

HANFORD CEMETERY DISTRICT

SYNOPSIS

The Hanford Cemetery District consists of four cemeteries: Hanford, Calvary, Lakeside, and Kings River. The Grand Jury visited each of the four cemeteries. Hanford Cemetery is made up of two locations across the street from one another on 10th Avenue, just south of Highway 198. The District Office is located on the grounds of Hanford Cemetery next to the military tank. Calvary Cemetery is located southwest of the district office, Lakeside Cemetery is on Kent Avenue south of Hanford, and Kings River is located on Dover Avenue north of the city of Hanford.

WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED

Public interest.

AUTHORITY

California Penal Code 925a.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury interviewed the District Manager and the Administrative Assistant, followed by a visit to each cemetery site. Cemetery staff provided documents which were reviewed by the Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

The Hanford Cemetery District was created in 1882. It consists of four cemeteries: Hanford Cemetery consists of 17 acres, Calvary has 18 acres, of which 13.2 acres are to be developed; Kings River is expanding an additional 1.5 acres, and Lakeside Cemetery, originally a family plot, is a very small area. Each of the cemeteries has one gate left open at all times to accommodate the public. Hanford Cemetery and Calvary Cemetery have special areas called “Babyland” for the burial of infants and small children. The District is non-denominational.

Calvary Cemetery has been vandalized several times, which led to the installation of security cameras on the property. Lighting has also been added around the District Office. Deputies from the Kings County Sheriff’s office patrol the cemeteries in the evening hours. The Cemetery District needs a new and larger maintenance/storage facility. The building currently being used is old and deteriorating. The building is neat and well organized. New sprinkler systems are being installed at each district cemetery and existing systems are being upgraded.

The District employs nine people, and also utilizes youth from the Job Training Office during the summer months. The jury was told there is a low turnover rate among the employees.

The District consists of a five-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Kings County Board of Supervisors. Each appointee must be a registered voter and reside within the cemetery district. Members serve a four-year term, and normally meet monthly. At this time the members receive an allotment of \$50 per meeting for serving on the board; however, after the new draft Policies of July 2009 are finalized, the rate will be increased to \$100 per meeting, not to exceed four meetings per month.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 The compensation for members of the Board of Trustees will be increased to \$100 per meeting.

Recommendation 1 None

Finding 2 A new maintenance/storage facility needs to be constructed at the Hanford Cemetery.

Recommendation 2 A new maintenance/storage facility needs to be constructed when funding is available.

Finding 3 New and upgraded sprinkler systems are being installed at each location which will result in water conservation.

Recommendation 3 None

COMMENTS

The cemeteries in Hanford Cemetery District are well maintained and operated by a dedicated staff.

RESPONSE REQUIREMENT

Penal Code Section 933 requires that specific responses to both the findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Kings County:

Hanford Cemetery District Board of Trustees (90 days from date of receipt)