

Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery District Board of Trustees, July 17, 2023

Chairman Rushford called the meeting in order at 4:24pm.

Present: Rushford, Dorjahn and Steck. **Absent:** Wigmore

Staff Present: Strachan and Franco

Minutes: Steck moved to approve minutes for June, Dorjahn seconded.

Claims: Steck moved to approve the claims for June, Dorjahn seconded.

Correspondence: 1. CA Public Cemetery Alliance Newsletter: Strachan handed the newsletter to the board.

Old Business: 1. Direct power to chapel & gate: Strachan stated that she currently has two estimates but met with another contractor this morning and hasn't received his bid yet. 2. Signing authority – Solano County: The forms were submitted

New Business: 1. Election of officer for FY 2023/2024: Steck nominates Rushford as Chairman. Rushford accepts, all in favor, so moved. Steck states since Wigmore is the current Vice-Chair and is absent that he would like to table voting for vice until next meeting when she is present. Dorjahn nominates Steck as Secretary. Steck accepts, all in favor, so moved. 2. Financial Report FY 2022/2023: Strachan passed around copies of the report. She states this reflects the plot sales for the previous fiscal year. The last couple years the board has elected to move 20% of those sales to future capital reserves for the development of cemetery II. Rushford motions to move 20%, \$55,230, to future capital. Steck seconds.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

Strachan directs the board's attention to the line for endowment and explains what the endowment care fund is. With how much we contribute each year, in addition to our funds at Stifel, our endowment should ensure that the cemetery is never neglected. To finalize the report Strachan states that we had 18% more than projected in revenue, which helped a lot since we purchased new heavy equipment. Expenses were up by just 5% even with that big expenditure. 3. Preliminary budget FY 2023/2024 Strachan gave the printed preliminary budget as well as the "highlights" report as she calls it. Highlights show the main account changes. Discussion. Strachan states that since we are paying down our CalPERS unfunded liability, that line item has a significant increase. Strachan excused Franco from the room so salaries may be discussed. Strachan handed out a proposed salary increase reflecting a 4% and 5% option for the staff. Discussion. Strachan states that when she was first promoted to manager, she was told she would have to "prove herself before receiving manager pay". After a lengthy discussion, Dorjahn motions to give the manager a 9% increase, Rushford seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

Rushford motioned to give the grounds crew and administrative assistant a 7% increase, Steck seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

Dorjahn motions to give the extra grounds helper an increase of \$3.00 per hour, Steck seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

Also being discussed is the board members' pay. Rushford states he is a volunteer. Dorjahn recuses herself from the discussion. Steck states he will go along with whatever the board decides. Discussion. Strachan suggests a \$50 per meeting increase. Dorjahn rescinds recusal so the board has a quorum. Rushford motions to increase board members meeting stipend to \$250 per meeting, Steck seconded.

Ayes: 3 Noes: zero

4. Joanna (Hunter) Lewis's headstone: Strachan starts by explaining the history to the board about the Lewis family and handing out newspaper printouts. Pastor Mark Lewis is a known drug abuser who is currently incarcerated for hiring church members to fire-bomb his girlfriend's house. His wife, Joanna Hunter Lewis, is buried at our cemetery. Her cause of death was listed as suicide by hanging. It has long been believed by her parents that Mark killed her since she had told him just days prior to her death that she was leaving him. Recently the Family Justice Center has gotten involved to try to help the Hunter family. They are working on having Joanna exhumed for a second autopsy in hopes that Mark will be charged with murder. Due to these reasons and numerous more stated by the family, it has been requested that the parents be allowed to have a new headstone placed without the last name Lewis on it. After a lengthy discussion it is decided that the family will need to provide paperwork giving them authority over the grave. Since Mark is currently the next of kin, only he can change the headstone.

Public Comments: None

Trustee Comments: Rushford thanked Franco for all their efforts to keep the cemetery beautiful. Dorjahn asked Strachan to look into having another speed bump installed at the cemetery entrance. Steck asked Strachan to get a larger more noticeable "office" sign for the grounds.

Staff & Management Comments: Strachan states that we had 32 burials in the month of June, 23 of those were cremations. Strachan also states that the CSDA asked if we would host a tour in September for them and the legislative partners.

Adjournment: Rushford adjourn at 5:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Heather Strachan, District Manager/VECD