ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT
Board of Trustees
October 6, 2026

MINUTES

The monthly meeting of the Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees was called to order by Chair Noel Hatch at 10:00 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 Trustee Peery.
Roll Call by Board Secretary, Mary Funk

PRESENT:	Noel Hatch, Chair	Fifth District
	Raymond Schnell, Vice Chair	Third District (Arrived 10:04)
	Kelly Rivers	First District
	Donna Marsh Peery	Second District

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

ALSO ATTENDING: Dave Kendig, General Counsel, Woodruff & Smart

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Board Meeting, September 1, 2026

B. Approval of the September 2026 Check Register (Claims) Nos. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 and 51.

C. Authorization of the November 2026 Check Register (Claims) Nos. 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85.

D. Accept Report on Economic Uncertainty Fund for Unanticipated Expenses in the General Fund.

MOTION: of Trustee Rivers, seconded by Trustee Peery and carried by a vote of 4-0, approved the Consent Calendar.

Brenda Manriquez noted that with the Economic Uncertainty Fund report, the District will be over budget, which is primarily due to the approved MOU. For auditing purposes, it will require a note be included with the budget.

Chair Secretary

MANAGER REPORTS

A. Interments and Interment Space Sales Reports – August 2026

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

			2026-2027	2025-2026
ANAHEIM	Interments	9 (6 Urn)	14 (10 Urn)	14 (10 Urn)
	Lot Sales	2	6	7
EL TORO	Interments	62 (25 Urn)	130 (50 Urn)	139 (63 Urn)
	Lot Sales	28	67	97
SANTA ANA	Interments	35 (12 Urn)	73 (24 Urn)	48 (18 Urn)
	Lot Sales	21	45	35
TOTAL	Interments	106 (43 Urn)	217 (84 Urn)	201 (91 Urn)
	Lot Sales	51	118	139

GM Deutsch reported that Anaheim Cemetery had two interment space sales in August and conducted 9 interment services and is right on track with figures from the previous year.

Vice Chair Schnell arrived at this time.

As expected, El Toro Memorial Park is down on interment space sales with 28 sales including 15 casket, 7 niches, and 6 in-ground cremation compared to 56 interment space sales in August 2025. Year-to-date, El Toro has sold 67 interment spaces compared to 97 in the previous year. El Toro has approximately 221 full casket spaces remaining, but GM Deutsch expects that number to go up as he and Cemetery Manager Bales continue to explore the remaining sections of the cemetery. He is hoping that next month will be adding about 100 more spaces that have been identified as available for El Toro.

GM Deutsch also commented that the District is starting to make the transition to the new cemetery software, PlotBox. We are currently correcting data and mapping issues from the final data extract from the old software and staff are beginning to transition to the new program. GM Deutsch stated that this will take us to the next level with access to greater information, better customer service, and more efficiencies in our operations.

Santa Ana Cemetery sold 21 interment spaces in August including 16 full casket spaces, 1 niche and 4 in-ground cremation spaces. Year-to-date, Santa Ana has sold 45 interment spaces compared to 35 in the previous fiscal year. MJ Section has approximately 47 spaces remaining as of the end of August. He and Cemetery Manager Amarillas are exploring other options at Santa Ana Cemetery which may be able to yield another 100 or so interment spaces. Santa Ana is well ahead for interment space sales compared to the previous year with 73 sales so far this year compared to 48 in the previous year.

Chair Secretary

Trustee Peery asked if the District has rights to the road that borders the St. John's cemetery's section. GM Deutsch said that it was determined that the road is on their property, but we may be able to negotiate with them and see if there is any opportunity for development.
Overall, the District sold 51 interment spaces in August. Year-to-date we are at 118 sales this year compared to 139 in the previous year. For interment services, District staff have conducted 217 interment services year-to-date compared to 201 in the previous year. The cremation rate stands at 38.7%, which is polar opposite of the industry average where cremation interments far outpace full casket burials.

