

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 14, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Location: Woodlake Public Cemetery District Office, 165 N. Cypress Street in Woodlake

Board Members Present: George Clausen; Belen Gomez; Bill Crawford

Others Present: Trilby Barton, District Manager; Members of the Public – Claudia Cabrera and two family members (names not given)

Call to Order: Board Chair, George Clausen called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda: It was moved to approve the agenda by Mr. Crawford and seconded by Ms. Gomez. Agenda was approved.

Public Comment: Claudia Cabrera provided public comment expressing concerns about the cemetery. She commented that board meetings were difficult to attend due to cancellations and date changes over the past 14 months. The District Manager noted that only two meetings have been cancelled and two meetings have been rescheduled, and proper notification had been posted. Ms. Cabrera continued and thanked the board for approving the replanting of a rosebush at her family members' grave. She brought pictures of the grave. She also summarized minutes from past board meetings, and noted her disapproval of the Flower & Memorial Policy and the use of the word "trash" in previous board minutes where the District Manager gave a report on picking up 45 bags of "trash" in the cemetery. She also passed around photos of the manager enforcing the Flower & Memorial Policy. She expressed dislike for the current staff at the cemetery. She also passed around photos of graves and Facebook comments. She noted that items had been removed from her family's gravesites and that vases had been impacted with sand. Ms. Barton commented that the board meeting is under adherence of the Brown Act, which allows the public 3 minutes to provide comments, and we were reaching the half hour mark. Ms. Cabrera requested that be clearly added to future agendas, and Ms. Barton noted that will be done. Ms. Barton also explained that she does remove items if a grave is out of compliance or if flowers are old, faded and losing petals or if items are broken, but there are only two headstones that she has ever purposefully removed all of the items from: one repeatedly placed marbles and beads on the grave, which is very dangerous for the public and staff when mowing and weed eating, and the other a family covered the entire grave in gravel, which took staff time away from other tasks to remove and clean up the area. Ms. Cabrera commented that her grandmother's headstone was cracked, and it was just installed last summer. Ms. Barton said she would look into it and repair it.

Public comment ended.

Minutes: Mr. Crawford moved to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2023 Board Meeting, and Ms. Gomez seconded. The minutes were approved.

Administration:

- **Financial Report:** Ms. Barton reported on the revenue and expenses for August 2023. She reported \$9,103.06 was deposited into the treasury on August 9, 2023 for July's revenue. A total of four burials were held in July, two full body and two cremations. No pre-need plots were sold. Total expenses in July totaled \$29,335.53. Major expenses included pump test on the two wells, replacement of a bladder tank, worker's compensation insurance, electrical improvements to the building, annual insurance policy, and the AC/Heater unit installation in the office. Expenses to-date for August were \$2,360.86 (not including payroll), which included the final bill to Woodlake Hardware and irrigation repair parts.
- **Office Improvements Update:** Ms. Barton reported that she will finish painting the building, exterior and interior, in October. She explained that the windows need to be replaced, and would be the last significant improvement needed for the building upgrades with the exception of the flooring. The quote received for window installation is \$5,300 for dual pane windows in the front and the two in the back. The board approved the installation of the new windows.

Ms. Barton also reported that the office refrigerator is broken, and she will purchase another one in October, along with paint for the interior of the office.

- **Other Administration-Related Updates:** No other administration-related updates.

Grounds Report:

- **Grounds Improvement Report:** Ms. Barton reported that squirrel abatement has been completed on the grounds, and the cost was considerably under budget. Next step will be general maintenance on squirrel abatement to make sure they don't move back in from the olive orchards, and filling in of the squirrel holes and fixing the headstones where they burrowed under. Ms. Barton also reported that headstones on the repair list are now being repaired/repoured as time permits between the installation of new headstones, burials and lawn maintenance.

Ms. Barton reported that the plan is to do another round of Weed & Feed in the Fall in the areas where there are still weeds, and also to overseed those areas. It's too hot to seed right now. But the lawn is in much better shape and the majority of the weeds are gone, and the grass is healthy.

Ms. Gomez asked about the trees along the south fence line, and Ms. Barton explained those will be removed with the demolition of the fence.

Update on Resolution to Increase Number of Board Members from Three to Five, and Seat Fulfillment

- Ms. Barton reported that the Approval of the Resolution to Increase the Number of Board Members from Three to Five is on the Tulare County Board of Supervisors' agenda for consideration of approval on August 23, 2023. William Valero has already submitted his application to fill one of the board seats to Supervisor Eddie Valero. Another community member has expressed interest in filling the second seat, but is checking to see if there will be conflict of interest.

Ms. Barton also noted that there will be two additional seats opening, as Mr. Clausen's term ends in January 2024 and he has confirmed he will not renew another term. Mr. Crawford has also expressed that he will be resigning in the near future, but has not selected a date yet.

Consideration of Creating Ad Hoc Committee for Fundraising Efforts

- Ms. Barton explained that between the irrigation system improvements in the Old Section and the wall replacement for the entrance and south walls, the cemetery needs to raise about \$120,000 in funds to pay for the projects. There has been some interest from community members to help raise these funds, and she'd like to form an Ad Hoc Committee for Fundraising Efforts. She has corresponded with County Counsel, and forming the Ad Hoc Committee is permitted. She also confirmed that donations are tax-deductible. The Board approved the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee.

Closed Session: None.

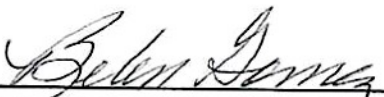
Board Comments & Additional Comments:

- None

Next Meeting – Ms. Barton noted that she will be out of town for one of her other jobs September 9 – 18, and requested to change the September meeting date to Tuesday, September 5 at 1:30 p.m. She will be accessible to the public while she is out of town, just as always, with the phones forwarded to her cell phone. The board meeting change for September worked for the board members' schedules as well.

Mr. Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Clausen seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Signed:


Belen Gomez, Board Secretary