

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

Board of Trustees

April 1, 2025

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees was called to order by Vice Chair Noel Hatch at 10:03 a.m., in the Board Room of the Orange County Cemetery District, 25751 Trabuco Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Noel Hatch.

Roll Call by Board Secretary, Mary Funk.

PRESENT:	Maribel Marroquin-Waldram, Chair	First District (Arrived 10:07 a.m.)
	Noel Hatch, Vice Chair	Fifth District
	Kelly Rivers	Second District
	Cynthia Ward	Fourth District
	Vacant	Third District

STAFF: Tim Deutsch, General Manager
Brenda Manriquez, Finance and Accounting Manager
Mary Funk, Board Secretary
Julio Amarillas, Cemetery Manager
Bud Bales, Cemetery Manager

ALSO

PRESENT: Steve Quintanilla, General Counsel (Attended remotely)
Colin Kirkpatrick, Deputy General Counsel (Attended remotely)
Larry Ryan, RJM Design Group (Attended remotely for Closed Session Only)

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Board Meeting, March 4, 2025
- B. Approval of the March 2025 Check Register (Claims) Nos. 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 and 151.
- C. Authorization of the May 2025 Check Registers (Claims) Nos. 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184 and 185.

MOTION: of Trustee Ward, seconded by Trustee Rivers and carried by a roll call vote of 3-0 (Chair Marroquin-Waldram absent for the vote), approved the Consent Calendar.

Chair Marroquin-Waldram arrived at 10:07 a.m.

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MANAGER REPORTS

A. Interments and Interment Space Sales Reports – February 2025

The following interment and interment space sales for February 2025 were reviewed.

			<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>
ANAHEIM	Interments	3 (3 Urn)	44 (31 Urn)	53 (41 Urn)
	Lot Sales	2	23	27
EL TORO	Interments	64 (27 Urn)	585 (214 Urn)	609 (204 Urn)
	Lot Sales	40	365	636
SANTA ANA	Interments	34 (10 Urn)	165 (78 Urn)	150 (66 Urn)
	Lot Sales	25	81	53
TOTAL	Interments	101 (40 Urn)	794 (323 Urn)	812 (311 Urn)
	Lot Sales	67	469	716

GM Deutsch reported that sales at El Toro Memorial Park are about as expected now that the first road closure at Santa Ana Cemetery is yielding sales, with both cemeteries selling 17 full casket spaces each for the month of February. GM Deutsch stated that he and Cemetery Manager Bud Bales are walking the grounds at El Toro identifying any unused areas that could be mapped as new interment spaces. Through this process they are expecting to add approximately \$600,000 worth of potential revenue which will add two to three months of extended sales at El Toro Memorial Park. Most of these spaces will be cremation spaces which will be sold more slowly over time than the casket spaces.

There were eleven niches sold in the Maureen Rivers Memorial Niche Garden and one space sold in the Los Alisos 30 niche area. None of these sales are for the new niches that were just completed at the end of February. Those niches will be added in next month’s report for March activity.

GM Deutsch also announced that Santa Ana Cemetery is just getting ready to open the 2nd and 3rd road closures. They are also close to filling four lots on the first road closure and when that occurs sod will be set down on those lots. Julio Amarillas reported that families knew when they purchased space that grass would not be planted until lots had been fully sold.

Vice Chair Hatch asked if the District had encouraged double-depth burial sooner, would we be in a better position now. GM Deutsch said that likely we would, but also no one could have predicted the COVID pandemic and how that influenced so many more people to purchase space for future use.

In regards to identifying unused areas of the park for conversion to interment spaces, Trustee Ward asked if there would be issues with existing owners, by us creating spaces where they did not exist before. She voiced concern particularly for families who purchased entire lots thinking

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they were created family areas and now we could potentially be inserting strangers among them. GM Deutsch said that has likely already occurred at Anaheim Cemetery where old buggy trails were converted to interment spaces. He continued adding, in the newer sections of the park that is not really a concern, but certainly the older more historical sections of the cemetery will be more challenging to make changes to.

Brenda Manriquez noted on the Income Statement, that typically El Toro has always been the cemetery creating the bulk of the revenue. But now, as expected, we are starting to see El Toro revenues decline and Santa Ana revenues increase. She also noted that we are also still waiting for the other half of property taxes to hit and that will make a big difference. GM Deutsch said that in looking at next year's budget, staff also needs to look at the fees that Santa Ana charges for interment space. Since they are considerably more affordable than El Toro, we will look to close that gap in pricing between the two cemeteries.

B. Financial Reports – February 2025

Brenda Manriquez stated that not much has changed with the Finance Report. Since the Finance and Investment Committee had no opposition to the budget amendment, she assumed that it will pass today. The finance report reflects the budget amendment. Brenda Manriquez did state that the District has had almost \$200,000 in legal fees as a result of the litigation opposing the new cemetery development in Gypsum Canyon. That will increase with additional billing in March. She reported that there were no new equipment purchases and the 4200 Account had routine expenses from RJM, GMU, etc. The second loan payment was also completed in March.

