

MINUTES OF MEETING  
LOUISIANA CEMETERY BOARD

May 17, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Louisiana Cemetery Board was held on May 17, 2024, at 3445 North Causeway Blvd., Suite 509, Metairie, Louisiana pursuant to Notice.

Chairman Melancon called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Present were:**

Gerald W. Melancon, Chairman  
Marilyn Leufroy, Vice Chairman  
Michele M. (Shelly) Holloway, Secretary/Treasurer  
Stacey Patin, Board Member  
F. Anton Wilbert, Board Member  
Sherri Peppo, Board Member  
Carroll W. Suggs, At Large Board Member  
Jerry W. Sullivan, Director  
Ryan M. Seidemann, Ph.D., RPA, Asst Attorney General  
Conlee S. Whitely, Special Counsel to the Board  
Lucy M. McCann, Consultant to the Board

**Also present at the meeting:**

Jimmy Patin, Greenwood Memorial Park, Pineville, Louisiana  
Boyd D. Mothe, Jr. , Louisiana Cemetery Association, Gretna, Louisiana  
Debbie Holmes, Argent Trust, Ruston, Louisiana  
John Albritton, Heard Cemetery, Harrisonburg, Louisiana  
Daniel A. Ranson, Attorney for Polygard, Gretna, Louisiana  
Wayne Pearl, Parklawn Memorial Gardens, Hammond, Louisiana  
Lakisha Green, Winfield Memorial Park, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Michael Klees, Winfield Memorial Park, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Tiffany Simon, Legacy/Resthaven, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Caitlyn Arbo, Assistant Director

**Public Comment**

Boyd Mothe, Jr. made public comment with regard to Mr. Melancon's attendance at the Commerce Committee Hearing on House Bill 493, as well as the anticipated DCRA Conference to be held in California and the expenses associated therewith regarding Mr. Seidemann's attendance.

## **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes were reviewed by the Board and, with the exception of a typographical error with regard to the spelling of a name, Ms. Leufroy made a motion to approve the November 3, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Suggs and unanimously approved by the Board.

Thereafter and in light of the numerous attendees at the hearing, Ms. Suggs moved that several items be taken out of order with regard to those issues in which members of the public were present so as to allow the board meeting to continue in the most expeditious manner possible. The motion was seconded by Ms. Patin and unanimously approved.

### **Topic # 16**     Docket No. 2017-002-I- c/w 2024-02-I- Winnfield Memorial Park, Inc., Baton Rouge, LA- Failure to Comply with Prior Memorandum of Understanding and Failure to Maintain Adequate Records.

The first presented to the Board for its consideration out of order was set forth in **Topic #16** of the Agenda, more particularly Case No. 2024-02-I c/w 2017-002-I, Winnfield Memorial Park. Lakeisha Green and Michael Klees appeared on behalf of Winnfield Memorial Park. The matter arises following a preliminary review by the Investigative Committee in Cases No. 2024-02-I c/w 2017-002-I. The matter arises as a result of Winnfield's failure to maintain accurate, complete and legible records pertaining to the operation of the business of the cemetery, including records relating to interments in several gardens and spaces allegedly available for interment as required by La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §8:662, and more particularly in Sections A,B,C,D, portions of Section F and J.

Ms. McCann provided information to the Board with regard to the problems arising in the various gardens beginning in 2017, which culminated in the cemetery providing what was believed to be complete and accurate maps and log books at the time and requiring for cemetery board approval of all interments in Gardens A,B,C,D, portions of Section F and J.

After a discussion with the representatives of Winnfield Memorial Park with regard to the inaccuracy of current maps made available by the cemetery following a lengthy process beginning in 2017, Ms. Holloway moved that the cemetery check each file with regard to cemetery records, marker orders, funeral order/invoices and place copies of all such records in the file, as well as a photo marker to match each map, and to review all maps and records to ensure complete accuracy within 120 days. The Motion was seconded by Ms. Suggs and it was unanimously approved by the Board. The matter will be revisited by the Board at the November, 2024 meeting.