Vice Chair Schnell asked if the District has enough working revenue to get through these shortfalls until Gypsum Canyon opens. Brenda Manriquez reported that in 2025-26 the District actually broke even, which was a pleasant surprise. In 2026-27 she expects expenses to be more than revenues.

GM Deutsch stated that for Gypsum Canyon, we are revising all the cost estimates to account for the new, smaller grading requirements. The District only has a limited amount of funds. We are currently paying back the construction loan at about $1.2 million a year which includes interest. In order to access the $20 million from the construction loan, the District must first pay $10 million from our own funds. To date we have spent approximately $4 million. We executed the loan in 2022 or 2023 and after ten years there will be a balloon payment due at which time the project can be refinanced.

The Board discussed the First Responders section to be opened at Gypsum Canyon. GM Deutsch said that First Responders will have to pay the same service fees as any other Orange County resident, but County of Orange did provide $1 million that is being held in Pre-Need that will go to cover the cost of interment spaces for First Responders.

Vice Chair Schnell asked when GM Deutsch expects that revenue will begin to be generated by Gypsum Canyon. GM Deutsch stated that we are continuing to work with the State, but we are hoping our public cemetery's first phase will be operational by late 2028. Once the design and layout for physical interment spaces are created we can start to collect deposits on interment spaces, with the understanding that if they need those spaces before the construction is complete, they would have to opt for available spaces at our other cemeteries or they would be refunded so they could go to a private cemetery.

Brenda Manriquez stated that even if we are short on working capital, we can still borrow from the Endowment Income. GM Deutsch said that the District would pay back any interest bearing funds first, and then pay back any Endowment Income that is borrowed later.

There was some discussion about the eligibility requirements for the First Responders section. GM Deutsch said all of those legal requirements remain to be worked out.

B. Financial Reports – August 2026

Brenda Manriquez stated that we are now two months into the fiscal year and everything is where she expected it to be. Interment space sales are slightly down. Taxable sales are up as well as interment service revenue. She is expecting a large portion of property tax to hit in December.

Chair Secretary

For expenses, Salaries & Employee Benefits is fine. There were two anomalies in Services and Supplies. The 1300 Account for Maintenance – Equipment is considerably higher due to fuel costs. Brenda stated that it normally runs around $2,000 to $3,000 a month, but last month's total was at $6,000. She explained further that much of the large equipment runs on diesel.

She also stated that the 1400 account for Maintenance – Buildings and Improvements is substantially under budget. She explained that last year there were a lot of one-time costs such as the irrigation expenses from Real Green and replacing the air conditioning unit.

For equipment, we did receive and pay for the Pro Gator in August for El Toro Memorial Park.

In September the $610,000 loan payment was made. Interest is also starting to go up a little with the recent Fed rate increase.

Chair Hatch noted that there are not as many early calls happening now with our investments. GM Deutsch agreed stating that we are holding more to maturity.

Brenda Manriquez stated that beginning on September 1st, the District started to share the cost of the merchant fees with families. The District is absorbing 1.25% and the families are paying the other 1.25%. This has caused more families to write checks instead of using credit cards. In a typical month the District has been paying between $3,000 to $6,000 in merchant fees but in September it was under $2,000.

She also reported that there are no major changes to the Balance Sheet. The District now has over $6 million in PreNeed deposits, not including the $1 million that is set aside for the First Responders section. The Endowment Income has about $12 million that we can borrow from if needed.

C. Investment Portfolio Changes - September 2026

GM Deutsch reminded the Trustees about the emails he has sent out regarding investments and as Brenda Manriquez stated, the rates are starting to go up. The District is only going out a year to maturity on PreNeed and Endowment Income to keep those as liquid as possible. With Endowment Income coming due, GM Deutsch stated that the District may want to consider short term CD's or mutual funds. There is 2.48 million coming due in the next six months for UBS Endowment Income and we still may be able to put that in a one year investment of some type. Vice Chair Schnell advised the District to keep an eye out because we could have another rate inversion coming. GM Deutsch also reported to the Board that he moved money from the General Fund and PreNeed Fund to California Class to capture a 4.285%. The District just has to sit on those funds for a full year to get that yield. There is still $14 million in CalTrust.

