

**Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District**  
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes  
Friday, January 9, 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, January 9, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

Public Notices were posted by the Clerk of the Board on Monday, January 5, 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 Ernesto Rosales called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m., those in attendance were as follows:

**Trustees present:**

Ernesto Rosales, Chair *(left at 11:14 a.m.)*  
Judy Vossler, Vice Chair  
Marcos Coronel, Trustee  
Bruce Underwood, Trustee

**Trustees absent:**

John Rios, Trustee *(Excused, Board action Underwood/Coronel – 4-0)*

**Additional participants:**

Josh Bonner, General Manager  
Sherry Winder, Finance Manager/Clerk of the Board  
Carlos Campos, General Counsel  
Jayson Braude, Kiley & Associates *(via Zoom)*

**Additional participants for Public Comment:**

Jason Jackson, Southwest Landscape & Maintenance  
Robert Pantanella, Southwest Landscape & Maintenance  
Quentin Kaplan, Conserve LandCare  
Jonathan Silva, Conserve LandCare

**FLAG SALUTE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jason Jackson and Robert Pantanella of Southwest Landscape & Maintenance addressed the Board regarding Item 3.4.

Quentin Kaplan and Jonathan Silva of Conserve LandCare also addressed the Board regarding Item 3.4.

## **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

GM Bonner noted there were no additions to the agenda and requested that Item 3.4, “Award of Landscape Contract” be moved to Item 3.1.

Motion: Underwood – Move for approval

Second: Coronel

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

## **1. PRESENTATIONS**

### **1.1 Presentation by Jayson Braude, Kiley & Associates**

District lobbying updates

Jayson Braude of Kiley & Associates updated the Board on the District’s Congressional funding request, noting the \$1 million request remains under consideration as part of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill. He reported that representatives from Congressman Ruiz’s office recently toured the cemetery to better understand the project’s community benefit and expressed optimism that the process will move forward later this month. GM Bonner noted he provided the tour and shared that the project would also support improvements to the Veterans Memorial. The Board requested notification of future official visits and asked to receive the lobbyist newsletter, which staff will forward by email. The Board thanked Mr. Braude for the update.

## **2. CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **2.1 Trustee Minutes**

a. Board Meeting – November 14, 2025

### **2.2 Finance and Administration**

a. Approval of Expenditures – Checks and ACH transactions as detailed (November 2025)

b. Investment Report (November 2025)

c. Budget to Actual (November 2025)

### **2.3 Liquidation of Surplus IT Equipment**

Authorization to Utilize Alternate Methods for Liquidation

**Staff Recommendations:** *Authorize the General Manager to utilize alternate fair and open market-based methods to liquidate the surplus Meraki MS350-48FP network switch, including soliciting competitive bids from specialized enterprise equipment resellers and asset recovery firms, and to take all actions necessary to complete the disposition in a manner that maximizes cost recovery for the District.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The original acquisition cost of the equipment was \$9,556.05. Proceeds from liquidation are unknown at this time but are expected to exceed the most recent public auction result of \$133.34. Any funds received from the sale will be deposited in accordance with District financial policies. No additional District funds are required.*

## **2.4 Landscape Agreement Extension**

Extend existing landscape maintenance agreement one month

**Staff Recommendations:** *Approve Amendment No. 4 to the Agreement for General Services with Southwest Landscape & Maintenance, LLC, retroactively extending the contract term from December 14, 2025, through January 14, 2026, as presented.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The cost of the one-month extension is \$33,498.00, consistent with the contractor's existing monthly rate. Sufficient funds are available within the approved budget. Approval of this item authorizes payment for services already rendered during the extended term.*

## **2.5 Classification and Compensation Study**

Budget authorization for the project

**Staff Recommendations:** *Authorize a budget allocation not to exceed \$19,825 to fund the District's Classification and Compensation Study as previously directed by the Board.*

**Financial Analysis:** *The total proposed cost for the Classification and Compensation Study is \$19,825, as detailed in the selected proposal. This amount is within the General Manager's contracting authority but requires Board authorization for budget expenditure. Funding will be incorporated into the appropriate fiscal year budget upon approval (6140 – Consulting).*

