

Artesia Cemetery District

Meeting Location: 11142 Artesia Blvd., Cerritos, CA 90703

Board of Trustees

Chair Mike Laughlin

Vice Chair Michael Wada

Trustee Allison Stewart

Trustee Osvaldo Palhinha

Trustee Linda Gonzalez

General Manager Antonio Mendoza

District Counsel Karen A. O'Neil

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thursday, January 19, 2023

4:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laughlin called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Laughlin, Vice Chair Wada, Trustee Gonzalez, Trustee Palhinha, Trustee Stewart

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Wada

4. AGENDA

Vice Chair Wada motioned to approve the Agenda of the January 19, 2023 Special Meeting.

Trustee Palhinha seconded. **Approved**

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Moeen came in at 4:01pm to share his input on Action Item 6B

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. PURCHASE OF STORAGE SHED

Vice Chair Wada: Asked if he needed to abstain due to the fact that he owns (2) Tuff sheds himself. GM stated that there was no conflict of interest and Vice Chair Wada was actually a great person to weigh in on this due to his own experience with the sheds. Vice Chair Wada then asked if we were going to store equipment. GM replied no we would be storing paperwork from the office in there.

Trustee Palhinha: Asked if GM is happy with location. Had a concern if the shed will be big enough for future needs as well. GM responded we should be able to continually rotating paperwork based on the amount of time we are required to keep the records.

Trustee Stewart: She mentioned that bases were different- Tuff Shed was steel vs Shed Design was Wood and she feels steel was a better option.

Trustee Gonzalez: It is a lot of money, suggested we try and utilize space in the garage to store records. She felt the cost of the shed was too much.

Chair Laughlin: Asked if size of the shed would be big enough to handle all our needs for the long run. Asked if we needed to shred some stuff now to help reduce storage.

Trustee Palhinha motioned to approve the Purchase of the Tuff Shed for \$7,588.78. Trustee Stewart seconded. **Approved**

**B. TIER 4: INTERMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW DOUBLE-DEPTH TIER
Rows 1 through 38 (formerly known as BLOCKS 193-201)**

1. Change the direction: **Head west – Feet east** (ACD Traditional) vs. **Feet west – Head east**
Guest Mr. Moeen: Follows Islamic Muslim Practice. Prays Mecca (qibla direction). Muslim practices are currently at a warehouses or rooms. Cemeteries they currently visit are very far and looking for something closer. He is an Artesia Resident.
Trustee Gonzalez: If we approve to change the direction of the body, then she thinks we'd need to change where the headstone is placed. She is not sure how she feels about that because she feels it will change the look of the cemetery.
Trustee Stewart: She is not opposed to it because it's underground and we don't see it.
Trustee Palhinha: He is not ready to approve due to the fact that the community doesn't know about this. He wants meetings with all community to get their input.
Vice Chair Wada: For him it looks as option 1 opens options for others. He truly doesn't mind which way the body goes because we don't see it.
B1 - APPROVED: 3 votes in favor, 2 against

2. Change location of Headstone: From **West** of grave to **East** of grave:
Vice Chair Wada: Opposed due to impact of symmetry of cemetery
Trustee Palhinha: Opposed to change due impact of symmetry of cemetery
Trustee Stewart: Opposed to preserve uniformity of the cemetery
Trustee Gonzalez: Opposed
Chair Laughlin: Opposed due to messing up the current look of the cemetery in which we've worked on the last 3 years to align all the headstones and make the cemetery grounds look better.
B2 - REJECTED: 5 votes against

3. Change grave alignment: **To be at an angle** to accommodate their burial traditions:
Trustee Gonzalez: Opposed
Trustee Stewart: Opposed due to optimizing space, we would lose a lot of ground.
Trustee Palhinha: Opposed
Vice Chair Wada: Opposed due to impact on cemetery and optimizing space
Chair Laughlin: Asked if the body can be tilted in the casket. He will need to speak to someone about this.
B3 - REJECTED: 5 votes against

4. **Casket** (ACD Traditional) vs. **NO Casket** (NOTE: ACD allowed green burials in the past, but they were discontinued because of Covid).
Vice Chair Wada: Opposed due to city water coming from ground wells, he sees potential issues with City Council and residents, especially our neighbors on the other side of the wall.
Trustee Palhinha: Opposed, Strongly
Trustee Stewart: Opposed, asked if there were different laws regarding green burials.
Trustee Gonzalez: Opposed due to seeing a burial herself and risking cemetery visitors witnessing an exposed body.
Chair Laughlin: He asked Moeen if other cemeteries allow this? Moeen said that El Toro and Westminster allow full Muslim funerals.
GM Mendoza: Mentioned that he spoke to El Toro Cemetery and they do allow Muslim burials in a bio-degradable casket. They do not change any other procedures or guidelines.
B4 - REJECTED: 5 votes against

5. Family members and/or mortuary staff will go into grave: To receive the body and then position the body according to their beliefs (There is a 'hold-harmless' waiver that each person would sign before entering grave)

Trustee Gonzalez: Opposed

Trustee Stewart: Opposed due to liability issues

Trustee Palhinha: Opposed, he feels there's plenty of time to see prior to burial

Vice Chair Wada: Opposed due to Hold Harmless waiver isn't worth the weight its written on and it's a liability. It can also be a worker's comp issue, etc.

Chair Laughlin: Opposed, too much of a liability issue.

B5 - REJECTED: 5 votes against

Vice Chair Wada motioned to approve Tier 4: Interment recommendations for New Double-Depth tier 4 with changes made at this meeting and will be brought back at next board meeting. Trustee Stewart seconded. **APPROVED**

C. BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee Gonzalez: Thanked guest for coming and hopes we can still serve him in the future. Sorry for voting against his recommendations.

Trustee Palhinha: He is so pleased that we solved problems as we have, and praise all especially our General Manager.

Trustee Stewart: Thanked guest for coming out and giving input and thanks for a good meeting.

Vice Chair Wada: Congratulated Chair Laughlin on running the meeting. Thanked our guest for his input as well and apologized for voting against it.

Chair Laughlin: Thanked guest and he thanked him for his input. Hopes we can serve him in the future.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Stewart motioned to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Gonzalez seconded.

Chair Laughlin adjourned the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 5:27 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on **Thursday, February 9th at 4:00 p.m.** at the District Office, located at Artesia Cemetery District, 11142 Artesia Blvd, Cerritos, CA 90703