

Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery District Board of Trustees, July 2, 2024

Vice-Chairman Wigmore called the meeting to order at 4:01pm.

Present: Dorjahn, Wigmore and Steck **Absent:** Rushford

Staff Present: Strachan **Also Present:** Sandra Wheeler, Lisa Nouchi, David Camp

Minutes: Steck moved to approve minutes for June, Dorjahn seconded.

Claims: Steck moved to approve the claims for June, Dorjahn seconded. Strachan states the claims were high in June due to paying for our audit of Fiscal years ending 2022 and 2023 as well as our work/comp and property/liability renewals.

Out of respect for Mr. Camp's time, Wigmore will start the meeting with line item 3 of new business.

New Business: 3. Multiple burial request – Camp: Mr. Camp explained that he has had his mother's cremated remains at home for some time. His father has recently passed away. He would like to have his mother's urn placed inside his dad's casket for burial and when he (Mr. Camp) passes away he will join his parents as a casket burial. Discussion. Dorjahn asked about other siblings and them signing off. He did state that his one sibling will sign off. They also have an additional plot left that she will be able to use if desired. Steck moved to approve the request for three burials in the one plot, Dorjahn seconded.

Correspondence: 1. CA Special Districts Magazine: Strachan gave the magazine for review

Old Business: 1. AR fund overage: Strachan reminds the board that during the audit and bank closure it was discovered that we have just over 19k in the AR account. In June the board had asked Strachan to see if there was a specific account the county recommended we deposit it to. The answer received was to post it to the general fund.

New Business: 1. Annual financial report – Stifel: Sandra Wheeler from Stifel explained the report. She spoke about how the Fed raising rates affects bonds. We are currently receiving between 3.29% and 4.05% yield. As interest rates go down, bond prices go up but so does the return. Our pre-need account compounds interest. Our endowment accounts interest is swept into a separate account that we can use at any time if needed. Sandra spoke to the board about investing additional funds. Discussion. Steck asked what we pay Sandra. She explained that there is not a management fee. She is paid by the banks. She receives a portion of the bond purchase price. Sandra stated that current bond yields are at 5.3% for one year and 5% for five years. Discussion. The board thanks Sandra for her time. 2. Annual financial report – Western International Securities: Lisa Nouchi from WIS presented her report to the board. She explained that we recently had a bond come due and that was reinvested per the board's request with all interest that had accrued (about 46K). The current value at WIS is 1,047,801.90 Discussion. Steck asked Lisa about current rates and investing more with WIS. Wigmore asked about investing in Money Market. Lisa continued with her presentation and is thanked for her time at the conclusion. Discussion. Steck asked Strachan about our current funds at the county and what yield we receive. It is about 2%. Strachan reminds the board that our auditor recommends we leave our cash with the county. Strachan also shares that having outside investments has caused a lot more bookkeeping and accounting duties for her to keep the books updated with realized losses and gains. She also expressed her reservations with taking more money from the county and states that she is more comfortable leaving it as is.

Strachan suggested taking the 400K in interest from the Stifel accounts and invest that with WIS. Ultimately it is a board decision. After a long discussion Steck made a motion to take an additional one million of the district funds from the county and invest it with Western International Securities. Dorjahn seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