## **2.6 Annual District Document Disposal**

Board authorization to dispose of District documents in compliance with policy

**Staff Recommendations:** *Staff recommends the Board direct staff to destroy and dispose of the documents as described in Exhibit A.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known financial impact resulting from this action.*

**Discussion:** The Board questioned the \$14,000 Arroyo payment under Item 2.2 due to the high cost. Finance Manager Winder explained that the charges are for quarterly vehicle services for the District's full fleet and were approved in the annual budget. GM Bonner noted that onsite servicing for larger equipment is specialized and costly, and shared that a backhoe oil change can cost about \$1,500.

**Motion: Vossler – Move for approval**

Second: Coronel

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood  
Abstain: None  
No: None  
Absent: Rios  
Motion passed.

### 3. ACTION ITEMS

#### 3.1 Award of Landscape Contract (formerly Item 3.4)

Review and approve landscape maintenance agreement

**Staff Recommendations:** Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees award the Landscape Maintenance contract to Conserve LandCare, LLC, based on the results of the RFP evaluation process. Conserve achieved the highest overall composite score when considering approach, experience and references, and cost, consistent with the evaluation criteria established in the RFP.

Staff further recommends that the Board authorize the General Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with Conserve in a form consistent with the RFP and proposed contract terms (Exhibit E), subject to review and approval by District counsel.

Consistent with the District's procurement policy, staff additionally recommends that the Board delegate authority to the General Manager to approve contract change orders and amendments not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the awarded contract value, provided that the cumulative contract amount remains within the Board-approved award. Additional contingency authority may be brought forward to the Board for consideration should the nature of the work or unforeseen conditions warrant further adjustments.

**Financial Analysis:** The Conserve proposal represents the lowest monthly cost submitted in response to the RFP. Awarding the contract to Conserve is anticipated to result in ongoing operational savings while maintaining required service levels and performance standards. Final contract costs are established in the proposal as:

\$24,860.25 Monthly

\$298,323 Annually

Additional work will be billed at \$65/hour, \$97.50 an hour (after hours)

Contract will be subject to a 4% annual value increase based on Consumer Price Index, CPU industry increase, governmental regulatory increases, or manufacturer or supplier increases.

The proposed agreement represents an annual savings of \$109,053 (current agreement is \$33,498 per month/\$407,376 annually).

**Discussion:** GM Bonner noted there was an amendment to the alternative options in the staff report distributed to the Board. He reported that the existing landscape contract expired three months ago and was temporarily extended while the RFP was completed. Eight qualified proposals were received, and a staff committee recommended Conserve LandCare as the highest-scoring bidder at \$24,860 per month (\$298,323 annually), an estimated savings of about \$109,000 per year compared to the current agreement. Board discussion ensued regarding the RFP process and scoring, vendor experience, the wide range of bid pricing, and concerns about maintaining service continuity and cemetery appearance. The Board also considered public comments from the current contractor requesting a chance to revisit scope and pricing, and comments from the recommended bidder regarding experience

and ability to meet the proposed scope. The Board directed GM Bonner to determine whether negotiating with the current vendor would be in the District's best interest and return with recommendations, noting that Item 2.4 would need to be reconsidered to extend the current contract further if additional time is needed.

**Motion: Continue item and direct GM to determine if it is in best interest of District to maintain the current vendor - Vossler**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

**Motion: Reconsider Item 2.4 - Coronel**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

**Motion: Acceptance of current amendment plus 6 additional weeks at current price - Coronel**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

*Break at 9:36 am*

*Resumed at 9:53 a.m.*

**3.2 Election of Board Officers (formerly Item 3.1)**

2026 Board Chair and Vice-chair selection

**Staff Recommendations:** *Staff recommends the Board nominate and select officers to serve in the capacity of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson/Secretary as required by District bylaws.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no known financial impact resulting from this action.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner reported that the bylaws require the Board to hold an annual election for Chair and Vice Chair. The Board discussed whether these roles should rotate as part of succession planning. The Board supported keeping consistent leadership and noted the annual election allows changes when needed. The Board also agreed it is important to plan ahead for future leadership changes.

