

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
Friday, August 14, 2026
8:00 a.m.

A meeting of the Governing Board of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District (“District”) was held at the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District Executive Building at 44801 Village Ct., Suite 104, Palm Desert, CA 92260 on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, August 10, 2026, at the following locations:

1. CVPCD Administrative Office – 82895 Avenue 52, Coachella, CA 92236
2. CVPCD Executive Office – 44801 Village Ct., Suite 104, Palm Desert, CA 92260
3. The CVPCD website – <http://coachellacemetery.org>

Chair Rosales called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m., those in attendance were as follows:

Trustees present:

Ernesto Rosales, Chair
Judy Vossler, Vice Chair
Marcos Coronel, Trustee
Bruce Underwood, Trustee

Trustees absent:

None

One Board seat was vacant due to the passing of Trustee John Rios.

Additional participants:

Josh Bonner, General Manager
Sherry Winder, Finance Manager/Clerk of the Board
Carlos Campos, General Counsel
Marlene Navarro-Lupian, Cemetery Services Manager

Additional participants for Public Comment:

None

FLAG SALUTE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jorge Avila emailed regarding Cemetery closing hours during summer months.

Cemetery Services Manager Navarro-Lupian shared by email a staff compliment she received following a service on cemetery grounds.

Shirley Anderson of Indio mailed a letter complimenting staff.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

1. CONSENT CALENDAR

1.1 Trustee Minutes

July 10, 2026

1.2 Finance and Administration

- a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed (June 2026)
- b. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed (July 2026)
- c. Investment Report (June 2026)
- d. Investment Report (July 2026)
- e. Budget to Actual (June 2026)
- f. Budget to Actual (July 2026)
- g. Final 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget Report

1.3 Selection of CEPPT Investment Strategy

Investment Strategy for the District's Pension Stabilization Fund

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the selection of CEPPT Strategy 1 for the District's initial \$500,000 Pension Stabilization Fund investment.

Financial Analysis:

As of May 31, 2026, the District held approximately \$6.54 million in General Fund investments and approximately \$19.45 million in total investments. The District also reported year-to-date ordinary revenues exceeding ordinary expenditures by approximately \$500,806. The initial \$500,000 CEPPT investment represents approximately 7.6% of the District's General Fund investment balance.

The District's 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report identified a net pension liability of \$959,761. The \$500,000 CEPPT investment represents approximately 52% of that reported liability. Because the District maintains sufficient General Fund liquidity and reserves to meet its near-term operating and capital needs, staff believes the District can tolerate the additional short-term fluctuations associated with Strategy 1.

The Pension Stabilization Fund is intended to address long-term pension costs. Accordingly, Strategy 1's greater long-term growth potential is better aligned with the purpose and anticipated investment horizon of the funds. Both strategies are subject to an annual expense ratio of 0.25%.

1.4 Irrigation Pump Parts Replacement and Additions

Addition to the 2026 Capital Project Budget

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees:

- 1. Approve funding of \$15,307.50 for replacement of the irrigation jockey pump and installation of the remote pump-station monitoring system.*
- 2. Authorize a 10% project contingency of \$1,530.75 and delegate authority to the General Manager to approve necessary changes within that amount, for a total capital authorization not to exceed \$16,838.25.*
- 3. Authorize the project's inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Capital Improvement Budget.*
- 4. Approve ongoing remote-monitoring services from Cloudburst Engineering, Inc. at a cost not to exceed \$1,000 per month, to be added to the District's 2026-2027 landscape maintenance budget (\$12,000 to 6710 · Grounds Maintenance).*

Financial Analysis:

Cloudburst Engineering, Inc. provided Estimate No. 1805 in the amount of \$8,132.50 for replacement of the jockey pump. The estimate includes:

Five-horsepower submersible pump and motor: \$3,800.00

Installation labor: \$2,500.00

Crane charges: \$1,500.00

Sales tax: \$332.50

The estimate does not include replacement of the column pipe. If the column pipe is found to require replacement, the contractor will provide a separate estimate for District consideration.

Cloudburst also provided Estimate No. 1806 for the equipment, software, installation, and monthly services necessary to remotely monitor the pump station. The one-time costs include:

Remote-monitoring software: \$3,500.00

Two Profinet cards and associated wiring: \$2,000.00

Installation: \$1,500.00

Sales tax: \$175.00

Total one-time monitoring system cost: \$7,175.00

The total capital cost for the jockey pump replacement and remote monitoring system is \$15,307.50. Because these improvements exceed the District's \$5,000 capitalization threshold and are expected to provide benefits beyond the current fiscal year, staff recommends adding the project to the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Capital Improvement Budget. Sufficient funding is available in the Capital Outlay Fund.