Wigmore asked Strachan to set-up a meeting with Lisa to discuss what the best option would be to keep the funds easily accessible. The board would like to hear options on the best return with laddered accounts for one to three years. Strachan will follow-up. 3. Multiple burial request – Camp: See previous. 4. Election of officers for fiscal year 2024/2025: Steck has Rushford on the phone and nominates him as Vice-Chairman, Rushford accepts. So moved. Steck nominates Wigmore as Vice-Chairman, Wigmore accepts. So moved. Strachan states that since she is the clerk/secretary to the board and that the trustee is secretary in name only, that position does not need to be nominated. 5. Financial report FY 2023/2024: Strachan states that since the district books at the county have not been fully reconciled due to year end, the report numbers are not 100% accurate. She shared that as it looks right now, we had approximately \$259,850 in plot sales. Of that 30%, or \$77,955, would be moved to future capital improvement for cemetery II. Discussion. Financial report tabled until the October board meeting. 6. Price increase review: Strachan shares with the board that we raised our in-ground cremation plot prices in January from \$1100 to \$1300 but she recommends raising them an additional \$50 per plot as well as raising the above ground, niche pricing by \$50 each. Steck asked if we are comparable to other cemeteries. Strachan states yes, we are actually less costly, but since we are all district cemeteries and only people living within the district can be buried at each cemetery it isn't imperative to stay competitive. After some discussion Dorjahn moved to approve the suggested price increase effective July 8th 2024, Steck seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

7. Pre-need pre-payment policy: Strachan shared that we currently have over one million in liability from items and services that have been pre-paid. She reminds the board that they approved not allowing customers to pre-pay containers starting last year. Since the district cannot control the cost, this was a wise decision. Strachan states that families are still able to pre-pay for the plot and endowment care fee but she suggests that we no longer allow customers to pre-pay services meaning the opening/closing fees. This service is provided by our staff. The cost could ultimately determined by the cost of salaries, equipment etc. Discussion. Steck asked if other cemeteries have this policy. Strachan states that she knows Silveyville and Solano do not allow pre-payment. After some discussion, Steck motioned that the district no longer allow customers to pre-pay for services (opening/closing) effective September 1, 2024, Dorjahn seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

8. Personnel policy amendment: Strachan states that employees receive two hours of compensatory time when they attend a required board meeting. According to our current policy, any comp hours over 80 must be cashed out on the last pay period of the fiscal year. The employees have the option to use this time instead of or in addition to PTO as well. Franco had requested that he be cashed out for 40 hours of his comp time this year. When Strachan inquired through the payroll department at the county she was told it needed to be specified that this was an option in our personnel policy. Discussion. Steck

asked how this would affect the budget. Strachan stated that she can have that account sufficiently funded so that it won't be an issue. Dorjahn moves that we amend the personnel policy to add that any employee that receives comp time may cash out any increment of their compensatory time any time they wish. Steck seconded.

Ayes: four Noes: zero

9. Equipment purchase – Mower: Strachan shares with the board that her and employees Franco and A. Torres went to look at new direct collect mower options. Franco had previously expressed interest in the ExMark. Strachan states that our current Toro mowers are nearing the end of their life so this is a good time to consider other options. We spoke to Sterling Moy Machinery regarding the ExMark as well as Pape Machinery regarding the John Deere. After learning about the option to change the baffles on the ExMark to mulch at 0%, 50% or 100%, Strachan recommended that we purchase that type. Although we would only use the mulch feature part of the year, it would be a great benefit to the grounds to help keep the lawn green. Strachan gave the quote from Sterling Moy to the board. One ExMark Navigator direct collect mower with the government entity discount would be \$18,586.80 Dorjahn moved to approve the purchase of one of these mowers, Wigmore seconded.

Ayes: three Noes: zero

Public Comments: None present

Trustee Comments: Steck stated that he would like to see Franco at meetings occasionally. Strachan said that since the board made meeting attendance optional for Franco and Sanchez, they prefer to not attend but she will relay the message. Since Strachan knows the everyday occurrences and intricacies of the district, she can give a concise and informative report to the board without the need to pay staff to attend. She did assure the board that if there is something pertinent or if they just want to touch base, she will make sure the staff attends. Wigmore asked what time the staff is normally off work and perhaps they could check in during that 30 minutes from the time the meeting starts until they leave for the day.

Staff & Management Comments: Strachan shared that we had a slower month for burials in June with just 14, 7 of those being cremations.

Adjournment: Having no further business to discuss, Wigmore adjourned the meeting at 5:55pm

Respectfully submitted by

Heather Strachan, District Manager and Clerk to the Board