### **Topic # 13**     Docket No. 2023-032-C c/w 2024-01-I- Parklawn Memorial Management, LLC, d/b/a Parklawn Memorial Gardens, Hammond, LA - Failure to Maintain Accurate and Complete Records regarding Disinterment of Remains

This matter is set forth in Case No. 2023-032-C. Respondent is represented by Wayne Pearl, Esq. The matter arises following an Investigative Committee review of a complaint received by the Board from two members of a family in which their father who had been allegedly disinterred and relocated to another cemetery. When Respondent was contacted, it was admitted that Decedent



had apparently been relocated from the cemetery but no records of the date of disinterment, the party/parties authorizing the disinterment or the party who disinterred the body and relocated it were made available.

After reviewing the lack of records by the cemetery, which was acknowledged by Mr. Pearl, Ms. Leufroy moved that a Consent Agreement be entered into with Parklawn with regard to the obligation of maintaining records with regard to disinterments, as well interments. That Agreement was seconded by Ms. Suggs and unanimously approved by the Board. Mr. Pearl has agreed to enter into such Consent Agreement.

**Topic # 14**      Docket No. 2019-14-Informal - Heard Cemetery Association, Inc., d/b/a Heard Cemetery, Manifest, LA- Operating Cemetery without a License, Failure to Provide Contracts for the sale of Burial Rights and Cemetery-Related Merchandise and Services; Failure to Establish Ownership of Cemetery Property; and Failure to protect records from destruction.

This matter arises pursuant to Case No. 2019-14-Informal. The Respondent has continuously operated a cemetery without a license in violation of La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §8:74 by failing to submit a completed Application for Exempt Certificate of Authority following an informal proceeding in which Respondent was required to submit all appropriate documentation on March 25, 2019. Although Respondent has provided some information, the file was not complete at the time as of the hearing date. The Respondent was represented by John Albritton, who did bring large poster-sized maps of the cemetery in which interments have been listed. In addition, the Respondent advised that payment has not been received to which he indicated that he would make immediate payment. In light of the additional records received from Respondent and Mr. Albritton's cooperation, Ms. Suggs moved that the Respondent be provided an additional thirty days in which to complete the application in a timely fashion and for staff to report on the application following receipt of all records. The motion was seconded by Ms. Leufroy and unanimously approved by the Board.

**Topic # 9**      Discussion regarding compliance with Insurance and Bonding requirements for Vantage Vaults

This matter arises out of Case No. 2022-011-Informal, regarding Vantage Products, Inc.

Following a corporate transaction involving the restructure of Vantage Products, the company was unable to secure insurance when the property in which stored items were located was no longer owned by the Respondent. Thereafter, through counsel, Daniel Ranson, the Respondent did submit sufficient proof of its bond and insurance requirements as required by Title 8. After review of the records, it was moved that the matter be closed without any further proceedings by Ms. Patin, which Motion was seconded by Ms. Leufroy and unanimously approved.

**AND NOW**, returning to the agenda in order as follows:

**Reports of Officers**

The Director reviewed the Statement of Operations for the year ending December 31, 2023, including cash and investments as of April 30, 2024, and budget vs. actual for January through April of 2024. After review and discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Leufroy to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilbert and unanimously approved.

The Director noted that interest earned during 2023 was \$26,682.00. As a result of Mr. Sullivan's discontinuation of state retirement and Mrs. Taylor's choice to not select state retirement, the Board has a savings benefit in 2024, prior to the change of LASER contributions of 33.65% of each such salary. LASER contributions for the fiscal year 2024-2025 for Mrs. Arbo has been reduced from 41.3% to 34.74%.

**Report of Director**

The Director reported on matters being handled by staff and or requiring action of the Board at this time.

