

The North Kern Cemetery District Minutes of Regular Meeting held August 14, 2025

The North Kern Cemetery Board meeting was held at 627 Austin St., Delano, CA., at 4:15 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Andrew Mendoza, Present were, Pearl Rivera, George Chase, Susana Valenzuela, Alica Santiago, Jorge Jaime Jr, Manager, and Connie Sandoval

Audience: Fernando Bravo, Lupe Rodriguez, Patrick Wolfe, Priscilla Aguilar Bello, and Denise Reyna

Public Comment: None

OPEN SESSION:

Approve Transfer of Revenue July 2025 to the County Treasurer for \$74,183.31.

Motion made by George Chase and seconded by Alicia Santiago to approve the Transfer of Revenue to the County Treasurer. Motion passed. No nays.

Approve July 2025 Bill List in the amount of \$108,069.24.

Motion made by Susana Valenzuela and seconded by George Chase to accept the Bill List in the amount of \$108,069.24. Motion passed. No nays.

Approve Financial Report for June 2025.

The District Manager informed the board that the office was closed because Xochitl, Connie, and he had gone to visit the Auditor Controller's office to seek assistance with the financial reports. Since Xochitl was not getting answers by email. They were informed by a county supervisor that the county had started a new program, KERN360, in which not all the information had been transferred yet, and they were still trying to figure out the new system. The months of June and July have not been closed due to issues arising with the system. The county supervisor estimates the program to be up and running by the end of September. Hopefully, the reports will be ready by October's board meeting. The board tabled the June 2025 financial report.

Approve Financial Report for July 2025.

The board tabled the July 2025 financial report.

Approve Profit and Loss Report for July 2025.

Motion made by Alicia Santiago and seconded by Pearl Rivera to approve the Profit and Loss report. Motion passed. No Nays.

Approve July 12, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Susanna Valenzuela and seconded by George Chase to approve the Board Minutes for July 12, 2025. Motion passed. No nays.

Regular Agenda:

Lupe Rodriguez / Headstone Issue

Lupe Rodriguez addressed the board, stating she has been coming to the cemetery for over 40 years to visit her daughter in baby land. She states she understands that if the grave has flowers, the trimming is skipped. She states that her solar lights are being broken, and she feels like someone is only doing it to her headstone. She was told by staff that a dog or a homeless person could have been breaking her decorations. She commented that a dog or a homeless person is not going to say, "Let's go to Lupe's grave." Also, the tree in baby land was taken down, and that tree had been there for many years. A new tree was planted, and the staff claimed a red or black mustang ran over it. She states she saw an employee spraying the tree, and she is not willing to name the employee. If the other tree was there for many years, why is the new tree not growing? Lupe informed the board that she had called Art Armendariz and Couch's office. The District Manager informed the board that the first tree was run over by a mustang. The second tree that Mr. Patrick wanted did not thrive. The District Manager suggests planting another kind of tree, and he has no problem replacing it, but it will be his choice now. When anyone donates a tree, we do not call the donors for any reason because the tree belongs to the cemetery. Lupe commented that as long as the district plants another tree, she does not have any problems. The District Manager commented that Lupe feels like she is being targeted by the staff and the contractors. The District Manager and Andrew met with Art Armendariz and Council Member Brian Osorio last week to address public concerns. Also, the District Manager states that the contractors do not mow or trim baby land because the DADD staff mows with a push mower and trims baby land by hand. Alicia suggests making a log and a quick reminder to the staff and DADD that if they see anything out of the ordinary, they should report it and log it in. The District Manager asks the board for permission to remove the existing tree and choose a new one. The board approved to remove the existing tree and replace it with a new tree.

Denice Reyna and Adrian Lopez / Headstone on Upright Section

Denice Reyna addressed the board that her husband, Adrian Lopez, could not get the day off, but her mother, Priscilla, is joining her. She states she asked if Xochitl it was okay to purchase a small baby flat headstone when she came into the office to make funeral arrangements for her son. Denice understands that Xochitl had made a mistake, but this is another loss to her after just losing her baby. The District Manager informed Denise that our rules only allow upright headstones in the upright section. Denise suggested that maybe the board would allow her to place her baby's headstone standing upright in front of the upright. She was notified that it would not be allowed. Andrew reviewed the burial order and noticed that Denice was charged for the marker setting fee and vases. George states that since she was charged at the time of burial, it should have been caught there, so he believes that we are at fault, and we should pay for the headstone. Andrew suggests updating the burial order and adding upright to the form to avoid future mistakes.