**Motion: Coronel - Retain existing officers – Ernesto Rosales as Chair and Judy Vossler as Vice-Chair/Secretary**

Second: Underwood

Yes: All in favor

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

**3.3 Sound Services for Memorial Day Event (formerly Item 3.2)**

Request to fund and procure sound services

**Staff Recommendations:** *Provide direction to staff regarding whether to pursue District-funded sound services for the Memorial Day event and, if so, authorize a budget allocation not to exceed \$5,000 to allow staff to solicit and contract for sound equipment and technical support consistent with District procurement policies.*

**Financial Analysis:** *Staff estimates that contracting for an outdoor sound system and qualified technician capable of supporting speakers and live musical performances (choir) would likely cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000. If the Board wishes to proceed, a budget authorization of up to \$5,000 is requested to allow flexibility based on availability, equipment requirements, and scheduling constraints. Once the District establishes a baseline cost moving forward, we will be able to more precisely budget for the service. Any expenditure would be subject to confirmation of available budget and would be procured in accordance with the District's Purchasing & Contracting Policy. No ongoing or recurring financial commitment would be created unless further directed by the Board in future budget cycles.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner reviewed issues with sound and equipment reliability at prior events and asked whether staff should obtain quotes for contracted sound services for future District events. Board discussion ensued regarding budgeting, scope, and which events the services should be used for. The Board also discussed whether an MOU and additional marketing support should be considered, and GM Bonner noted these items should be addressed in greater detail at the May Planning Session.

**Motion: Underwood – Allocate \$5,000 addition to budget for fiscal year**

Second: Coronel

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

**3.4 Special Events Policy (formerly Item 3.3)**

Consideration and adoption of a special events policy

**Staff Recommendations:** *Adopt the proposed Special Events Policy and authorize the General Manager to implement and administer the policy, including the use of existing emergency plans, safety checklists, and event-specific procedures consistent with the policy framework.*

**Financial Analysis:** *Adoption of the Special Events Policy does not, by itself, create any new or ongoing financial obligations. Any costs associated with individual events would continue to be subject to Board direction, budget authorization, and applicable procurement policies.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner reported that the Board previously directed staff to develop an Events Policy. GM Bonner explained the policy is intended to guide how District events are planned and held, support compliance with local laws and ordinances, and formalize current practices. GM Bonner noted the policy would serve as a baseline that the Board may revise as needed. The Board agreed the policy provides a consistent standard for all District events.

**Motion: Move for approval - Vossler**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Rosales, Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rios

Motion passed.

### **3.5 Consideration of a Special Board Session**

Special session to discuss district priorities and strategic planning

**Staff Recommendations:** *Provide direction regarding whether to schedule a special Board session to discuss District priorities and strategic planning and, if so, identify a preferred date, time, or existing meeting to be designated for that purpose.*

**Financial Analysis:** *There is no direct fiscal impact associated with holding a special Board session beyond standard meeting-related costs. Any future financial impacts would depend on Board direction resulting from the discussion and would be addressed through subsequent agenda items and budget actions as appropriate.*

**Discussion:** GM Bonner noted this topic has been discussed over the past two Board meetings and said the goal is to clarify staff workflow and how items are placed on the agenda. GM Bonner proposed that staff present the top 10–15 priority projects at the May Strategic Planning Session for Board direction and that agenda requests be raised during Trustee comments, be supported by at least one additional Trustee, and accompanied by a brief written explanation. GM Bonner stated this process aligns with the Governance Policy (Section 5, “Adding Items to Future Agendas”), would reduce staff workload tied to single-Trustee requests, and could lessen the need for a special session.