Ongoing remote monitoring will cost \$1,000 per month, or up to \$12,000 annually. The service includes alarm acknowledgment, evaluation of the appropriate response, monitoring of pump pressures and other critical system functions, and one on-site service visit per month, if necessary. This recurring service cost will be incorporated into the District's landscape maintenance operating budget and will not be capitalized.

1.5 New Security Monitoring System

Additon to the 2026 Capital Project Budget

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees:

- 1. Approve the creation of a Coachella Security System Improvements capital line item in the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget.*
- 2. Authorize the reallocation of \$50,000 from the completed maintenance building motor and roll-up door project to the new capital line item.*

Financial Analysis:

The final cost of the security system cannot be determined until the District completes the competitive proposal process. Based on the anticipated equipment and service requirements, staff estimates that the initial capital cost will range from approximately \$20,000 to \$40,000. Ongoing monitoring, equipment maintenance, connectivity, and subscription expenses will be evaluated through the Request for Proposals.

The Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Capital Budget included \$100,000 for the replacement of motors and roll-up doors at the maintenance building. The project has been completed for approximately \$30,000, leaving an available balance of approximately \$70,000. Staff recommends reallocating \$50,000 of the remaining appropriation to a new capital line item for the District's security system improvements. This would provide sufficient funding for the anticipated project while retaining approximately \$20,000 in savings from the original capital appropriation.

Capital Allocation	Amount
<i>Original motor and roll-up door appropriation</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>
<i>Completed motor and roll-up door project</i>	<i>(\$30,000)</i>
<i>Proposed security system allocation</i>	<i>(\$50,000)</i>
Remaining capital budget savings	\$20,000

Issuance of the Request for Proposals would not obligate the District to select a vendor or enter into a contract. Staff will evaluate proposals based on cost, technology, system reliability, monitoring capabilities, compatibility with District facilities, ongoing service expenses, and the potential reduction of existing security costs. Any ongoing monitoring expenses would be incorporated into the appropriate operating budget following vendor selection. Any contract requiring Board approval under the District's purchasing policy would be returned to the Board for consideration.

Motion: Vossler – Move for approval

Second: Coronel

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Vacant: One Board seat

Motion passed.

2. ACTION ITEMS

2.1 Headstone Setting Fees

Consideration of recently adopted fee increases

Staff Recommendation:

Because setting fees below the cost of providing services is not generally recommended as a longterm financial practice, staff must default to the fees as recommended through independent fee study as our recommendation.

Financial Analysis:

During Fiscal Year 2025–2026, the District completed:

- *281 single headstone settings;*
- *125 double headstone settings; and*
- *73 headstone resets.*

The District generated approximately \$158,000 in headstone setting and other marker-related revenue during the fiscal year. Using last year's service volume, the previous and current fees would produce the following estimated revenue from new single and double headstone settings:

<i>Headstone Type</i>	<i>LY Revenue</i>	<i>Revenue at Current Fee</i>
<i>Single</i>	<i>\$89,920</i>	<i>\$198,293</i>
<i>Double</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>	<i>\$93,947</i>

Based on the same service volume, the recently approved fees would generate approximately \$142,320.77 more annually from new single and double headstone settings than the previous fees. This represents an increase of approximately 94.9%. Revenue from the 73 resets and other marker-related services is not included in this comparison.

The financial impact of any fee reduction can be estimated by multiplying the reduction by the annual number of settings. Based on last year's volume:

- *Every \$10 reduction in the single headstone fee would reduce annual revenue by approximately \$2,810.*
- *Every \$10 reduction in the double headstone fee would reduce annual revenue by approximately \$1,250.*
- *A \$10 reduction applied to both fees would reduce annual revenue by approximately \$4,060.*
- *A \$100 reduction applied to both fees would reduce annual revenue by approximately \$40,600.*

Additional Considerations

- *Any fee established below the calculated full cost recovery amount would create a subsidy equal to the difference between the cost of providing the service and the fee paid by the customer. That difference may be supported by property tax revenue, investment earnings, other service revenue, or available District reserves.*
- *A phased approach would also produce less revenue than immediate full cost recovery during the phase-in period. However, the annual subsidy would decrease as the fees move closer to the calculated full cost recovery amounts.*
- *If the Board directs staff to evaluate cost reductions before changing the fees, there would be no immediate financial impact. The recently approved rates would remain in effect until the Board takes further action.*

• Finally, if the Board does make a change, they may want to consider how a change might impact families that have already paid the increased fee, in the event they ask for consideration.