**Approval of Application for Pre-Construction Sales Projects**

The Director reviewed the Application for Pre-Construction Sales Projects received by the Board since the November 3, 2023, Board Meeting. After review and discussion, Ms. Leufroy made a motion to approve the following Applications for Pre-Construction Sales Projects received by the Board since the last meeting, which motion was seconded by Ms. Suggs and unanimously approved:

- a) The Congregation of Saint Anns Roman Catholic Church d/b/a St. Ann Cemetery – Youngsville, LA - Garden Mausoleum Addition
- b) Pinecrest Memorial Gardens, Inc. d/b/a Pinecrest Memorial Gardens - Covington, LA – Gethsemane Mausoleum North
- c) S.E. Cemeteries of Louisiana, LLC d/b/a St. Bernard Memorial Gardens - Chalmette, LA – Garden of Tribute
- d) Congregation of Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church, St. Amant, Ascension Parish d/b/a Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleum – St. Amant, LA – Garden Mausoleum
- e) Congregation of St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church Parish of Livingston, LA d/b/a St. Joseph Cemetery – French Settlement, LA - Garden Mausoleum No. 4
- f) SCI Louisiana Funeral Services, Inc. d/b/a St. Lazarus of Bethany Memorial Gardens - Covington, LA – Grace Estates Avenue A
- g) The Congregation of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Roman Catholic Church, Golden Meadow, LA d/b/a Our Lady of Prompt Succor Cemetery - Golden Meadow, LA - Garden Mausoleum



### Approval of Certificates of Authority To Be Issued

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the issuance of the following licenses, which Applications have been completed since the last Board Meeting, to which Ms. Peppo made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Patin and unanimously approved.

Further, in light of the receipt of a completed Application only a day prior to the Board Meeting, it is necessary to add as an addendum to the Agenda (Exempts (NEW)) 2024-025-A **Gary Anthoy Graff d/b/a Bearheals Cemetery, Kentwood, LA**, which addendum was approved by unanimous consent.

#### **Exempts (New):**

- a) #2020-002-A – West Carroll Memorial Cemetery - Pioneer, LA
- b) #2023-028-A – Al Falah Cemetery – Opelousas, LA
- c) #2023-037-A- Michael Cuzzort d/b/a Cuzzort Family Cemetery- Greensburg, LA
- d) #2023-082-A- Trudie Ann Guitreau d/b/a Guitreau Family Cemetery- Prairieville, LA
- e) #2023-082-A- Joseph Edward Noble, Jr. d/b/a Novel Cemetery, Bush, LA
- f) #2023-086-A- Covington Presbyterian Church- Memorial Garden Covington Presbyterian Church (Scatter Garden)- Covington, LA
- g) #2023-090-A-Herschel Glenn Marcantel, Jr. d/b/a Marcantel Family Cemetery- Mamou, LA
- h) #2023-091-A- Stephen R. Sutton d/b/a Sutton Family Cemetery- Monroe, LA
- i) #2023-079 A- Charlotte Schexnayder d/b/a Daddy's Place Cemetery- Hammond, LA
- j) #2023-096-A- Old Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery, Inc.- Columbia, LA
- k) #2023-097-A- Bennett Cemetery Association- Folsom, LA
- l) #2024-026-A- Clifford and Clair Kass d/b/a Kass Family Cemetery- Franklinton, LA
- m) #2023-027-A- Mike A. Small, Sr. d/b/a/ Seven Oaks Cemetery- Walker, LA
- n) #2024-030-A- Gorum Cemetery Inc.- Gorum, LA
- o) #2024-031-A- Raymond Laborde Correctional Center d/b/a Bayou Hope Cemetery- Cottonport, LA
- p) #2024-044-A- Owen Bellon d/b/a Bellon Family Cemetery- Lake Charles, LA
- q) #2024-034-A- Longstraw Baptist Church. d/b/a Longstraw Cemetery- Choudrant, LA
- r) #2022-070-A Holy Hill Baptist Church, d/b/a Holy Hill Baptist Church Cemetery, Harvey, LA
- s) #2024-021-A- Brenda Pittman, d/b/a Isreal Cemetery- Franklinton, LA
- t) #2024-025-A Gary Anthoy Graff d/b/a Bearheals Cemetery, Kentwood, LA

