

**Kern County Cemetery District**  
Minutes for  
April 17, 2025

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

Call to Order: Call to Order at 12:00 pm by Chairman Braun. Chairman Braun led the flag salute.

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: None.

Public Comment: None

Consent Calendar: Minutes of the regular Board meeting for March 2025. The payroll warrants for 25/07 through 25/07 were approved. Vouchers, checks, and financial reports for March 2025 were approved. This was done by approval of the consent calendar by motion of Trustee Olsen and seconded by Trustee Ezell: 3 ayes, unanimous.

Management Update

- We had 11 services in Shafter and 8 services in Wasco for the month of March 2025. This gives us 202 services for the fiscal year to date. We are at an 18% cremation rate.
- Shafter Rent House: Demolition occurred between March 26-28, 2025. MD Demolition removed the septic tank and accumulated concrete from the cemetery grounds. Previously approved lighting and an alarm system for the garage and shop will begin soon.
- The Journeyman electric vehicles are failing due to battery and other minor maintenance issues. SJVA is still offering its grant program. Demos will be requested for possible replacement EVs. The change to lithium batteries and maintenance-free options for the newer EV models are very enticing.
- Memorial Day 2025: Staff will be preparing for this event. Staff at Wasco Cemetery will be involved in coordinating the Wasco event. Shafter staff will coordinate the Shafter event. Sound systems and podiums have been purchased for both locations. Reading of the Veteran's names will be the responsibility of the Wasco community and will only be read if there are volunteers.
- The 2025-25 CAPC Membership Guide Booklet is available. We receive one with our CAPC membership, and we will order a PDF copy at \$8.00 to forward to Board members and the Wasco secretary.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Review of Investments

The Investment Manager presented the Board with a letter explaining the investments of the District, including the Stifel, the County, and the WestAmerica investments. As of March 31, 2025, the District has \$9,191,325 as a combined investment of all accounts. The District has \$5,170,554 with the County of Kern, \$3,743,193 with Stifel, and \$277,578 with WestAmerica Bank. The investment with Stifel Investments has been made in accordance with the requirements set forth by the State of California and our Investment Policy. Manager Caudillo acknowledged that the District has ample liquidity to meet its obligations for the next 6 months.

The amount that is in each Kern County Cemetery District account is as follows:

- Maintenance and Operation (M&O) \$1,663,867
- Endowment Care \$1,491,901
- Contracts \$1,993,194
- Capital Projects \$ 81,592
- Stifel \$3,743,193
- WestAmerica Bank \$ 277,578

*The motion was made to receive and file this information and make it available to any who may wish to review its contents by Trustee Ezell and seconded by Trustee Olsen: 3 ayes, unanimous.*

Capital Needs Review – 2025-26 Budget

The Manager brought multiple items to the attention of the Board for the 2025-26 Budget. Firstly, funds are needed to replace small equipment: rotary cutters, shoring devices, and Exmark mowers. Office Equipment: The 8x8 phone system costs approximately \$5,800. Maintenance and Development: Trees at both the Shafter and Wasco Cemetery for \$40,000; Development of Section B at Shafter Cemetery for \$550,000; Engineering for Section B at \$60,000; New office/shop for Wasco Cemetery 600,000; Well/Pump Repair \$60,000; Repair or replacement of Wasco Shed Roofing for \$11,000; purchase four electric vehicles.

*No action at this time.*

Engagement Agreement – Mark Velasquez

Attorney Hunt serves as the District's attorney, and due to his recent retirement, re-entry into the workforce, and the massive changes in the construction/contractor sector in recent years. Attorney Hunt did not feel he would be the best fit to represent the District in legal matters for the development of Section B. Attorney Hunt encouraged Manager Caudillo to contact Attorney Mark Velasquez to serve as legal representative for this project. Attorney Mark Velasquez provided a Legal Service Agreement, and Caudillo is requesting authorization to use Attorney Velasquez.

