

# Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District

An Independent California Special District

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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

During this past fiscal year there were 9 full casket in-ground interments, 16 cremation interments and 3 urns placed into the niches at the Lafayette Cemetery as well as the sale of 7 full casket in-ground sites, 3 cremation sites and 4 niches. In the Alamo Cemetery there were 2 full casket in-ground interments, 8 cremations and 18 urns placed into the niches and a pre-need sale of 28 niches. The Lafayette Cemetery has over 280 interment sites and 120 niches for sale. The Alamo Cemetery still has 130 niches for sale. No full casket in-ground interment sites are available in Alamo.

The District no longer has grounds keepers because we cannot afford to pay the going rate or benefits that are needed to attract outside staff. The District has been contracting with companies for opening/closing for all interments, which are now only performed on Thursday and Fridays.

All outside landscaping work is now done by contractors. These companies clean and bag all debris, which are then taken to the dump. The cost totals \$100,855. There have been many trips to Contra Costa Transfer Station, at a cost of \$3,500. Lawn care costs \$7,872. Preemergence is sprayed twice a year, the cost \$3,360. A portable restroom for the year costs \$3,150.

Here are some of the annual expenses associated with running our District: Workers Compensation & Property Insurance \$11,454; tree removal \$4,300; Medical/Dental \$15,522. Our water bill continually increases even though the District now shuts off the water in Lafayette from November through April (water is not available in the Alamo Cemetery) the annual cost to the District is \$13,000. Six weeks of security service to stop an unhoused person from lighting fires and opening graves, \$5,000.

The District has many areas that are in desperate need of attention, updating and/or repair. Currently, our public cemetery does not have running water or a restroom and no decent office for staff to work in, meet with families in, enjoy lunch in, or take their breaks in. We are inundated with rats. The District has reached out to the Contra Costa Auditor / Controller Robert Campbell numerous times because we believe the District has been shorted on property tax. These inquiries have produced no explanations.

The District no longer has AT&T service. The District no longer has a fax line, and all phone calls are now through Verizon internet. Costs are still increasing. The cost is \$7,142.


Costs have increased to keep the District running smoothly, including employee benefits and supplies. This year the District paid \$41,550, into retirement funds.

Operating a public cemetery is quite different than operating a private cemetery. Private cemeteries are not obligated to follow the California Health and Safety codes when setting prices. They have many options at their disposal including no limit on the area they serve, trading, brokers, payment plans, accepting credit cards, etc. Unfortunately, public cemeteries are extremely limited in the way of options – our District does not offer payment plans or credit cards and use of the cemetery is limited to residents of the tax area.


Presently more families are choosing cremation because the costs associated with full casket burials are usually 4 to 5 times higher than that of cremation. They are also choosing to take their loved one's ashes home.

As of June 2024, the District has \$715,472 in its Endowment Fund. The annual operating budget was \$478,500. Total tax revenue from 2023-24 F/Y was \$449,993.

Respectfully submitted on this 5<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024, by District Manager Patricia A. Howard.

  
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Mary McCosker, Trustee / Chairperson

  
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Carolyn Thiessen, Trustee

  
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Paul Gardner, Trustee