**2024 Non-Exempt (New/Transfers):**

- a) #2019-022-A - Darlington Church of God in Christ, Inc. Cemetery - Greensburg, LA
- b) #2021-007-A - Rising Star Baptist Church of LaPlace La, Inc. d/b/a Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery - LaPlace, LA
- c) #2022-077-A - ECS Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Memorial Park of Tallulah - Transylvania, LA
- d) #2022-079-A - ECS Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Memorial Park of Lake Providence - Lake Providence, LA
- e) #2023-081-A - Heaven Cemetery and Memorial Gardens, LLC - Alexandria, LA
- f) #2023-089-A - Hillview Cemetery, LLC - Bogalusa, LA
- g) #2023-077-A - Asbury United Methodist Church, Bossier City, Louisiana, Inc. - Bossier City, LA

**2024 CSO/CMO (New/Transfers)**

- a) #2024-035-A - Longstraw Cemetery Association, Inc. d/b/a/ Longstraw Cemetery- Choudrant, LA

**Ratification of Renewals**

The Chairman requested a vote to approve the renewal of the following licenses, which was moved by Ms. Peppo, seconded By Ms. Paton, and unanimously approved:

**2024 ACSML (Renewals):**

- a) ACSML #24-001

**2024 Exempts (Renewals)**

#0013E  
#0073E  
#0261E  
#0273E  
#0296E  
#0312E  
#0452E  
#0460E  
#0493E  
#0525E  
#0552E  
#0586E  
#0617E  
#0756E  
#0834E  
#0868E

#0969E  
#1265E  
#1420E  
#1485E  
#1496E

**2024 Non-Exempt (Renewals):**

- a) #2024-001 - #2024-540

**2024 CSO and CMO (Renewals):**

- a) CSO #24-001 – CSO #24-05  
b) CMO #24-001 – CMO #24-05

**Reports of Committees**

**Administrative Committee**

There were no reports from the Administrative Committee.

**Examination & Inspection Committee**

The Examination and Inspection Committee reviewed a total of 11 reports that represent a statistically significant sample size of the examinations performed and have approved the same, which reports were approved as presented.

**Old Business**

- a) Statewide Cemetery Response Task Force Report – Hurricanes Laura, Delta and Ida.

Dr. Seidemann gave a brief history of the Louisiana Cemetery Response Task Force, its members and functions. Dr. Seidemann indicated that almost all of the storms have been closed out by the State and by FEMA, with the exception of a few remains which are left to be interred. He indicated that the task force continues to have two staging areas in Southeast Louisiana, namely in Plaquemine Parish and Jefferson Parish. Identification of the remains are ongoing.

- b) Cemetery Response Task Force Legislation Update- Dr. Seidemann also discussed a new proposed legislation that would clean up the original task force law.

11. **New Business**

b) **2023 Legislation**

The Director reviewed significant portions of legislation that may be of note to the Board, particularly the following:

House Bill 493 allowing for the merger of cemetery trust funds owned by the same cemetery authority.



House Bill 527 relative to Louisiana veterans cemeteries.

House Bill 772 which provide for a cemetery emergency assistance and disaster relief relative to the cemetery response task force.

House Bill 808 which permitted municipal and parochial governments to use government labor and resources to abate public health and safety risks in abandoned cemeteries.

**e) The Congregation of St. Edwards Roman Catholic Church of Tallulah requests for wavier of the requirement to submit credit reports as part of Certificate of Authority Application.**

The Congregation of St. Edwards Roman Catholic Church of Tallulah requested that the Board waive the requirements of the signatories on the Application, namely the Bishop and Vicar General of the Diocese of Alexandria, as well as the Pastor of the Applicant to provide credit reports to establish that St. Edwards Cemetery will be a “permanent benefit to the cemetery” of Tallulah, Louisiana. After discussion and a note that such waivers are generally not considered, it was moved by Ms. Patin and seconded by Ms. Leufroy that the waiver be issued in this single instance based upon the circumstances set forth and unanimously approved by the Board.