Board discussion ensued regarding whether a special session was needed, the process for adding items to future agendas, and the balance between Board oversight and day-to-day administration, including that items should be agendaized before extensive research is performed. GM Bonner stated staff will follow the policy as written unless the Board updates it. The Board emphasized the need for consistent

application of the policy, and GM Bonner acknowledged the policy has been overlooked at times and stated staff will follow it going forward.

No action was taken.

*Chair Rosales left meeting at 11:14 am.*

**Motion: Do not schedule a special session to prioritize work items, at this time - Vossler**  
***Motion died for lack of a second.***

**Motion: Schedule a special board meeting – Underwood**  
***Motion died for lack of a second.***

**Motion: Do not have a special session – Coronel**

Second: Underwood

Yes: Vossler, Coronel, Underwood

Abstain: None

No: None

Absent: Rosales, Rios

Motion passed.

#### **4. INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **4.1 Identification Signage on District-Owned Vehicles**

Vehicles assigned for commuter or personal use

GM Bonner reported the item was brought forward for Board consideration at the request of a Trustee. GM Bonner explained that the Ford Explorer is designated for District business use and has District signage, while the Chevy Silverado is designated for the General Manager’s personal use and does not have District signage. Following discussion, the Board directed staff to place the item on a future agenda and agreed that Trustee Coronel and Vice Chair Vossler would meet with GM Bonner to review contract benefits and return with a recommendation to the Board.

##### **4.2 District Participation in Legislative Events**

Request for Authorization to Seek Formal Legal Opinion

GM Bonner reported he received a request from a Trustee regarding Board member participation in legislative events. GM Bonner stated he drafted a memo, obtained legal review, and the requesting Trustee asked that the matter be discussed by the full Board. Counsel Campos stated he reviewed the memo and sent an email stating “Approved”. The Board agreed that this was sufficient.

Trustee Underwood requested skipping Items 4.3 and 4.4 and moving directly to Trustee Comments so he could report out on events attended, as he needed to leave shortly. Trustee Coronel noted that the information had already been submitted in writing, which was sufficient.

#### **4.3 Dia de los Muertos Entertainment Stage**

Planning and procurement of stage for the 2026 DDLM

Trustee Vossler suggested returning Item 4.3 as an action item at the next meeting. GM Bonner noted the item was agendaized due to Trustee Coronel's earlier concerns. Trustee Coronel said his questions stemmed from legal concerns but, in light of the policy discussion, further discussion was unnecessary. He stated the District should follow the procurement and governance policies and allow GM Bonner to handle the matter.

#### **4.4 Employee Handbook Review**

Review of handbook for legal and compliance updates

GM Bonner noted Item 4.4 was not urgent and could be deferred to the next agenda, stating it was included as part of the Board's direction for the annual scope of work. Trustee Coronel noted he had originally requested the item, withdrew his request, and stated there was no need for the item to be deferred to the next agenda. The Board agreed to this course of action.

### **5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **5.1 LAFCO MSR Ad Hoc Committee**

The Committee recommended moving forward with annexation and will schedule a committee meeting with legal counsel.

### **6. TRUSTEE/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

#### **6.1 Trustee Comments and Event/Function Report Out**

Trustee Coronel requested that GM Bonner and the Board begin discussing succession planning, including the need for an Assistant GM. Trustee Coronel also noted the need to support employees by reviewing and updating formulas and policies for sick and vacation accruals, educational incentives, comp time, and related items.

Trustee Underwood submitted written reports on his attendance at recent events, including the 11/19/25 GCVCC La Quinta State of the City, the 11/20/25 Valley Sanitary District 100th Anniversary at CVHM, the 12/5/25 Legislative Update with State Assemblyman Jeff Gonzalez at the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce, and the 12/11/25 State of the County, Riverside event with V.

Manuel Perez. Trustee Underwood stated he would like to revisit paying down unfunded liabilities. GM Bonner noted this item is scheduled for discussion at the May Planning Session.

## **6.2 General Manager Update**

This item was not discussed due to time constraints, with the monthly General Manager Report noted.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Coronel moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

### **NEXT MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION**

Friday, February 13, 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.