

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT
Board of Trustees
April 29, 2024

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees was called to order by Chair Ward at 10:06 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 General Manager Deutsch.
Roll Call by Board Secretary, Mary Funk.

PRESENT:	Cynthia Ward, Chair	Fourth District
	Maribel Marroquin-Waldram, Vice Chair	First District
	Kelly Rivers	Second District
	Vladimir A. Anderson	Third District
	Noel Hatch	Fifth District

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None



BOARD COMMENTS

A. Bill Stelter Retirement Luncheon, March 22, 2024, Santa Ana, CA

Chair Ward reported that she attended the event and stated it was a lovely luncheon. It was delightful to see so many people turn out to wish Bill well. Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram also attended and was very appreciative for the invitation. She stated with his many years of service it was nice to honor him. Bill is an impressive individual and it was very telling to see so many other retirees come back to honor him.

B. ISDOC Quarterly Meeting, April 25, 2024 at 11:30 a.m. Featuring Placentia Library District and Buena Park Library District.

Trustee Rivers attended this meeting and found the presentations by the two library districts to be very interesting. They have a lot of events and activities going on that sound like a lot of fun. She also saw James Fisler at the meeting and a LAFCO Special Districts Dialogue flyer. Mr. Fisler mentioned that he would like to attend the May Board meeting and speak during Public Comments on the upcoming LAFCO election for the Special District Member Seat.

	
Chair	Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**A. CSDA Professional Development Committee Meeting, May 2, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.
(Via Zoom)**

Vladimir Anderson will be attending this meeting.

B. Memorial Day Programs, May 27, 2024

Anaheim Cemetery – 11:00 a.m.

El Toro Memorial Park – 11:00 a.m.

Santa Ana Cemetery – 10:00 a.m.

STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION

GM Deutsch explained that all the comments from the April 10th Strategic Planning Meeting were consolidated on to the Strategic Plan Worksheet, which now shows all the various goals the District hopes to achieve for each year within the five-year strategic plan. GM Deutsch stated he would still like to talk to staff to get their goals for the next five years.

He did state that as you review the updated strategic plan worksheet and SWOT analysis you will see some cross-over between categories.

GM Deutsch asked for any comments as the worksheet was reviewed.

Cemetery Manager Bud Bales commented that with the upcoming regulations restricting the use of gas powered equipment, we should consider the need for adequate charging stations both in the design of the new cemetery and in the existing cemeteries. He also asked about the possibility of having a parking lot that is covered with solar panels. GM Deutsch said that we cannot go fully off the grid as we also have to be sensitive to the unappealing aesthetics that so many solar panels will have, but on some structures, particularly in the maintenance area which is not as visible that would certainly be an option. GM Deutsch said that currently Southern California Edison is providing temporary power, but ultimately electricity will be provided by the City of Anaheim.

Trustee Hatch commented that supporters of a Veterans Cemetery in Irvine still pose a threat. GM Deutsch answered that for that to occur, there would have to deal with the significant soil remediation issues at the Irvine site. In addition, at this point, CalVet is aligned with our project.

Cemetery Manager Bud Bales said that in terms of serving families now and in the future, we should revisit the Repurchase of Interment Space Policy to see if there is anything we can do to make selling a space back to the District more attractive. He commented that the Whiting family has over 60 unused spaces which could really benefit people in the community who are at-need. Once we update the Repurchase policy, it may be worthwhile to reach out to the family to see if they would be willing to sell back some of those spaces.

Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram asked what the status is for the road closures at Santa Ana Cemetery. GM Deutsch said that he is working with legal counsel and Fairhaven on the agreement concerning the shared road. GM Deutsch said he hopes to begin construction on the

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first road closures in July. In all, Santa Ana Cemetery may gain as many as 550 new casket spaces. GM Deutsch anticipates that if they sell 20 to 25 spaces a month, that should last for almost two years. That timing would work out well, since he is still hopeful that we can break ground on the new cemetery construction hopefully sometime in 2026.

Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram inquired about the gates at Santa Ana Cemetery. There was some discussion about how the road closures impact traffic flow. GM Deutsch commented that the swing gates are not meant to restrict people from coming in and out, just the vehicles. GM Deutsch said that they do need to make some changes so that police and fire are able to open and close those gates in the event of an emergency.

In discussing how to retain knowledgeable Trustees, GM Deutsch said that he would add a goal of Trustees keeping up with educational training opportunities. He requested that the Trustees let him know if there are any areas in which they would like to receive additional training. He noted that Brenda Manriquez could also provide Trustee training for those who wanted to learn more about our accounting practices and financial statements.

In retaining and hiring quality staff, Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram suggested that Mary Funk become certified in Human Resources. GM Deutsch said the District should also look at other certifications that may be appropriate for other staff as well. GM Deutsch said that new Union negotiations will also begin in February of 2025. The District needs to determine if we will bring in Liebert Cassidy Whitmore again to assist with negotiations. He said that the District will also need to complete a review of all the job descriptions and pay scales.

Trustee Hatch commented that when talking about the development of the new cemetery, we need to plan out how the investment funds will be used. GM Deutsch said that this would be included in the goal for 2024-25 with the creation of a 5-year Financial Management Plan. This plan would include all of the District funds including the investment funds. Each month when he communicates to the Trustees about the investment portfolio, he felt this may feel like a foreign topic. He will add investment training for the Trustees and staff. He noted that the five-year ladder has basically been out the door, since we have had an inverted curve over the last two years and the District has been trying to keep investments liquid.

