

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT
Board of Trustees
March 3, 2026

MINUTES

The monthly meeting of the Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees was called to order by Chair Noel Hatch at 10:05 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 Chair Hatch.
Roll Call by Board Secretary, Mary Funk.

PRESENT: Noel Hatch, Chair Fifth District
Raymond Schnell, Vice Chair Third District
Kelly Rivers Second District

ABSENT: Maribel Marroquin-Waldram First District

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

ALSO ATTENDING: Dave Kendig, General Counsel, Woodruff & Smart
Mark Monachino, Woodruff & Smart (Attended Remotely)
Barbara Raileanu, Woodruff & Smart (Attended Remotely)
Michael Wimberley, Woodruff & Smart (Attended Remotely)
Jim Fisler, OCLAFCO Commissioner
Tim Lineberger, Venture Strategic
Felisha and Jose Luna

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL COUNSEL

GM Deutsch was happy to introduce the District's new General Counsel, David Kendig of Woodruff & Smart in Costa Mesa. Mr. Kendig stated that it was a delight to be selected. Counsel Kendig was already familiar with both Vice Chair Schnell and Chair Hatch since Woodruff & Smart also represents the City of Tustin and the Orange County Fire Authority. He introduced his colleagues, Mark Monachino, Barbara Raileanu, and Micahel Wimberley who were attending the meeting remotely. He stated that Mark will be instrumental with the upcoming needs regarding the Gypsum Canyon Development. Barbara has also worked with the District previously with labor and employment law issues and stated that she is excited to support the District in all its endeavors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

OCLAFCO Commissioner, Jim Fisler attended the meeting just to touch bases with the District, to stay connected and to offer support. He stated that five years ago he helped to develop The


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Special Districts Dialogue publication that keeps Special District staff and Trustees informed of activities occurring within OCLAFCO. He noted that both Commissioner Douglas Davert and Kathryn Freshley hold seats that are up for election and both are running again. Chair Hatch asked if there are any pressing concerns right now. Mr. Fisler stated that OCLAFCO is in a really good place right now and want to make sure that cities, counties, and special districts are able to deliver services that are as affordable and efficient as possible. He stated they will be presenting the budget at the next meeting. They are anticipating revenues to decrease by about 9% but also expect expenses to decline by about 18%.

Tim Lineberger with Venture Strategic, a consulting firm working with OCLAFCO, also attended the meeting with Mr. Fisler, but did not offer any comments.

Felisha and Jose Luna also attended the meeting and wanted to address the Board about a concern with the District's security service. They stated that they had recently interred their daughter at Santa Ana Cemetery. During the service the District's armed security guard's appearance and mannerisms made many who had come to attend the service feel uncomfortable. Several attendees were concerned that the guard may have been an ICE agent. The guard was dressed in tactical gear and had his face covered with a gator and his cap on backwards, When the Lunas approached their daughter's grave to place flowers, the security guard very gruffly told them that they had to get back. During a very difficult time when they were trying to grieve, the attitude and appearance of this security guard made an already tragic situation even worse. There is obviously a lot of fear and tension in our communities now, and the District's security should be sensitive to that. They did note that the gentlemen in blue uniforms were very kind and helpful.

GM Deutsch explained that the gentlemen in blue uniforms are our District Groundskeepers. GM Deutsch stated that due to past gang related issues in the park we had to make the decision to hire armed guards to ensure the safety of both visitors and staff. However, all security guards need to remember that they are there for the protection of visitors and should be sensitive to the nature of a cemetery and that people are grieving and are deserving of compassion and respect. GM Deutsch also agreed that guards should not be wearing their caps backward and if they are sick, they should not use gators as a face shield but rather appropriate medical masks.

Chair Hatch stated that it takes a lot of courage to come to a Board Meeting like this and share your experiences with the Trustees. He expressed to the Lunas that when they leave this meeting he hopes they leave proud of sharing their thoughts and that he hopes they understand your worth to the Board. The reason you are here is very sacred, private and pure. The Board understands that you are relying on them to provide an environment that will magnify the peaceful place you should expect at a cemetery. It is our responsibility as a Board and our mission to ensure that these grounds are sacred, and he thanked the Lunas for their presence today.

Mr. Luna stated that there is nothing wrong with the officer and he respects the job the security guard has to do. They just need to understand that the cemetery is not like any other security job. It is a very special place. Mr. Luna stated that he knows he has to keep us safe, but he should not be looking on his phone and then scanning the faces of the attendees. They need to be sensitive to people's fears that ICE creates. Mr. Luna also commented on how kind and supportive


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Cemetery Manager Julio Amarillas had been through this whole process. The Board thanked the Lunas for coming and they left at this time along with Jim Fisler and Tim Lineberger.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Board Meeting, February 3, 2026
- B. Approval of the February 2026 Check Register (Claims) Nos. 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135 and 136.
- C. Authorization of the April 2026 Check Register (Claims) Nos. 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169 and 170.

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

MANAGER REPORTS

A. Interments and Interment Space Sales Reports – January 2026

The following interment and interment space sales for January 2026 were reviewed.