*The motion was made by Trustee Olsen and seconded by Trustee Ezell to authorize the use of Attorney Velasquez as the District's primary attorney for the Section B project. The motion also included a request for Mark Velasquez to consider serving as the District's attorney for future matters pending his desire to be a legal representative full-time. The Board wishes to express its confidence in Attorney Velasquez. 3 ayes, unanimous.*

Review of Section B Contract

Provost and Pritchard have provided the “Contract Documents and Specifications for the 2025 SMP Site Improvement”. This contract outlines the guidelines for the expansion of Shafter Section B. It includes provisions related to Davis-Bacon and Caltrans, which are not applicable to the Shafter expansion project. P&P is reluctant to remove this language, as it is part of their standard contract and has been approved by their attorneys. Our attorney, Mark Velasquez, has also reviewed the contract and suggested removing specific phrases. However, he noted that if P&P is hesitant to make these changes, it will not ultimately impact the project requirements.

*Trustee Olsen moved to authorize and accept the Provost and Pritchard contract, with or without the Davis Bacon and Caltrans verbiage. Trustee Ezell seconded the motion. The motion included authorization to sign the contract. 3 ayes, unanimous.*

Shafter Pump Motor

The pump motor at the Shafter well was replaced in 2021; however, it has now failed and is no longer under warranty. As a result, staff is unable to run water, which puts the survival of the grass and trees at risk without a long-term water source. S.A. Camp was contacted, and their team removed the pump, confirming that a new motor was needed. Unfortunately, this expense was not included in the Budget, so Board authorization is required to cover the pump motor replacement cost.

*Trustee Braun moved to authorize the installation of a new motor for the Shafter pump at the estimated cost of \$20,000 to \$30,000, and Trustee Olsen seconded the motion. This motion authorizes the swift action of the Manager. 3 ayes, unanimous.*

Shafter Cemetery Tree Removal

The 2024-2025 Budget allowed up to \$30,000 for tree maintenance. There are three trees located at the site of the demolished rental house. These trees create an area that could encourage families to have a BBQ or picnic at this site. These three trees have weakened cores and termites. There is also a tree at the northeast corner of Section New E that has been deemed hazardous by both Western Tree Service and Alspaw Tree Service, and removal of these four trees would be prudent. The plan is to place gravel for a temporary parking lot at the demolition site.

Manager Caudillo also presented two proposals for the removal of the trees. Western Tree Service also provided information on their Tree Maintenance service. Under this service, Western Tree Service will log, tag, and monitor all the trees on the cemetery grounds, and a quarterly report will be provided regarding the maintenance and care of the trees.

Two quotes were obtained for the removal of the four trees and the grass pile.

- Western Tree Service \$7,675.00
- Alspaw Tree Service \$6,200.00

*Trustee Olsen moved to authorize the removal of the four trees and the grass pile by Alspaw Tree Service at \$6,200.00. The quote provides up to 5 loads of grass; if a 6<sup>th</sup> load is required, the motion includes an additional load of \$950.00. The Board requested that Western Tree Service attend a future Board meeting to present the benefits of their tree maintenance service. 3 ayes, unanimous.*

District Manager Performance Evaluation

The Board has decided not to conduct the Manager's performance evaluation. Evaluation sheets have been requested for review during the evaluation process. The Manager's performance evaluation is scheduled for the meeting on May 15, 2025, including a closed session.

*Trustee Braun has moved to postpone the Manager's evaluation. Trustee Braun requested the evaluation forms be provided to the Board and the evaluation is to be performed at the May 15, 2025, meeting. 3 ayes, unanimous.*

Recess to Closed Session

Chairman Braun requested a closed session and that the closed session include Manager Caudillo at 3:25 pm. Pursuant to Government Code §54957. Regarding Labor Negotiations for the District Manager.

Reconvened into Open Session

Trustee Braun reconvened into Open Session at 3:44 pm and announced no reportable action.

*No action was taken.*

Trustees' Comments

Trustee Braun: No comments  
Trustee Ezell: No comments  
Trustee Olsen: No comments

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm by Chairman Braun. The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2025.

Signed,

Eliza Caudillo  
District Manager