In terms of retaining our Trustees, GM Deutsch noted that in January 2025, we need to address the reappointment of Trustee Rivers, since her term actually expired in January 2024. Chair Ward, Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram, and Trustee Anderson will all be needing reappointment in 2026. Trustee Hatch's term will not expire until 2028.

Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram suggested that we create a non-profit to support the Cemetery District. GM Deutsch suggested something like Friends of the Orange County Cemetery District. Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram stated that we could create one non-profit that would allow for donations to go to restricted accounts for various purposes.

The idea of green burials at Gypsum Canyon was also discussed and should be included in the goal for 2028-29 for creating a long-term development plan for future phases.

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GM Deutsch said that he would set up meetings for the Trustees to speak with staff to get their input on the Strategic Plan 2024 Worksheet.

GM Deutsch then began a discussion on the SWOT worksheet that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the District should be aware of.

Trustee Hatch asked if there were any rumors out there about the Irvine City Council trying to bring back the Veterans Cemetery to Irvine. GM Deutsch said he did think there was one Councilmember from Irvine who would like to see that discussed. Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram stated that we just need to keep focusing on our project and moving forward. GM Deutsch noted that the only objections we have heard are from those who would still want to see the Veterans Cemetery move forward in Irvine. Nothing that the Irvine supporters have done has delayed our project from moving forward. GM Deutsch stated that he is hopeful that our public cemetery development will go before the Planning Commission in June and will then go before the Anaheim City Council in July.

It was suggested that our relationship with mortuaries and vault companies and our community relationships should be seen as a strength.

For weaknesses, it was suggested that the item, “Lack of Financial Support for Veterans Cemetery” should be changed to “Lack of Secured Funding for Veterans Cemetery.

GM Deutsch also noted that while “District Funding for Project” is currently listed as a weakness, he and Finance and Accounting Manager, Brenda Manriquez are working on Pro Formas to analyze this more fully. GM Deutsch also noted that while “Risk of not receiving City approvals” is listed as a weaknesses, he thinks that risk if very minimal.

The Board felt that “Land Construction Issues”, “Opposition of Development”, and “Irvine Supporters” are more external forces and should be listed under Threats rather than Weaknesses.

The meeting broke for lunch at 11:30 a.m. and resumed at 12:05 p.m.

The list of Opportunities was discussed next. Trustee Hatch asked if it would be prudent for Board Members to attend City Council Meetings to promote the new cemetery services. GM Deutsch felt it might be more appropriate to request to speak at Council Meetings, to thank Councilmembers for their support of the public cemetery development.

GM Deutsch said that for “Use of Technology” as an opportunity, staff is exploring different cemetery software options that might present greater efficiency and productivity. GM Deutsch said he would also like to explore live streaming capabilities at committal shelters at the new cemetery that would allow family members to see a graveside service who may not be able to come in person. GM Deutsch would also like to eventually construct a reception hall that could be used for memorial services or a host of other community events.

Cemetery Manager Julio Amarillas asked if there are any concerns about the new cemetery’s location on the edge of Orange County. Communities in Riverside will be closer to the new cemetery than many communities in Orange County. Julio Amarillas suggested that it might be

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nice to reach out to communities like Cypress who are furthest away to let them know that there is a public cemetery in Orange County that can serve them.

Vice Chair Marroquin-Waldram left the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

GM Deutsch also noted that our cemeteries have been in business for 157 years. This new cemetery development will allow that to continue for another 80 to 100 years and will provide the District with long-term fiscal stability.

Finance and Accounting Manager Brenda Manriquez said that we should add grant funding as an opportunity. GM Deutsch said that we could get grant funding for water drilling under Proposition 50. Chair Cynthia Ward stated that perhaps we could get grant funding as well for construction of the community space.

Trustee Hatch asked where the other Veteran Cemeteries are located. GM Deutsch said in terms of National Veteran Cemeteries, there is Riverside, Los Angeles, and Point Loma in San Diego.

In regards to federal funding for the Veterans Cemetery at Gypsum Canyon, GM Deutsch said that CalVet seems to be pretty confident that they will be able to obtain Federal Funding. GM Deutsch also added that the State of California has earmarked \$24.5 million for the project.

The list of Threats was discussed next.

GM Deutsch stated that he believes the Irvine Supporters are not so much opposed to our public cemetery development, but rather just wants the Veterans Cemetery to be in Irvine and not at Gypsum Canyon.

The loss of Veteran cemetery supporters for Gypsum Canyon is listed as a threat, but it is highly unlikely that we would lose their support.

Time is technically a threat, considering the District is already five years in to the time frame set by the County when it deeded us the land. But the County is also heavily invested in the project moving forward at this point. As far as having to use the loan proceeds within the specified time, GM Deutsch noted that this is also something that we could possibly extend.

GM Deutsch asked if there were any other threats that should be added to the list. Chair Ward stated that water supply should be added as a threat. GM Deutsch stated that the well testing being done now at Gypsum Canyon is showing about 150 gallons per minute. This would be enough to sustain development for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Ultimately, however, we would need about 400 gallons a minute. So we will need to rely on the City of Anaheim for water utilities.

GM Deutsch asked about upcoming meetings. The Board will meet on Tuesday, May 7th for a regular Board Meeting. On May 14th, it was proposed to meet again for Strategic Planning from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. On May 22nd, the Finance and Investment Committee will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and the Board will meeting for Strategic Planning that same day from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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O.C.C.D. – Minutes

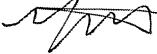
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GM Deutsch hopes to present the budget for Board approval at the June 4th Board Meeting.

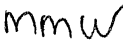
ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS - None

The next regular meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 7, 2024**, 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 12:44 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

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