Brenda Manriquez stated that the Balance Sheet had no changes. There is currently about \$2.5 million in unassigned. We will see how the property tax comes in and then determine if any transfers can be made at year end from the unassigned fund balance.

C. Investment Portfolio Changes - March 2025

GM Deutsch commented that there were only a few changes in investments during March with only one bond being called early. There will be a lot of investments maturing over the next six months. Currently rates are hovering right around 4% to 4.5%.

D. Capital Projects Update

GM Deutsch stated that met with Anaheim Fire to discuss fire suppression options for the new cemetery development. He also noted that CSDA hosted a virtual event with staffers of Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris whose district boundary covers Lake Forest and Irvine. The Assemblymember is a co-signer on AB 571 with Assemblymember Quirk-Silva's office, so GM Deutsch thanked her for her support. GM Deutsch stated that he and Larry Ryan of RJM will be traveling to Sacramento on April 2nd to meet with Assemblymember Quirk-Silva and will also be meeting in with CalVet. They will provide a full update on the legal proceedings and proposed changes to the development and also find out if there is anything more the District can do to support AB 571.

GM Deutsch did report that there had been another malfunction with the flag. As they were lowering it to put a new flag up, the line malfunctioned and the flag came crashing down. No one was injured and repairs were made within a few days. He stated that staff will have to be more diligent in lowering the flag any time there is inclement weather. GM Deutsch said he is also

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having discussions with the Sons of the American Revolution and the Daughters of the American Revolution who have shown an interest in fundraising to buy replacement flags. Trustee Ward suggested that we post a picture of the flag on our website and credit the organization who sponsored the flag that is currently flying. We could also have information for anyone who wants to make a donation toward the purchase of a flag. GM Deutsch also suggested that when a donated flag is raised for the first time they could invite the sponsoring party to participate in the flag raising. GM Deutsch said these flags cost anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,500. GM Deutsch said he had spoken with legal counsel and was informed that the District is able to accept donations without having to form a non-profit. GM Deutsch said that they are also considering decreasing the size of the flag because they discovered that at times when the flag is required to be lowered to half mast, they cannot do so without the bottom of the flag touching the ground.

For the existing cemeteries, GM Deutsch is meeting with Anaheim Public Utilities to discuss how to proceed with the well project at Anaheim Cemetery and safely navigating around the electrical lines that go near the Anaheim pump house. GM Deutsch also stated that a curbing contractor has been hired for the Santa Ana road closures. The contract amount was \$31,000 which was within the General Manager's discretion to approve without the Board having to act. That work is starting today.

GENERAL COUNSEL REPORT - None

NEW BUSINESS

A. ISDOC Executive Committee Secretary Vacancy

GM Deutsch explained that the Independent Special Districts of Orange County is looking to fill a vacancy for the position of Secretary. If the Trustees had anyone they wanted to nominate they would need to approve a resolution. No one submitted any nominations, so no action was taken.

B. Third Amendment to Communications Site Lease with T-Mobile West Tower LLC at El Toro Memorial Park

GM Deutsch welcomed Colin Kirkpatrick to the call and explained that he had been working for several months on an amendment for the continued lease of our two cell tower sites at El Toro Memorial Park. This had been a 20-year lease that T-Mobile had been wanting to renew for some time. However, several years ago staff discovered that when the telecommunication lines had originally been run underground, they strayed off the intended path and into our interment lawn leaving about 40 to 50 spaces unusable. It took many years of insisting that this be corrected, and in 2024 the lines were finally correctly rerouted. Colin Kirkpatrick explained that under the terms of this new lease, it will be a five year extension with an option to renew for up to five successive five year periods. The monthly rent will increase from \$3,721 to \$4,407, with an automatic 3% annual increase built in throughout the term of the lease. In addition, the District will receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$20,000 in consideration for the extension.

Vice Chair Hatch asked if there is any further modifications needed to the grounds. GM Deutsch said that when they moved the lines out of the interment lawn, they did leave empty conduit. As we open graves for interments that empty conduit can just be removed by our staff. GM Deutsch also explained that whenever repairs or updates are needed to the cell towers they are required to contact us first to schedule the repairs. When bringing in cranes or heavy equipment they always

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put down plywood to protect the lawns and they have always been very sensitive about working around families when interments are underway. GM Deutsch said that he will be adding a provision requiring them to maintain the Cypress look as the District expects, including maintenance if cypress branches fall off during heavy winds.

MOTION: of Vice Chair Hatch, seconded by Trustee Rivers and carried by a roll call vote of 4-0, approved the Third Amendment to the Communications Site Lease with T-Mobile West Tower LLC at El Toro Memorial Park.

GM Deutsch recommended that the Board move to Committee Reports

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Finance & Investment and Personnel Committee Meeting, March 11, 2025

A. Mid-Year Budget Review

GM Deutsch said there was nothing new to report since the Committee Meeting review on March 11th.