		<u>2025-2026</u>		<u>2024-2025</u>
ANAHEIM	Interments	11 (6 Urn)	45 (28 Urn)	41 (28 Urn)
	Lot Sales	2	18	21
EL TORO	Interments	68 (20 Urn)	471 (191 Urn)	521 (187 Urn)
	Lot Sales	30	291	325
SANTA ANA	Interments	30 (10 Urn)	188 (54 Urn)	131 (68 Urn)
	Lot Sales	18	128	56
TOTAL	Interments	109 (36 Urn)	704 (273 Urn)	693 (283 Urn)
	Lot Sales	50	437	402

GM Deutsch stated that since all three existing District cemeteries are landlocked with no more room for expansion within, casket space will now continue to diminish. There is currently enough niche space for the next 12 to 18 months and a consultant is working on a master plan for future niche projects District-wide. GM Deutsch also explained that when a cemetery plot is sold the revenue on the space sale is recognized immediately. Services that are purchased for future use go in the pre-need fund. Those revenues are recognized later when those services are actually used.

Anaheim Cemetery, which is completely sold out for full body burial space, had two interment sales in January that were both for At-Need niche spaces. Staff at Anaheim Cemetery conducted 11 interments of which 5 were casket interments, 2 were in-ground cremation burials, and 4 urns


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were placed in niches. Year-to-date staff have sold 18 interment spaces compared to 21 sales from the previous fiscal year. For interment services year-to-date, Anaheim is also about even with 45 interment services this year compared to 41 in the previous year.

The District's overall cremation rate stands at almost 39% cremation and 61% full casket. This is almost the opposite of the industry average where the cremation rate is in the mid 60s. Affordability of casket interments is the main reason why our cremation rate is so low compared to the industry average.

El Toro Memorial Park sold 30 interment spaces in January including 19 casket spaces, 6 niche spaces and 5 in-ground cremation spaces. El Toro has approximately 317 remaining available casket spaces. That number does tend to fluctuate because we continue to scour the grounds for any areas that can become usable casket interment space. Our Irrigation staff are in the process of moving water lines that have the potential to add 60 to 80 new casket spaces. There may be other telecommunications or electrical lines that may also yield a few more spaces.

For interment services, staff at El Toro Memorial Park conducted 68 interments in January. Year-to-date, El Toro staff have conducted 471 interments this fiscal year compared to 521 in the previous year. As availability of casket spaces diminishes, we will see this declining trend continue.

Santa Ana Cemetery sold 18 interment spaces in January including 12 casket spaces, 3 niches and 3 in-ground cremation spaces. This is only possible because Santa Ana Cemetery closed the last three remaining roads and converted those areas into approximately 500 new casket spaces.

Current projections indicate that El Toro Memorial Park will be completely sold out for full casket space by August 2027. Santa Ana Cemetery will be sold out by January 2029.

Overall, the District is still ahead on interment space sales with 437 spaces sold so far this fiscal year, compared to 402 in the previous year. Overall, the District is also just slightly ahead on Interment Services with 704 interments completed this fiscal year compared to 693 in the previous year.

The Income Statement shows that if you look at Operating Income the District was at a loss of approximately \$175,000. However, once you factor in Non-Operating Revenues, the District's net income was about \$98,000 to the good.

B. Financial Reports – January 2026

Brenda Manriquez stated that the financial reports are looking good. The District is slightly over on Salaries and Benefits which is mostly due to the new MOU COLA and step increases, but at this point the \$274,000 in the Economic Uncertainty Fund should cover any potential overages. As we get more projections toward the end of the fiscal year, staff may bring something back to the Board in May to determine if a budget adjustment should be considered. Brenda Manriquez also stated that the District will have money that can be committed for the new cemetery development, which we would then uncommit to make the down payment to Anaheim Public Utilities for the water and electrical work.


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When comparing year-to-date, the District is exceeding revenue expectations for property tax, interest, interment services, taxable sales and miscellaneous revenues.

Services & Supplies are trending normally. There were just a couple of overages for unexpected irrigation support and fence repairs at the new cemetery. As Quintanilla and Associates wound down at the end of the calendar year, invoicing was low. Also the wet winter brought good cost savings on water usage and the additional Irrigation Specialist is helping to ensure the water we are using is as efficient as possible.

Vice Chair Schnell wanted to confirm that the expenses don't include annual depreciation. Brenda Manriquez stated that was correct. She will do that at year-end.

Brenda Manriquez also reported that the next construction loan payment will go out in March.

The Balance Sheet is looking very good. She is recommending that the \$3.2 million in Assigned for Land Development should be committed so it doesn't look like the District is just sitting on this pile of money that we don't know what to do with. If we don't commit that \$3.2 we could also use it toward the \$3 million down payment that Anaheim Public Utilities will need. GM Deutsch also added that it is important to designate funds so that when the District is negotiating new MOUs or changing fee structures there is not a large balance of unassigned money that appears to be discretionary.