D. Capital Projects Update

GM Deutsch said in September he had the privilege of lowering the flag on the morning of 9-11 and then it was raised back up at dusk.

On September 15th he met virtually with Anaheim Public Utilities. They confirmed that the $1 million deposit from the District had been received. They project that power will be at the site

by June or July of 2027. He also stated that the City has been really good about continuing to allow the permit for temporary power for the flag lights. Chair Hatch noted that maintaining the flag has been a bit of an albatross for the District. GM Deutsch stated that the 30'x60' flags were difficult to maintain. They have been able to go down to a 30'x50' without having to adjust the rigging grommets. Those smaller flags cost about $3,000 to $4,000 each. He also reported that it was a real boost to morale for Veterans to see actual work starting with the electrical line, even if it was offsite. It is tangible progress for the Veterans cemetery. Cemetery Manager Bud Bales asked how far Anaheim Public Utilities has to run the new electrical line for the property. GM Deutsch said the new electrical lines run about 1 ½ miles in order to reach our site. GM Deutsch also noted that right now all of the electrical work is being done in the bike lane so it is not having much of an impact on traffic. When they run the water lines it will impact the car lane and that work will be done at night.

The last piece of equipment for this fiscal year has been ordered. It is a recycling mower for El Toro. The advantage is you don't have to capture grass clippings, but staff will have to stay on top of it because the recycling mower can only be used if the grass has not grown too long. Overall, it should make mowing substantially more efficient.

GM Deutsch said the next step in the project will be the relocation of the gas line. Brenda Manriquez asked about the news reports on accepting the $10 million in grant funding. GM Deutsch explained that currently those funds can only be used for the construction of actual structures and the development of interment space. They are trying to get that changed so it can also be used for utilities and infrastructure like roads and grading.

GM Deutsch said they also need to get the parcel that is for the Veterans Cemetery legally transferred.

GENERAL COUNSEL REPORT

Counsel Kending reported about whether or not the District needs further policy on the prohibition of firearms on cemetery property. He said it is already prohibited under State law. The Supreme Court is undecided on whether or not this violates the 2nd Amendment. For now, no further action is needed.

Chair Hatch requested that we move Closed Session and Item A of New Business to the end of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

B. OCERS Employer Contribution Discount for Fiscal Year 2027-28

GM Deutsch said that OCERS, the District's pension plan, offers a discount each year for employers that pre-pay the employer's contribution for the upcoming fiscal year. GM Deutsch said he projects the District's revenue, current staffing, and merit steps and projects that out, taking into consideration which employees are on which plan. OCERS has two different plans. The PEPRA plan is for employees who were hired after January 1, 2014. The Legacy plan is for employees who were hired before January 1, 2014. With the data that GM Deutsch provides to OCERS, they then calculate the required contribution. By participating in the program, the District will receive a 7% discount on the employer contributions. When you compare that to the 3% the District would be earning if we kept those funds on deposit, it makes financial sense to

participate in the program. It also helps to decrease the District's unfunded liabilities in the future. Since the Board is authorizing this on a budget that doesn't exist yet, it will be recorded as a pre-paid expense.

MOTION: of Vice Chair Schnell, seconded by Trustee Rivers and carried by a vote of 4-0, approved pre-paying the employer's contributions to OCERS and authorize the General Manager to execute the transfer of payment in the amount of $332,018.34 to OCERS.

