IS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE TO RETURN TO A ONCE A MONTH BOARD MEETING; AND

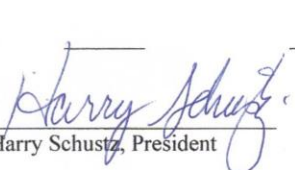
WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HEREBY DECLARES THAT THE MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS OF THE KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT WILL BE HELD ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 1:00 PM AT THE DISTRICT’S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby **ORDERED** and **DETERMINED** that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED on a motion made by Trustee Ryan; and seconded by Trustee Agapiou on this 5th Day of June, 2024 by the following vote of the Board of Trustees:

✓ Trustee Agapiou	✓ YES	— NO	— ABSTAIN	— ABSENT
Trustee Olivares	— YES	— NO	— ABSTAIN	✗ ABSENT
✓ Trustee Ryan	✓ YES	— NO	— ABSTAIN	— ABSENT
✓ Trustee Schustz (one seat is vacant)	✓ YES	— NO	— ABSTAIN	— ABSENT

Total Votes: 3 _____ _____ 1


 Harry Schustz, President

ATTEST:

 John Blythe,
 Clerk Specialist/Administrative Assistant