

Kern River Valley Public Cemetery District
Minutes of the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting – Tuesday, August 13th, 2024 @ 1:00 PM

KERN RIVER VALLEY PUBLIC CEMETERY DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Tuesday August 13th, 2024 @ 1:00 PM
District Office: 8441 Burlando Road Wofford Heights, CA 93285 County of Kern

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

- A. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Schustz at 1:00 PM
- B. ROLL CALL ROLL CALL – QUORUM PRESENT (5 Trustees Present)
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION: Chairperson Schustz gave the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.
- D. PUBLIC COMMENT, REQUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS: There were four members of the public, two of which were from the news media at this meeting. The following gave public comments:

Catherine Stachowiak: Reporter from the Kern Valley Sun

Jennifer Wagner: Inquired about the Grand Jury report and requests follow up on their recommendations. Chairperson Schustz responded he will report under his individual board member comment section.

Jill Sloan Thurman: She is a former trustee, board chairperson/president. She now lives in Missouri but has followed the recent events at the cemetery district. She expresses concern regarding the CalPERS liability and the district worked very hard trying to get out of the CalPERS when she was on the board.

Laura Kyt: Former District Secretary (see Addendum, Letter submitted to Board on Page 5)

- E. CONSENT AGENDA:
Backlog of Past Board Meeting Minutes:
 - 1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – February 7th, 2022
 - 2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – March 8th, 2022
 - 3. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – May 10th, 2022
 - 4. Special Board Meeting Minutes – June 14th, 2022
 - 5. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2022
 - 6. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – September 20th, 2022
 - 7. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – December 19th, 2022
 - 8. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – January 10th, 2023
 - 9. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – May 25th, 2023
 - 10. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – June 5th, 2023
 - 11. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – November 14th, 2023

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Recent Board Meeting Minutes:

1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – July 9th, 2024

Motion to approve consent agenda items by Trustee Olivares; second by Trustee Agapiou and passed.

- F. ANNUAL INVESTMENTS PRESENTATIONS: Sandra Wheeler, Financial Advisor
Financial Advisor Wheeler presented her annual presentation to the board regarding the interest on the Pre-Need and Endowment Funds; currently the funds are \$604,305.
- G. MANAGER’S REPORT: Orion Sanders, District Manager
Manager Sanders reports that consultants Tim Unruh and Joel Bauer spent a day at the office recently, going over training and procedures. Manager Sanders reports that a new office clerk has been hired, Stacy Stivers to help with accounting and data and internment entries. He reports that groundskeeper Reno Shadden has been busy trying to replace sprinkler heads that have not been working in years and dealing with cleaning out the water well system. Manager Sanders has also been developing a new logo of the district to present to the board. Manager Sanders also reports that he has had on-going discussions with CemSites which the board is considering moving forward on. Last month, the District terminated its relationship with Intera and it will no longer be responsible for the interment records operation of this cemetery. Manager Sanders also had a meeting with FEMA regarding the Historical Cemetery. Currently, the District does not need to do anything further until FEMA reaches back out. Manager Sanders will also will follow up with the engineering firm, WZI Inc. out of Bakersfield regarding the sea wall. Managers Sanders also met with Supervisor Peters and field representative Cody Criswell and they visited the District recently. Laura Kyt, former District Secretary and member of the public inquired about the District’s furniture. Manager Sanders reports that the furniture and the unutilized office desks have been put in storage.
- H. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE: John Blythe, District Administrative Assistant
Assistant Blythe reports fiscal year 2016-17 is currently under audit with auditor Kevin Brejnak. Financial Accountant David Bruner and Assistant Blythe worked two days together last week prepping additional audit files requested by Auditor Brejnak. Accountant Bruner is readying FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19 for audit. There were some unfortunate delays due to an issue of being unable to locate certain back up files and the fires that caused some road closures, however he has taken files back to his office in Merced to further along the audit preparation and reconciling process. Assistant Blythe reports that new office clerk Stacy Stivers and district secretary Tammy Ashlock completed the backlog of minutes for 2022 and 2023 as well. He also reminded the trustees to ensure completion of AB1234 and Sexual Harassment Training. Currently Trustee Ryan is the only one that needs to complete.
- I. OLD BUSINESS:
1. Consider forming new Board Officers (Secretary and Treasurer): The board had further discussion about forming the new board officers and concurred tabling the topic for now until further research can be completed with CAPC and CSDA.
 2. Fiscal Year Budget 2024-2025: Manager Sanders has not had enough time to revise the tentative baseline budget that the board adopted back in May. The board recommended tabling until further modifications can be completed by Manager Sanders.

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3. Cemetery Software - CemSites: Manager Sanders reports that the tentative cost for this upgraded software is around \$20,000 however it can be piecemealed. Manager Sanders feels until the budget can be further modified, to hold off on this topic. Board recommended tabling for now, until the budget is more finalized and it can be brought back to the board for recommendation for approval.

J. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Welcome New Trustee Teresa Barnum: Chairperson Schustz welcomed new trustee Teresa “Kat” Barnum who was recently appointed to the board by the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Trustee Barnum said she is happy to be part of the new team and has already completed her AB 1234 Ethics Training and Sexual Harassment Training. She is looking to becoming part of the team and serving the constituents of the District.
2. District Website: Chairperson Schustz welcomed William Box who has maintained the KRV Historical Society’s Website and had offered input on a new website, data storage and emails. Mr. Box gave an overview of Google Workspace, Professional Communication, and the use of Gmail specifically. Mr. Box also reviewed Streamline which is the District’s current website. Mr. Box thanked the Trustees and District Management for the time and consideration if the District decides to eventually start its own website. Manager Sanders has been looking into this and would like to develop a more interactive website to present to the board and to the public.
3. Review District Policy #2145 Records Retention: Assistant Blythe submitted this policy to the Board for review. If and when the District eventually decides to go through CemSites and some of the documents are cloud based or digitized, the Board needs to ensure that the records maintained under the District’s adopted policy. Assistant Blythe indicates that certain records are to be kept in perpetuity, however some records after seven years that are digitized can be destroyed, only with the board approving this and reviewed/signed off by legal counsel.
4. Scattering of Ashes – Rose Garden: Assistant Blythe indicates that District Secretary Tammy Ashlock requested this on the agenda as per a recommendation by consultant Danny Brown. Manager Sanders requests the Board considering tabling this item.
5. District Master Fee Register – Update Prices: District Secretary Tammy Ashlock furnished copies of the District’s Master Fee Register to the Board. The Board unanimously agreed to table these items until the next board meeting after more thorough review.
6. District Surplus – Sell District Utility Vehicle: Manger Sanders requests tabling this item as he would like to consider a District Surplus Sale with not only the utility vehicle but some of the other vehicles no longer being utilized Laura Kyt recommended to Manager Sanders reaching out to the East Kern Air Pollution Control District regarding grants for these items. Board concurred tabling this item until a future meeting.
7. Annual Adoption of Resolution #108: District Investment Policy: There was lengthy discussion regarding the district’s investments with Stifle & Nicholas Investments Co. Laura Kyt commented that when she was employed at the district she had concerns regarding the stock market risks and it may be advantageous for the Board to consider moving these funds to the County Funds which would be more safer. Chairperson

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Schustz inquired about the process of doing that. Assistant Blythe indicated that the Board would need to vote on that and then pass a resolution moving the endowment and pre-need investments to the County, which the board should consider having an in depth discussion about. Manager Sanders shares concerns that due to the election year, it might not be a bad idea to move the money into a less risky fund. Board concurred tabling adopting its Annual Investment Resolution #108 this item until a future meeting.

8. FYE 2016-2017 Financial Statements (Currently in Review): Assistant Blythe reports this is a receive and file reconciliation financial report from Fiscal Year End 2016-2017 from Accountant David Bruner and has been submitted to Auditor Brejnak as well as with the County and State.

Trustee Agapiou moved to receive and file reconciliation financial report for FYE 2016-17; second by Trustee Olivares and passed.

K. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS OR REPORTS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA:

Trustee Agapiou: Feels the board covered a lot of ground this afternoon. Would like to see the website revamped and eventually see the under utilized vehicles sold in a district surplus sale.

Trustee Barnum: Looking forward to serving on the board.

Trustee Olivares: Echoes Trustee Agapiou's comments and looks forward to hearing what the Air Pollution Control District may offer regarding vehicles. He is very happy that groundskeeper Reno Shadden is working on getting the grounds beautified and the trees trimmed.

Trustee Ryan: Agrees with Trustee Agapiou and Trustee Olivares regarding covering a lot of topics today, although many were tabled. But is looking forward to getting more of these items off the agenda and continuing to move forward.

Chairperson Schustz: Reviewed the recommendation list from the Kern County Grand Jury's Report. He went line item on the ones that are accomplished and/or in process. Roughly about 90% of the Grand Jury's recommendations have been completed at this time.

- L. NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING: Tuesday September 10th, 2024 at 1:00 PM

- M. MOTION TO ADJOURN: Trustee Agapiou moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:35PM and was seconded by Trustee Barnum and passed.

Respectfully submitted by
Tamela Ashlock

Tamela Ashlock
District Secretary

**Trustee Teresa Barnum participated remotely via phone @
5540 Lake Isabella Blvd. Suite E3 Lake Isabella, CA 93240*

Addendum:

1. Letter Submitted to Board of Trustees from Laura Kyt

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Laura Kyt
P.O. Box 565
Wofford Heights, CA 93285
760-376-2031

July 9, 2024

Board of Trustees
Kern River Valley Cemetery District
P.O. Box 215
Wofford Heights, CA 93285

Dear Board of Trustees,

I do want to provide a comment today as a member of the public as well as the former District Secretary. I am not here to cause anyone to feel uneasy. I am here to express opinions pertaining to today's agenda regarding matters that I am familiar with. It is my hope that I will be able to address the board during the discussion of those action items to share insight regarding those matters. By providing my perspective on the action items that are listed on today's agenda it may be somewhat helpful during the decision-making process.

I want to add that changing this room to a conference room seems kind of like a waste of space. Allowing the manager to have this space as an office of his own, a space where staff could meet with clients, would have most likely been used more frequently than board meetings once a month. To me it would have been wise to have the board meetings offsite. The district could have rented space from the Kernville Chamber of Commerce. That space would have served the community well and the chamber would have been able to charge a fee for each meeting. I am wondering what has happened to the furniture. The district spent thousands of dollars on that furniture. If it was given away then that would be considered a gift of public funds. If it was sold it should have been done by having a "District Surplus Sale" because special district must follow proper ways of disposing of district property.

This document is provided to see to it that my comments at today's meeting, this 13th of August 2024, are included in the minutes of the district.

I request and expect that this letter become part of the district minutes as my public comment for today's meeting.

Kindest regards,


Laura Kyt