**c) Renewal of Contract for Special Counsel to the Board, Conlee S. Whiteley for period of two years**

The Director noted that Ms. Whiteley’s legal contract would be expiring on December 31, 2024, and sought the Board’s approval to extend the terms of the contract under the present pay structure as approved by the Louisiana Department of Justice. After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Leufroy to authorized the extension of the contract for the full extent permitted by law and seconded by Mr. Wilbert, which Motion was unanimously approved.by the Board.

**a) Request for Travel Approval for Jerry Sullivan, Delia Taylor, Ryan Seidemann, and Christine Halling to attend the DCRA Convention to be held in Sacramento, California October 7-10, 2024, and Tri-State Cemetery Association Convention to be held in Biloxi, Mississippi, on August 13, 2024 (there will be no lodging sought as it will be day travel only to Biloxi).**

The Director noted that the Death Care Regulators of North America would be having a conference in Sacramento, California, on the dates of October 7-10, 2024, as well as a Tri-State Cemetery Association Convention to be held in Biloxi, Mississippi, on August 13, 2024. The Director requested that travel be approved for himself, Delia Taylor, Ryan Seidemann (Asst. Attorney General), and Christine Halling of the La. Department of Justice, to attend the DCRA Convention and for Mr. Sullivan to attend the Tri-State Cemetery Association Meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi. Only the DCRA Convention would include travel and lodging. It was noted that the Tri-State Cemetery Association Meeting would only include travel costs for milage, but would not include any cost for lodging in light of the location of the convention’s location nearby.



After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Suggs to approve the travel requested, and seconded by Mr. Wilbert, which Motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

f) **Investigative Committee**

**Docket No. 2022-016-C – Turner Vaults and Monuments - Welsh, LA - Consideration of scheduling Formal Hearing.**

No one appeared on behalf of Respondent despite Mr. Sullivan's notation that the same was received by the Respondent as evidenced by a certified mail return receipt. The matter arises as a result of Respondent's failure to deliver merchandise within 120 days or to trust the funds until the delivery was made. In light of the default, it was moved by Ms. Suggs and seconded by Ms. Leufroy that the Respondent be provided 90 days in which to provide proof of purchase and foundation work completed or full refund or face additional penalties at the next board meeting in 2024. This matter was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Docket No. 2021-007-I – Hope Cemetery, Baton Rouge, LA - Operating a Cemetery without a License, and Failure to Maintain Records.**

The Director advised the Board as a follow-up of a long pending matter that Hope Cemetery a/k/a Live Oak Cemetery was issued a cease and desist order on August 30, 2022, as a result of failure to provide a completed Application for a Certificate of Authority. Despite an informal conference on April 26, 2022, and correspondence dated May 10, 2022, advising the Respondent of what matters remained open. Mr. Sullivan noted that there are no additional burials following the cease and desist order, but that the cemetery authority remains not in compliance with Louisiana law.

**Docket No. 2018-018-I- Word of Truth New Life Center, Inc., d/b/a New of Truth New Life Cemetery, Bayou Goula, LA- Operating a Cemetery without a License, and Failure to Provide Evidence that records are maintained as required to Title 8.**

This matter arises as a result of the failure of Respondent, Word of Truth New Life Center, Inc. a/k/a St. Paul's Baptist Church Cemetery, to complete an Application for Certificate of Authority despite receiving notice from the Board on or about August 28, 2018; attendance at an Informal Proceeding on February 26, 2019; and correspondence regarding the same dated March 14, 2019, October 29, 2019, December 3, 2019, February 17, 2020, March 15, 2021, July 21, 2021, February 3, 2022, and August 25, 2022. It is noted that the cemetery continues to make interments despite notification of its non-compliance with Louisiana law. Mr. Sullivan requested that Dr. Seidemann be authorized to issue a cease and desist order on behalf of the Board. After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Leufroy that Dr. Seidemann be authorized to immediately issue the cease and desist order, and seconded by Ms. Patin, which Motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Docket No. 2024-004-I- Gentilly Land Company, Inc., d/b/a Rest Haven Memorial Park, New Orleans, LA- Failure to Maintain Accurate and Complete Records.**