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed the headstone setting fees, explaining that the Willdan Financial fee study included administrative time omitted from the prior study and that the Board has discretion over the level of cost recovery. The Board discussed public concerns regarding the increased costs, including an example in which headstone removal, border replacement, and resetting totaled approximately \$2,400. Following discussion, the Board directed staff to review the time and potential cost savings associated with privatizing headstone border replacement.

2.2 Classification and Compensation Study Follow-up Items

Consideration of Classification, Compensation, and Employee Benefit Proposals

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board discuss the proposals and provide direction or take separate action on each of the following:

- 1. A 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment and its effective date.*
- 2. The proposed six-step classification and salary schedule, including employee placement and eligibility for advancement.*
- 3. An annual cost-of-living review process, including whether future adjustments should be capped at 3%.*
- 4. A 10% increase in the cafeteria plan contribution for the upcoming year and a potential 5% cap on future annual increases.*
- 5. Further review of the cafeteria plan cash-back option and the potential use of any resulting savings.*
- 6. Development of a proposed Director classification, direction from the Board on what they hope to accomplish with the position, salary range, organizational placement, and financial analysis for consideration at a future meeting.*

Financial Analysis:

The Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Operating Budget includes approximately \$2,053,034 in total payroll and employee-related expenses, consisting of:

<u>Budget category</u>	<u>FY 2026–2027 Amount</u>
Salaries	\$1,091,951.76
Payroll taxes	\$80,384.71
Overtime	\$40,000.00
Cafeteria plan	\$259,200.00
Other benefits	\$300,208.85
Retirement	\$192,892.50
Unemployment insurance	\$7,896.00
Workers' compensation	\$34,500.00
Total payroll and employee-related expenses	\$2,053,033.82

The budget currently projects operating revenues of \$4,763,075 and operating expenses of

\$4,611,623.82, resulting in projected net operating income of approximately \$151,451.18. The financial effect of the proposals would depend upon which actions the Board approves and how they are implemented.

Six-Step Salary Schedule

The current salary schedule contains five steps, with approximately 5% between each step. Adding a sixth step would increase the maximum salary available within each classification by approximately 5%. Approval of the schedule alone would not necessarily create an immediate expense. The actual cost would depend upon which employees are eligible to advance to Step 6 and when those advancements become effective.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment

Applying a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment to the entire budgeted salary line of \$1,091,951.76 would produce a maximum estimated direct salary increase of approximately \$27,298.79 annually. The actual amount may be lower depending upon which positions and employees are included.

The adjustment would also increase retirement contributions, payroll taxes, workers' compensation premiums, and other salary-based costs. Therefore, the total annual cost would exceed the direct salary increase. If the adjustment is added to base salaries, it would become an ongoing expense, despite being described as a one-time adjustment.

Cafeteria Plan Contribution

The Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget includes \$259,200 for the cafeteria plan. A 10% increase to the budgeted contribution would result in an estimated additional annual cost of \$25,920, assuming the number of participating employees and coverage arrangements remain unchanged.

The 2027 CalPERS premiums will increase between approximately 4.36% and 10.01%, depending upon the health plan selected. A 10% increase in the District contribution would generally offset the upcoming premium increases, although the effect on individual employees would vary by plan and coverage level.

Capping future annual contribution increases at 5% would provide greater budget predictability. However, employees would be responsible for a greater portion of any future premium increase exceeding the Board-approved adjustment.

Combined Immediate Effect

Based on the current salary and cafeteria plan appropriations, the 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment and 10% cafeteria plan increase would have the following estimated direct effect:

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Estimated annual cost</i>
2.5% cost-of-living adjustment	Up to \$27,298.79
10% cafeteria plan increase	\$25,920.00
Combined direct cost Up to	\$53,218.79
Related salary-based employer costs	Additional amount to be determined

Before related employer costs, the combined direct expense would reduce projected net operating income from approximately \$151,451 to approximately \$98,232. This amount does not include the cost of advancing employees to a sixth salary step or creating a Director position.

Proposed Director Position

No funding for a new Director position is specifically identified in the Fiscal Year 2026–2027

Budget. The financial effect would include salary, retirement, payroll taxes, health and cafeteria benefits, workers' compensation, and other employment-related expenses. If authorized, the General Manager would develop the classification and job description and administer the position within the amount approved by the Board. Depending upon the approved budget and effective date, a budget amendment would be required.