Chair Hatch asked how the County's \$20 million will flow into the project. GM Deutsch said that a small portion of the County's \$20 million has already been spent down, but we will need to enter into a cost sharing agreement. As far as the \$20 million that the District has from the construction loan, the District must first spend \$10 million of its own money before we can tap into the construction loan proceeds. Brenda Manriquez stated that, to date, we have spent about \$4 million. The District still needs to spend another \$6 million before we can access those funds.

The overall cost for the Anaheim Public Utilities electrical and water project is estimated at about \$10.3 million. They require a \$3 million down payment that we hope to split with CalVet or the County. It is a Design/Build project that will be managed entirely by Anaheim Public Utilities. The District just needs to pay the fee and they complete the work.

Chair Hatch asked about the \$10 million Veterans Grant. GM Deutsch said that those funds are strictly for the Veterans and won't benefit the public cemetery at all.

C. Investment Portfolio Changes - February 2025

GM Deutsch explained that this report shows what investments have matured or have been called early and also what new investments have been purchased. For the Endowment Principal, we are trying to push that out as far as we can with terms between 48 to 60 months. The Endowment Income and Pre-Need investments are being kept with terms between 12 to 18 months so we can borrow against those investments for the cemetery development. GM Deutsch also explained that the report shows what investments are coming due in the next six months and what the current posted rates are for the various pooled funds.


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D. Capital Projects Update

GM Deutsch said that the Capital Projects Update recaps the activities he has engaged in over the last month that primarily have to do with the Gypsum Canyon Cemetery Development.

On February 9th, GM Deutsch met with the First Responders group to discuss possible monumentation in the First Responders Section. He also met with Supervisor Sarmiento’s Chief of Staff on February 25th to discuss the Allied Veterans Section and the need for community contacts and funding.

He also said that he participates in meetings with CalVet and DGS every two weeks. CalVet is resistant to the idea of a Heli-Hydrant on their site, so GM Deutsch and Larry Ryan are looking at three or four other locations on the back side of the property that would not belong to CalVet.

On February 20th, GM Deutsch went to the office of Woodruff and Smart to kick off the District’s engagement with the firm.

GM Deutsch said the Eagle Scout project at Gypsum Canyon to protect the Oak trees in the entry parking area is nearing completion.

GM Deutsch also noted that So Cal Edison and AT&T are working on undergrounding power poles and telecommunication lines at the site. The poles are unappealing aesthetically and also present a hazard in terms of wildfire protection. GM Deutsch expects to be bringing back a contract to the Board to get this work completed.

The 241 Flyover project was also briefly discussed. GM Deutsch said that this will involve several entities and he expects a groundbreaking ceremony will be happening in the future.

E. 2026-27 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Discussion

GM Deutsch presented the timeline he is working with to prepare for next fiscal year’s budget. He stated that typically we try to get the budget to the Board for approval in June. Any changes to the District’s master fee schedule would go into effect 30 days after Board approval of the budget. He also explained that the District is not subject to Proposition 218.

GM Deutsch stated that now that the District has retained legal counsel, future agendas will include a General Counsel report where Counsel Dave Kendig can advise the Board on any legal matters that he feels are relevant.

NEW BUSINESS

A. CSDA Board of Directors Call for Nomination

GM Deutsch informed the Board that the California Special Districts Association has sent out the “Call for Nominations” for the Seat C Director position for the 2027-2029 term. If anyone has a proposed nominee, staff would need to submit our nomination along with a minute order before April 10, 2026. No one presented any candidates for nomination.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS - None


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BOARD COMMENTS

A. Staff Appreciation Luncheon, February 24, 2026, El Toro Memorial Park

Trustee Schnell stated that the luncheon was very well done and he would like to see the District continue this on an annual basis. He believes it helps to build a really good culture. He also stated that GM Deutsch’s comments were very thoughtful and touching and that staff seemed to really appreciate it.

Trustee Hatch agreed adding that he gets a sense that the District is a real family with a true feeling of esprit de corps.

Trustee River stated that she and her son Darrell, also enjoyed participating in the luncheon. GM Deutsch explained that Trustee Rivers has a long history with the District, since her mother, Maureen Rivers, sat on our board for over 20 years. Kelly was appointed to the seat in 2016 after her mother passed and how now served on our Board for the last ten years.

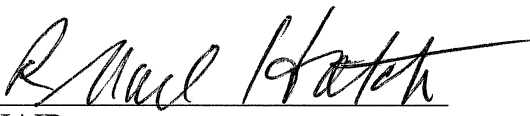
ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. California Association of Public Cemeteries, Annual Conference, Garden Grove, March 19-21, 2026

GM Deutsch said that he will be attending this event along with Chair Hatch, Vice Chair Schnell, Trustee Rivers, Trustee Marroquin-Waldram, Cemetery Manager Julio Amarillas, and Cemetery Assistants Robert Hernandez, Andriana Tristan-Losey, and Kim Eazell.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 7, 2026** CA 92630.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.


CHAIR


BOARD SECRETARY


Chair


Secretary