

Kern County Cemetery District
Minutes for

August 15, 2024

Regular Board Meeting
Shafter Memorial Park Office
18662 Santa Fe Way, Shafter, CA

Call to Order: Call to Order at 12:00 p.m. by Chairman Braun. Chairman Braun led the flag salute and invocation.

Roll Call: In attendance was Barry Braun, Chairman of the Board; Carl Olsen, Vice-Chair; Jerry Ezell, Secretary of the Board.

Employees: Eliza Caudillo, District Manager; Denton Carender, Superintendent; Alicia Reveles, Secretary.

Visitors: Kevin Harmon from the office of Ruetggers and Schuler.

Public Comment: None.

Consent Calendar: Includes the approval of the Agenda for the current meeting and minutes of the regular Board meeting for July 2024. The payroll warrants for 24/15 through 24/16 were approved. Vouchers, checks, and financial reports for July 2024 were approved. This was done by approval of the consent calendar by motion of Trustee Ezell and seconded by Trustee Olsen; 3 ayes, unanimous.

Management Update

- We had 10 services in Shafter and 13 services in Wasco for the month of July 2024. This gives us 23 services for the fiscal year to date. With a 13% cremation rate.
- The Stifel July reinvestment selected by the Board was not available. The Board authorized the next closest option. Sandra Wheeler, Investment Advisor, placed the recently matured investment into a comparable Federal Home Loan Mtg. Corp Note at 5.00%, with a maturity date of 07/2029, Callable 01/2025.
- A groundman was injured on Tuesday, August 6, 2024. The employee was taken to Mercy Southwest for treatment.
- Tree trimming was scheduled for Wasco Cemetery and was completed at the beginning of the August 12th, 2024, week. Alspaw Tree Service provided the tree trimming at \$7,200.00.

Holtermann Land Rent Contract for Wasco

The bare-ground lease with Holtermann Farms is due to expire on December 31, 2024. Manager Caudillo contacted Holtermann Farms regarding possibly renewing their lease for another 20 years. The Holtermanns were receptive to the option to continue leasing the 20 acres east of the currently developed cemetery grounds. The summary of the proposed lease is as follows:

- 20-year lease beginning January 1, 2025, with an expiration date of December 31, 2044; the annual lease payment of \$7,000.00 is to be paid in two payments of \$3,500.00 due by April 1st and August 1st of each year.
- Holtermanns will remove their currently mature trees.
- Holtermanns will opt to plant a crop of their choice. The intended crop will be almond trees.
- Holtermanns intend to plant a grain crop to allow the ground to regenerate.
- The lease includes an annual extension option not to exceed 5 years.

- During the 5-year extension period, Holtermanns agreed to a 2% (\$140.00) lease increase.
- The District agrees to waive lease payments for five years to allow the ground regeneration and for the almond trees to develop and produce an adequate harvest.
- Upon termination of the lease, the Holtermanns agreed that they would return the ground to bare ground status.

Recommendations from Attorney Robert Hunt include Resolution 24-25-1, allowing the leasing of the 20 acres to the east of the 20 acres available for burials.

A motion was made to accept Resolution 24-25-1, allowing the leasing of District-owned land as allowed by the State of California pursuant to all applicable Public Cemetery District Law, Health, and Safety Codes §9000, et seq. by Trustee Banks and seconded by Trustee Ezell; 3 ayes, unanimous.

Another motion was made by Trustee Olsen and seconded by Trustee Ezell to authorize a 20-year lease agreement between the Kern County Cemetery District and Robert Holtermann, CFO – of Holtermann Farms, for the eastern portion of the Wasco Cemetery, for \$7,000 a year. The lease includes an additional annual renewal option not to exceed 5 years. During the optional 5-year renewal period, the Holtermanns agreed to a 2% (\$140.00) lease increase. The Holtermanns will opt for either a grain crop or an almond crop. The lease payments are to commence in 2030, due as \$3,500.00 in April and \$3,500.00 in August of each year for the duration of the lease and consequential 5-year optional annual renewal with an increased lease payment of \$140.00. 3 ayes, unanimous

Ruetggers and Schuler Architect Contract

Manager Caudillo presented an Architect and Engineering Contract for the Shafter Cemetery northeast section of the cemetery to be known as Section B. Attorney Hunt and Architect John Schuler reviewed the contract, which outlines the District expectations regarding the development project, prevailing wages, and Request for Proposal.

The motion to accept the Ruetggers and Schuler contract for \$30,700.00 to begin the process of planning and developing, the Request for Proposal, and adhering to all laws for prevailing wages. was made by Trustee Olsen and seconded by Trustee Ezell; 3 ayes, unanimous.

An Ad Hoc Committee was established consisting of Manager Caudillo, Trustee Braun, and Superintendent Carender to develop the vision for the future Shafter Cemetery burial section and the area currently leased for almond growth.

Noel Alexandria Foundation

Manager Caudillo spoke to Toni Jones, a representative of the Noel Alexandria Foundation. The Noel Alexandria Foundation (NAF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness and provide resources to families affected by pregnancy and infant loss. The foundation provides free emotional, educational, and financial support to families who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss. The representatives would like to place flags and banners on infant graves during the month of October. The banners would be in a central location, and the flags would mark each grave.

This request from the Noel Alexandria Foundation also brings forward the recent request from two individuals who approached Manager Caudillo regarding establishing a Dia De Los Muertos program at the Shafter Cemetery and a request from an organization in Shafter that would like to do a drive-through event in October. After due discussion, the Board of Trustees opted to continue hosting only the Memorial Day Event. Other non-hosted cemetery events could possibly have insurance ramifications, overlapping onto neighboring graves, future abandonment of the activities, and the public's expectations that the District would assume control of hosting these events at the District's expense. *No Action, only direction provided.*

Trustees Comments

Trustee Ezell: While at a recent burial service in Shafter, was approached about wheelchair accessibility at the southwest area of Section: New E.

Trustee Braun: Presented flyers he obtained at the Wasco Community Coalition meeting he attends. The flyer encourages individuals to attend any number of classes offered through the Wasco and Shafter Adult Education Center. The flyers include information on Psychiatric Mental Health and Women's Health assistance at the Good Samaritan Rural Health Clinic.

Trustee Olsen: While at Kathleen Krause's office for his Oath of Office appointment as a Kern County Cemetery District Trustee, Kathleen commented on the quality of the past and present Trustees of the Shafter and Wasco Cemetery.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm by Chairman Braun. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2024.

Signed,

Eliza Caudillo
District Manager