Overall Budget Effect

The projected operating surplus may be sufficient to absorb some of the proposed compensation and benefit changes. However, approving the cost-of-living adjustment, cafeteria plan increase, employee advancement to a sixth step, and a new Director position together could use a substantial portion of, or potentially exceed, the projected \$151,451.18 in net operating income.

Staff recommends that the Board consider the cumulative ongoing cost of its decisions and identify the effective date of each approved change. Following Board direction, staff can calculate the precise fiscal effect and return with any necessary budget amendments at the next scheduled Board meeting.

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed the follow-up items from the Classification and Compensation Study, which had previously been discussed in open and closed sessions. At the Board's request, the proposals were returned for consideration in August, including the proposed compensation and benefit changes and the possible creation of a Director position. The Board agreed to provide direction for each item listed in the staff recommendation individually.

Following discussion, the Board approved:

1. A 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment effective with the next pay period.
2. A new six-step salary schedule incorporating the 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment.
3. Annual review of cost-of-living adjustments, with future adjustments capped at 3%.
4. A 10% increase to the cafeteria plan contribution for the upcoming year, with future annual adjustments capped at 5%.
5. Elimination of the cafeteria plan's 50% cash-back provision.
6. No action on the proposed Director position.

Motion: Coronel – Yes on 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5 remove cafeteria cash-back plan, 6 no action

Second: Vossler

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: None

Vacant: One Board seat

Motion passed.

2.3 Veterans Committee

Proposal to form a Veterans Committee

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board determine whether it wishes to:

- 1. Establish a standing Veterans Committee with continuing responsibility for advising the Board regarding the Veterans Memorial, veterans-related services, Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities, and other matters assigned by the Board; or*
- 2. Establish a temporary ad hoc Veterans Committee to review the District's existing veterans related services and events, evaluate the feasibility and potential location of relocating the Purple Heart Memorial, and consult with veterans and other interested community representatives as appropriate. An ad hoc committee would present its findings and recommendations to the Board by a date established by the Board, and Dissolve upon completion of its assignment;*

Financial Analysis:

Formation of the committee would not create an immediate direct expenditure. However, a standing committee would require ongoing staff support for agenda preparation, public posting, meeting attendance, minutes, records management, and follow-up activities. An ad hoc committee would require less administrative support because its work would be limited in scope and duration.

Formation of either committee would not authorize expenditures for events or improvements. Any project or expenditure exceeding existing administrative or budget authority would be presented separately to the Board for consideration.

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed that this item was brought forward by Trustee Coronel, who proposed establishing a formal advisory committee composed of veterans to advise the District. Board discussion ensued, and the Board agreed that no action was needed at this time.

2.4 Legislative Action Authority

Consideration of the District's legislative response process

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board provide direction establishing a practical mechanism for the District to participate in time sensitive legislative and regulatory advocacy consistent with the existing Legislative Advocacy Policy.

Specifically, staff recommends that the Board either restore authority to the General Manager to take positions on matters that clearly fall within the Board adopted Advocacy Priorities, with all such activity subsequently reported to the Board, or establish a two member Legislative Advocacy Committee authorized to act when legislative or regulatory timelines do not permit consideration by the full Board.

Either option would preserve Board oversight while allowing the District to maintain an effective voice on matters that may directly affect its finances, operations, employees, and ability to provide services.

Financial Analysis:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with changing the Board's administrative direction regarding implementation of the existing Legislative Advocacy Policy.

Legislative and regulatory measures considered through the advocacy process may, however, have significant future fiscal impacts on the District. The recent request concerning proposed changes to PEPPRA is an example of legislation with the potential to affect future District personnel and retirement costs.

Discussion: GM Bonner reported that the District's legislative voice had diminished because requests requiring timely responses did not align with scheduled Board meetings. He explained that existing policy authorizes him to respond on the District's behalf in accordance with the Board-adopted legislative platform and requested clarification of the Board's prior direction.

Board discussion ensued. The Board supported GM Bonner continuing to represent the District in accordance with the existing platform and discussed reviewing the nearly three-year-old platform during a future study session. No action was taken.

3. INFORMATION ITEMS

3.1 Centennial Celebration Update

Planning for the District's 100-year anniversary

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed preliminary plans for the District's 100th anniversary in August 2027, including a visitor guide, heritage trail, promotional video, historical website, advertising campaign, community celebration, and possible partnership with the Coachella Valley History Museum for a ghost tour. The proposed historical materials would highlight the District's history, former Trustees and General Managers, veterans, notable individuals interred at the cemetery, and significant cemetery features.