Roll call vote:

Pearl Rivera Aye

Alicia Santiago Aye

Susana Valenzuela Aye

George Chase Aye

Andrew Mendoza Aye

Roll call vote 5-0 to reimburse for the baby flat headstone and galvanized vases. Motion passed unanimously. No Nays.

Delinquent Accounts

The board was presented with two accounts that are delinquent for non-payment. The board was informed that the same protocol was used, and a certified letter was sent out. The District Manager told the board that one of the delinquent accounts belongs to the Gonzalez family, for whom the police had to be called to the office due to disruptive behavior and threats to the staff. The District Manager also informed the board that a vendor placed a double upright for the Gonzalez family without notifying the office. Andrew suggests making a form for the vendors to get approval from the cemetery prior to installing the uprights. Motion made by George Chase and seconded by Alicia Santiago to go forward with delinquent accounts of Ana L. & Juan M. Arceo as well as Humberto Gonzalez & Humberto Gonzalez, Jr., if accounts are not made current by August 15, 2025. All payments shall be forfeited to North Kern Cemetery District. Motion passed. No Nays.

2025-2026 Budget

The board reviewed and discussed the budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Motion made by George Chase and seconded by Alicia Santiago to approve the 2025-2026 budget. Motion passed. No Nays.

REPORTS

Manager's/Trustee's Reports: Burials: July Casketed: 31 Cremations: 10 Infants: 1 Disinterment: 0 Monthly Total: 31

YTD: 211 YTD Casketed: 149 YTD Cremations: 57 Infant YTD: 4 Disinterment YTD: 1

The District Manager reports to the board that the City of Delano has finally approved the project. LAV/Pinnacle will contact the manager to discuss the next steps. The board was informed that Lupe Rodriguez and the District Manager's brother-in-law contacted Art Armendariz and Council Member Brian Osorio. Lupe Rodriguez reached out because she felt the contractors and staff were targeting her. The District Manager mentioned that she was so upset that she threatened him. The brother-in-law was caught blowing, and a security guard made contact with him. He stated that Council Member Brian Osorio and Art Armendariz permitted him to do so. They arranged a meeting with him, which Andrew also attended. They met on a Thursday, the day the contractors trim the cemetery, so they were able to see them trimming. The District Manager took them on a tour and explained that they have no jurisdiction at the cemetery. They discussed how the Delano police do not respond to calls, and they suggested a meeting with the police chief. Additionally, the District Manager would like to hire a temporary employee for the office. The grave look-up for CemSites has finally been completed, and with the extra staff, there will be no downtime. The board requested that this topic be added to next month's agenda. The manager also informed the board that the internet needs an upgrade, as

phone calls are being dropped and the connection is slow. Denise, a neighbor near the shop, contacted the District Manager to see if the board would be interested in buying her house, which she is offering for \$220,000. It is unclear whether the house is in good condition to rent out. Demolition of the house and selling the lots may not be profitable. Andrew suggested the property might be suitable for cremation niches and an ash garden. The week of the CAPC conference coincides with the day of the board meeting. The board has agreed to hold the meeting the week after the conference, on Thursday, October 16th. Recently, the District Manager learned that Manuel Morales, a former employee, is currently fighting a workers' compensation case against the district. He was informed by the attorney that there will be no settlement or lifetime medical because they have video evidence of him. In a separate lawsuit, the District Manager had a disposition with the attorneys, and they might ask for another witness, maybe Davila or Xochitl. Also, since the city approved the project, the District Manager advised the board that they need to explore how to finance it to keep the project moving forward. The board was also informed about an issue with the Saturday service. The hearse arrived with a casket, but the service was scheduled and dug for a cremation burial. The blue digger card indicated cremation, but the calendar listed a full-size casket burial. The good thing is that the mortuary arrived early enough for the staff to dig for the casket. On another note, for the Day of the Dead, Father Miguel would like to have mass at the cemetery. The District Manager informed the board that it falls on a Sunday this year, and arrangements need to be made with the employees to come out on that Sunday; the board will need to decide whether to pay overtime or double time.

Adjournment: Motion made by Susana Valenzuela and seconded by George Chase that meeting be closed at 6:29 p.m. Motion passed. No Nays.

Minutes recorded by Connie Sandoval, Executive Assistant