C. Personnel Manual, Article 4 – Leave Provision, Section 9 – Catastrophic Leave

GM Deutsch explained that the District has a Catastrophic Leave provision that allows employees to donate their own Annual Leave or Compensatory Time to another employee who has suffered a debilitating injury or illness. However, we now have an employee, Cemetery Assistant, Andriana Tristan, who is expecting a child and planning for maternity leave. Cemetery Manager Julio Amarillas was approached by several staff members who wanted to donate some of their leave time to help Andriana be able to financially afford to extend her maternity leave. The District's short-term disability plan will cover about 66% of her salary for only six to eight weeks. When that exhausts she will be on unpaid pregnancy leave. Staff is asking the Board to revise the Catastrophic leave policy to include parenthood leave. GM Deutsch added that this will have no budgetary effect on the District and added that it will also help to reduce the compensated absences liability that the District carries. Chair Hatch asked if Counsel Kendig had any concerns. He had none.

MOTION: of Trustee Peery, seconded by Trustee Rivers and carried by a vote of 4-0, approved the proposed modifications to the catastrophic leave policy to include employees on an extended parenthood leave.

D. Board Policy Manual Review

GM Deutsch reminded the Board that at the September meeting they approved the concept of amending the Board Committee and Subcommittee Policy so that the Finance and Investment Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Communications and Public Relations Committee are all two-person standing committees. The Board just need to formally adopt this policy by resolution.

MOTION: of Vice Chair Schnell, seconded by Trustee Peery and carried by a vote of 4-0, adopted Resolution No. 2026-11 amending the Board Committee and Subcommittee Policy.

E. Board Committee Discussion & Member Selection

GM Deutsch stated that now that the Board Committee and Subcommittee Policy has been approved the Board needs to discuss who will sit on which committees and who will chair each committee. After discussion, the board agreed that the Finance and Investment Committee will be chaired by Ray Schnell with Noel Hatch as the second member. The Personnel Committee will be chaired by Kelly Rivers with Donna Peery as the second member. The Communications and Public Relations Committee will be chaired by Donna Peery with Kelly Rivers as the second member.

Chair Secretary

MOTION: of Vice Chair Schnell, seconded by Trustee Peery and carried by a vote of 4-0, agreed to the Committee Chair appointments and member selection as listed above.

GM Deutsch said he will work on scheduling these meetings. The Finance and Investment Committee usually meets two to three times a year. The Personnel Committee will start to meet in preparation for the 2028-29 MOU negotiations. The Communications and Public Relations Committee meets on an as-needed basis, but with Gypsum Canyon starting to be developed, it will certainly meet more frequently.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS – None

BOARD COMMENTS - None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. **CAPC Annual Education Seminar, Burlingame, CA October 9-10, 2026**
Trustee Rivers and District Secretary Siennika Pryor-Winters will be attending.

B. **ISDOC Quarterly Meeting, October 29, 2026, Fountain Valley, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**
Trustee Rivers and GM Deutsch will both be attending.

C. **Dia de los Muertos Program, Anaheim Cemetery, Nov. 2, 2026, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.**
GM Deutsch encouraged the Trustees to attend any of the Day of the Dead events adding that the live program at Anaheim Cemetery is always a very fun event. Trustee Rivers said that she will be attending.

D. **Veterans Day Program, El Toro Memorial Park, Nov. 11, 2026, 11:00 a.m.**
Board Secretary Mary Funk reported that Mark Furlan will be the keynote speaker at El Toro's Veterans Day program. She is waiting to receive his biographical information.

At 11:12 a.m. the Board of Trustees adjourned to closed session.

CLOSED SESSION

A. **Public Employee Performance Evaluation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.**
Employee's Title: General Manager

B. **Labor Negotiations – Unrepresented Employee Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6(a)**
Unrepresented Employee – Tim Deutsch, General Manager
District Designated Representative – David Kendig, General Legal Counsel

At 12:13 p.m. the Board reconvened from Closed Session. Counsel Kendig stated that there was no reportable action.

Chair Secretary

NEW BUSINESS

A. General Manager Employment Agreement Amendment

No discussion took place.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 10, 2026** CA 92630.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

CHAIR

BOARD SECRETARY

Chair Secretary