The Board supported holding a communitywide celebration at the cemetery during cooler weather, potentially in conjunction with Dia de los Muertos. The Board also discussed creating an interactive centennial website, partnering with the Coachella Valley History Museum, and soliciting community stories for staff to review and select. GM Bonner noted that the expanded plans may require additional funding. Staff will continue developing the proposal and return it to the Board for further consideration.

3.2 Flower Cups for Double Headstones

Allowance for multiple cups

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed the request, previously raised during public comment, to allow two flower cups with double headstones. He identified implementation considerations, including whether the change should be established by policy or administrative procedure, apply automatically or only upon request, apply to existing or only new headstones, and address headstones with existing concrete installations.

Following discussion, the Board directed staff to develop an administrative procedure and return the matter to the Board if implementation concerns arise.

3.3 Board Packet Printing

Electronic review options for board packets

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed the item, which was brought forward at the request of Vice Chair Vossler to reduce the volume of printed Board packet materials by providing some documents electronically. The Board discussed a hybrid option that would continue providing printed packets to Trustees who prefer them. GM Bonner will test tablet-based packets with interested Trustees.

3.4 Alternative Niche Vase Option

Neat Niche Flower & Flag Vase

Discussion: GM Bonner reviewed a lower-cost niche vase option identified at a recent conference, noting that the increased cost of the District's current vase may be unaffordable for some families. He presented options to sell the vases to families or make them available for shared public use, similar to Riverside National Cemetery, and recommended purchasing 50 vases initially. He noted that the purchase would require the item to return to the Board for budget approval.

Board discussion ensued. The Board expressed a preference for the current vase style and directed staff to return with a recommendation at the next Board meeting.

4. COMMITTEE UPDATES

4.1 LAFCO MSR Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: The Committee reported that it had not met since the previous Board meeting. The Committee also discussed outstanding questions regarding the tax amount to be negotiated by the County, the applicable taxing mechanism, and examples from other agencies. General Counsel Campos recommended that GM Bonner attend the next Committee meeting to assist with preparing a staff report.

5. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

5.1 Trustee Comments and Event/Function Report Out

Chair Rosales had no report and requested another email regarding upcoming required training.

Vice Chair Vossler reported completing ethics training and enrolling in sexual-harassment-prevention training but had not yet received the training link from CSDA. She also continued to visit the office to sign checks as needed.

Trustee Coronel reported attending the GCVCC Legislative Committee meeting. He requested replacement of deteriorated traffic cones, and staff clarified that the cones belonged to the landscaping contractor, which will be asked to replace them. He also asked about a flag-replacement schedule, and GM Bonner confirmed that all flags, including the POW flag, are replaced regularly.

Trustee Coronel congratulated employees participating in the education-reimbursement program and reported that Desert Recreation District may pursue another special-assessment measure and seek the District's support. GM Bonner noted that the District's legislative platform would guide any response.

Trustee Underwood reported meeting with BB&K regarding LAFCO and attending presentations concerning SB 827, Brown Act updates, and federal funding opportunities. He also reported that Nikki Winslow won the CSDA election and noted that the landscaping contractor was behind on required reports.

5.2 General Manager Update

GM Bonner reported completion of the decomposed-granite replacement and improvements near the Veterans Memorial. He noted that Our Lady of Soledad no longer holds Monday services, which may affect the District's schedule. He also provided updates on landscaping hot spots, a temporary road repair, the road-construction and CRM solicitations, Dia de los Muertos permitting, and the pending HUD road-funding agreement anticipated later in the fall.

FM Winder and GM Bonner reviewed security-billing concerns, and the Board requested a copy of the security contract. The Board also commended staff for converting the basketball hoop into lighting, discussed the PR firm's redesign of the newsletter, and requested the landscaping contractor's overdue report.

GM Bonner reported two major tree-branch failures in the northeast corner, one of which damaged a portion of the fence. Following the second failure, the arborist recommended removal of the affected tree.

Meeting was adjourned to closed session at 10:27 a.m.

6. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

6.1 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)

Olga Castaneda Torres v. Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District, et al.

Riverside County Superior Court, Case No. CVPS2602583

Meeting resumed from closed session at 10:28 a.m.

Counsel Campos reported that the Board received an update on one item in closed session and took no action.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION

Friday, September 11, 2026

8:00 a.m.

Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District Executive Office

44801 Village Ct., Suite 104

Palm Desert, CA 92260

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherry Winder

Clerk of the Board

Approved: _____ BOT Mtg.