B. 2024-25 Budget Amendment Review and Approval

Brenda Manriquez explained that because of the legal fees that have occurred as a result of the lawsuit against Gypsum Canyon, additional maintenance required from vendors for irrigation and landscaping support, and office renovations at Anaheim Cemetery, the District will need to make an amendment to the budget.

MOTION: of Trustee Ward, seconded by Vice Chair Hatch and carried by a roll call vote of 4-0, approved the total budget amendment of \$520,000 for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 with funds to be transferred from the following sources:

- \$400,000 transfer from the Cemetery Improvement Reserve Fund (Committed Fund Balance) since the legal fees are related to the progress of the fourth cemetery.
- \$120,000 transfer from Unassigned Fund Balance.

C. 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Discussion

There was no further discussion on the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation.

D. Orange County Investment Pool Status Update

GM Deutsch reminded the Trustees that the County of Orange Board of Supervisors stripped the Treasurer of all investment duties and is now handling that themselves. This does not really impact the District in any way, but if he does see any issues arising out of this decision, GM Deutsch said he would keep the Board informed.

E. Investment Policy Review

GM Deutsch stated that every year the District is required to review the Investment Policy. The only significant changes were to pull wording referring to the County of Orange Treasurer and replacing it with the County of Orange Board of Supervisors.

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MOTION: of Trustee Ward, seconded by Vice Chair Hatch and carried by a roll call vote of 4-0, approved the 2025 Investment Policy.

F. Investment Strategy 2025-26

GM Deutsch stated that there were no drastic changes to the Investment Strategy.

G. District Staffing Plan

GM Deutsch stated that more discussions on this will be held as we look at the upcoming budget. The focus on staffing will be how to best prepare for the opening of Gypsum Canyon while also considering staffing levels at the existing three cemeteries, when the bulk of sales and interments will be shifting to the new cemetery.

BOARD COMMENTS

A. CAPC Annual Conference, March 13-15, 2025, Seaside, CA

Trustee Rivers said that she liked the conference this year and thought that Carol Griese did a good job. She will be staying on the CAPC Board as Secretary. They will be having a planning meeting in San Luis Obispo that she will be attending. She also noted that CAPC decided not to merge with the Public Cemetery Alliance. Trustee Rivers also noted that the speakers were good and she is glad that at the next annual conference, which will be held in Garden Grove, they will only be hosting one evening dinner.

Chair Marroquin-Waldram also attended the conference and was very happy to see Karen O’Neil return to present the Harassment Prevention training. She said that Carol Griese announced that she will be retiring and that they will be looking for another District to take over the administration of the association. Trustee Rivers stated that she thinks the Coachella Cemetery District may want to take it on. Chair Marroquin-Waldram also said she appreciated how many people spoke so well of Tim Deutsch.

B. OCCOG Annual Conference, March 27, 2025, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Trustee Rivers, Brenda Manriquez and Tim Deutsch all attended this Annual Conference. It was a timely topic on “collaboration in the community.” Trustee Rivers asked if it would be beneficial to become members. GM Deutsch said that for this conference, because of our association with the County of Orange, we were able to get the member ticket pricing. Moving forward it may be beneficial to be a part of this organization.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS - None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The ISDOC Quarterly Meeting Will be held on April 30th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Fountain Valley. The featured guest speaker will be Baryic Hunter, OCFA Assistant Chief Field Operations North. Mr. Hunter will be speaking on OCFA: A Legacy of Service and Preparednes for Fire Season. Vice Chair Hatch and Trustee Rivers stated that they would both like to attend.

CSDA Legislative Days are being held in May. At this time, no one from the District will be attending.

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The Board adjourned to Closed Session at 11:12 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

- A. Conference with Labor Negotiators pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6(a):**
 District designated representative: General Counsel Steven B. Quintanilla.
 Employee Organization: Groundskeeping Unit (Service Employees International Union Local 721 CTW-CLC).

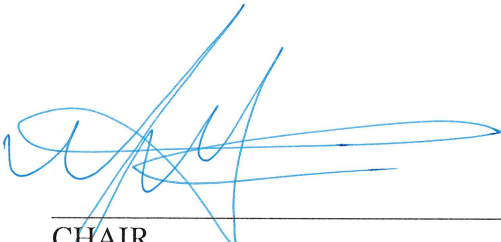
- B. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation**
 Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)
 Name of case: Build the Great Park Veterans Cemetery, Dr. Harvey H. Liss and Cyrus Pourhassanian vs. City of Anaheim, Anaheim City Council
 Case No. 30-2024-0 142 0506-CU-WM-CX C

- C. Conference with Legal Counsel – Significant Exposure to Litigation**
 Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)
 One Potential Case

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 12:52 p.m. Counsel Quintanilla stated that no reportable action took place.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 6, 2025**, at 10:00 a.m., at the Orange County Cemetery District, 25751 Trabuco Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.



CHAIR



BOARD SECRETARY



Chair



Secretary