

Kern County Cemetery District

Shafter Memorial Park Office
18662 Santa Fe Way, Shafter, CA

Teleconference

Call to Order: Call to Order at 12:00pm by Chairman Braun, John Wayne led flag salute and Manager Unruh gave the invocation.

Roll Call: In attendance was Barry Braun, Chairman of the Board via video; Belton Banks, Vice-Chair; Jerry Ezell, Secretary of the Board via video.

Employees and Visitors: Timothy W. Unruh, District Manager; Eliza Caudillo, District Secretary; Denton Carender.

Public Comment: None

Consent Calendar: Includes the approval of the agenda for the current meeting and minutes of the regular board meeting for April 2020 as approved. The payroll warrants for 20-08 through 20-09 were approved. Vouchers, checks, and financial reports for April 2020 were approved. This was done by approval of the consent calendar by motion of Trustee Banks and seconded by Trustee Ezell; Roll call vote; Banks – Aye; Ezell – Aye; Braun – Aye, Unanimous, 3 ayes.

Management Update

- We had 16 services in Shafter and 7 services in Wasco for the month of April 2020. This gives us 198 for the fiscal year-to-date.
- Manager Unruh gave the board an update on the COVID-19 issue and its effect on the district. It is expected that as the heat increases that we should allow for a canopy for each service. This next week the public cemetery districts will be discussing the opening of Kern County after the COVID-19 scare and what it means for our districts.
- Manager Unruh explained the cancellation of Memorial Day for each cemetery. This decision was made with the information available during the first week in May. At that time, the state and county were still closed, and it was felt that to have a large event would be inadvisable. The grounds will still be cleaned up and small flags placed on each veteran's grave.

Employee Negotiations

Our current MOU is over on June 30, 2020 and Chairman Braun appointed Trustee Banks to work with Manager Unruh and Superintendent Carender to bring together a multi-year MOU for the staff. If possible, the agreement is to be brought to the board for ratification at the July meeting.

Approval of Biennial Conflict of Interest Code

California Code section 87306.5 requires that every local agency review their Conflict of Interest Code every other year. This review starts with each body reviewing their current code and making any necessary adjustments. The County of Kern Board of Supervisors are our code reviewing body and our code with any changes will be sent to them.

The board discussed the current code and it was determined that it should stay the same. No changes were deemed to be necessary at this time.

The motion to authorize the Conflict of Interest Code for the Kern County Cemetery Districts to remain the same and the manager to send this review to the County of Kern Board of Supervisor was made by Trustee Ezell and seconded by Trustee Banks. Roll call vote: Banks – Ay, Ezell – Aye, Braun – Aye; unanimous.

Administrative Policy Changes

This review is the final action to accept the changes made at a previous open board meeting. The only changes made were non-substantive changes that clarified the intent.

The motion to accept the Administrative Policy changes was made by Trustee Ezell and seconded by Trustee Braun. Roll Call vote: Banks – Aye, Ezell – Aye, Braun – Aye; unanimous.

No Cash Acceptance Policy

The board reviewed the possibility to stop accepting cash as a form of payment for at-need burials and pre-need burial plans. The intent is the need to be accountable to our staff who is currently accepting cash payments and having them in the offices. This potentially creates the possibility of theft by persons and may make the staff vulnerable and the office susceptible to break-ins.

Manager Unruh brought to the board a policy change that was reviewed. This change included the following.

To properly secure payments and being mindful for the safety of our staff and offices, the Kern County Cemetery District will no longer accept cash payments at the Shafter and Wasco Cemetery offices.

Payment must be in the form of a mortuary check, cashier check, money order, credit, or debit card for all at-need burial payments and pre-need contract payments. Personal checks will be accepted for at-need burials with proper identification. Personal or auto pay checks may be used for pre-need payments.

This was reviewed and will be brought back to the board for final discussion and possible acceptance. No action taken.

Investment Update

Manager Unruh brought the purchase of investments that were authorized at the April regular board meeting. Due to the nature of receiving information a week prior to authorization and the time to get the information to our investment broker, we were unable to get the same investments as discussed. At that time manager Unruh decided to put to investments into one offering which in effect placed the district 6.32% over the commercial bond allowance.

Unruh asked the board to authorize allowing for a 10% increase of our portfolio due to this commercial bond investment. This allowance would be for the term of this investment.

The motion was made by Trustee Banks and seconded by Trustee Ezell to allow for the commercial bond investment to be 10% over the 30% currently allowed by our investment policy for a 40% allowance for the term of the commercial bond investment. Roll Call vote: Banks – Aye, Ezell – Aye, Braun – Aye; unanimous.

Trustee Comments

Trustee Banks commented on the hard work that the staff has been doing to prepare for Memorial Day during this COVID-19 problem.

Trustee Ezell stated his concern with the upcoming budget with the loss of revenue in our property tax received by the district.

Chairman Braun expressed concern with the possibility of the state taking our money that we currently have with the county in various funds as they continue to determine their deficit.

Manager Unruh stated that the board will be taking a first look at the upcoming budget at the next board meeting and that we received more in the April property tax assessment than was expected. This in turn will give the district a good start in the next fiscal year.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 by Chairman Braun. The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2020.

Signed,

Timothy W. Unruh
District Manager