Upon information and belief, the Respondent, Rest Haven Memorial Park, in New Orleans, Louisiana has failed to maintain accurate, complete, and legible records pertaining to the operation

of its cemetery and has refused to provide such records to the Board for inspection or review upon request as required by La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §8:314 and 315. No one on behalf of the Respondent appeared at the hearing before the Board. Mr. Sullivan requested that Mr. Seidemann be permitted to issue a subpoena for all such records as soon as possible in order to ensure compliance.

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Suggs and Ms. Leufroy that Dr. Seidemann be authorized to issue a subpoena for all such records as soon as possible in order to ensure compliance, and seconded by Ms. Leufroy, which Motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**Ms. Suggs made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the following litigation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Leufroy and a roll call vote was taken with unanimous consent.**

- a) State of Louisiana and the Louisiana Cemetery Board versus Stephanie Means Green, Denise Baranco, Wayne A. Matthews, Sr., Ronald R. Matthews, Dollie Matthews, Darryl G. Baranco, Sr., Mignon Baranco Fontenette, June B. Gumbel, Joseph S. Baranco, Jr., Christopher P. Baranco, Robert G. Baranco, III, Ramon M. Baranco, Schyvanda T. Baranco, Edith B. Baranco, David Brian Baranco, Sr., Nineteenth Judicial District Court, Parish of East Baton Rouge, Docket No. 613710, Section 24
- b) Gina M. Baker versus Louisiana Cemetery Board, The Firemen's Charitable and Benevolent Association of New Orleans, and the State of Louisiana, through its Department of Justice, the Hon. Jeff Landry, Attorney General – Docket No. 818-614 Division F, Twenty-Fourth Judicial District Court, Parish of Jefferson – Petition for Judicial Review
- c) Cypress Grove Cemetery- Report on Removal of Human Remains from Wall Vaults and reconstruction of monument.
- d) Status of Gilbert Cemetery and placement of burial vaults on pre-existing plots containing interred remains
- e) Discussion regarding issues surrounding possible development of Death Museum in location adjacent to St. Louis #1 Cemetery, New Orleans.

#### **Following Executive Session and Returning Therefrom**

It was moved by Ms. Suggs that the Board return from Executive Session and seconded by Ms. Peppo, which Motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Upon returning from Executive Session, the Board has instructed staff and counsel to close that investigation regarding Cypress Grove Cemetery relative to the removal of human remains from wall vaults and reconstruction of a monument that was moved and requested that Mr. Seidemann respond to the Complainant. Ms. Leufroy moved to close the investigation, seconded by Mr. Wilbert and unanimously approved by the Board.

After reviewing the status of Gilbert Cemetery, it was moved by Mr. Wilbert and seconded by Ms. Suggs that Mr. Seidemann request authority to court order to open vaults and determine what




remains are located in unauthorized portions of the cemetery and to determine if such remains can be relocated to another portion of the cemetery. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.


After the Board received information relative to the development of a possible death museum adjacent to St. Louis #1 Cemetery, New Orleans, it was moved by Ms. Peppo and seconded by Ms. Leufroy that the Asst. Attorney General Seidemann be authorized to issue a cease and desist order if the need arises relative to any impact on cemetery remains. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

It is noted that Ms. Peppo will not be able to attend the next board meeting as originally scheduled. Therefore, the next board meeting has been moved to November 22, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Since there was no further business, Ms. Suggs made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Leufroy, and unanimously approved by the Board.

  
Michele M. (Shelly) Holloway, Secretary/Treasurer

Attested To:

  
Gerald W. Melancon, Chairman