



**APPROVED**  
**CEMETERY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**TOWER 101 - 101 NE 3rd AVENUE, SUITE 1100, 11th FLOOR**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33311**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025 – 3:30 P.M.**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance</b>	
		<b>03/2025 through 03/2026</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Scott Busa	P	1	0
Alfonso Canales	A	0	1
Chelsea Krebs	A	0	1
Dennis Ulmer, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Patricia Zeiler, Chair	P	1	0

City Staff

Stacy Spates, Cemetery Administrator  
 Kenya Baker, Senior Financial Administrator

Guests

Kim Krause, Truist Bank  
 Michael Hanlon, Batesville Cemetery Management Solutions  
 Christin Laroche, Batesville Cemetery Management Solutions  
 Karen Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:37 p.m.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll was called.

**B. City Ordinance No.C-09-05, Quorum Requirement (Discussion)**

It was determined a quorum was present.

**C. Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2025 (Discussion/Motion)**

**Motion** made by Mr. Busa, seconded by Mr. Ulmer, to approve the meeting minutes for January 9, 2025, as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (3-0)

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Cemetery Software Update (Discussion)**

Ms. Stacy Spates, Cemetery Administrator, provided an update regarding the termination of the previous cemetery software contract, noting the agreement was officially terminated as of April 4, 2025. A software demonstration from a new company would be presented during the meeting.

Discussion followed regarding the history of the procurement process, with board members expressing concern over the prolonged delay in acquiring a new system.

### **B. Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery Mausoleum Project (Discussion)**

Ms. Spates reported that the construction of the mausoleum at Sunset Memorial Gardens was scheduled to commence in May 2025, with expected completion by November 2025.

Chair Zeiler inquired about the potential for pre-need sales for the mausoleum. Ms. Spates explained that while pre-need sales for cemetery plots were permitted, pre-need sales for mausoleums would be discussed in an upcoming summer meeting.

Board members reviewed the projected capacity of 476 crypts and discussed future expansion possibilities at Lauderdale Memorial.

## **3. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Cemetery Audit**

Chair Zeiler stated she was unable to fully review the audit before the meeting. Ms. Spates confirmed the auditor would present the findings at the May meeting. Chair Zeiler emphasized that audit findings should be reviewed by the board before being presented publicly, even in a quasi-governmental setting. She noted concerns about oversight references in the audit and requested further clarification.

Ms. Spates stated one of the audit findings related to the general price list. Chair Zeiler expressed frustration that the issue had been raised without prior discussion. Ms. Spates explained that maintenance reimbursements had not been conducted for years, except for capital improvement projects. Commissioner Herbst had noted that these were policy issues rather than violations, though updates on findings would still need to be provided.

Chair Zeiler expressed willingness to conduct a cost analysis to evaluate pricing structures. Ms. Spates explained that current benchmarks were based on private cemeteries, as no comparable municipal cemeteries existed in the area. She noted adjustments had not been made during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Ulmer inquired whether the ordinance required price reviews every two years. Ms. Spates clarified that no specific timeframe was stated and suggested proposing a three-year review cycle with adjustments as needed.

Mr. Busa asked whether a standing cost-of-living increase could be implemented. Ms. Spates noted annual reviews could be established, but any formal adjustments would require an amendment to board rules.

Discussion followed on the feasibility of setting a standardized formula for adjustments.

Regarding the audit findings, Mr. Busa expressed concerns about unfilled managerial duties and stated he did not fully understand certain financial disbursements. Ms. Spates explained that expenses related to irrigation and mausoleum construction were fronted by the city and later reimbursed. She confirmed reimbursement had been processed for irrigation at Sunset Memorial Gardens.

Chair Zeiler stated that she did not see a clear timeframe indicated in the audit and expressed concerns about transparency. Ms. Spates clarified the audit had been conducted by the city and was presented at the February 18 conference meeting. Chair Zeiler stated she would prepare a letter with her observations for the commissioners and present it at the next board meeting.

#### **B. Perpetual Care Trust Fund Investment Review/Truist Bank**

Ms. Kim Krause, Truist Bank, provided an investment update, noting ongoing market volatility and recent declines in equity performance. She reviewed the February 2025 performance summary, indicating the Perpetual Care Trust Fund had a total market value of \$37.1 million at the beginning of the month, which had since decreased to \$36.1 million due to recent market corrections. She explained fixed-income investments remained stable, yielding approximately 2.2% year-to-date, while U.S. equity holdings experienced a 5% decline. International equity investments, however, had performed positively, showing an increase of 7-9%.

Ms. Krause highlighted key factors contributing to market fluctuations, including tariffs, inflation, and employment statistics, and reassured the board the investment policy remained aligned with long-term goals. She noted fixed-income diversification had provided a buffer against market volatility and recommended staying the course with the current strategy. She also encouraged board members to attend Truist's upcoming market update calls to stay informed about investment trends.

Mr. Busa reiterated the importance of maintaining external oversight of the trust fund and stated he was not in favor of transitioning investment management to city oversight.

Vice Chair Zeiler agreed and emphasized the need for continued evaluation while keeping the trust fund independent of city control.

#### **C. Motion Approving Special Meetings for April & June 2025**

Ms. Spates requested the board consider holding special meetings in April and June 2025 to see the software demonstration and discuss merchandise services trust fund.

**Motion** made by Mr. Ulmer, seconded by Mr. Busa, to hold special meetings in April and June 2025. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (3-0)

Discussion ensued about term limits and board appointments.

#### **D. Other Business**

Mr. Mike Hanlon and Ms. Christin Laroche, Batesville Cemetery Management Solutions, presented a PowerPoint via Zoom, outlining key benefits of their cloud-based software, including efficiency, revenue growth, cost reduction, and risk mitigation. They demonstrated features such as sales lead management, cemetery mapping, contract management, business analytics (Power BI), and website integration (Find a Loved One).

Mr. Busa confirmed the system could be accessed via a terminal or iPad and integrates with Google Maps.

Chair Zeiler asked if Ms. Spates would receive notifications for sales holds to which Mr. Hanlon confirmed status updates would be visible in the system.

Mr. Ulmer inquired about resident discount differentiation. Mr. Hanlon confirmed it was supported.

Mr. Busa asked about integration for pre-need services. Ms. Spates stated it would depend on the vendor but emphasized trust fund management is the priority and would require oversight by a licensed individual.

Chair Zeiler inquired about Carriage Services' outstanding balance. Ms. Spates said records were still under review, with final numbers expected by June/July. It was noted the auditor was determining the amount owed, estimated by Chair Zeiler to be in the hundreds of thousands over 6.5 years.

Regarding data conversion, Mr. Hanlon confirmed their system could digitize historical Carriage records and integrate the data.

Mr. Busa asked about pricing. Mr. Hanlon stated costs would include data migration and an annual subscription fee based on interments. Additionally, Ms. Laroche confirmed U.S.-based customer support would be included.

Ms. Spates raised a property sale request at Evergreen Cemetery, which she, Mr. Busa, and Chair Zeiler reviewed.

Chair Zeiler referenced a 2011 case where an architect deemed part of the land unusable due to a five-foot drop-off. Mr. Busa presented a map showing active grading and the need for expansion. It was confirmed the issue would be referred to the city's real estate division.

#### **E. Communication to the City Commission**

There was none.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

Discussion ensued about the need for more Board members and process.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: Special Meeting - April TBA**