

CENTRAL OFFICE
901 N. Stonewall
Oklahoma City, OK 73117
Tel: (405) 239-7141
Fax: (405) 239-2430



EASTERN OFFICE
1115 West 17th St.
Tulsa, OK 74107
Tel: (918) 295-3400
Fax: (918) 585-1549

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER
BOARD OF MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS**

**BOARD OF MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS
REGULAR MEETING**

Board Meeting Minutes from
Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.
Location Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
901 N. Stonewall, Oklahoma City, OK 73117, 405-239-7141 and
Via Videoconference at 1115 W. 17th St., Tulsa, OK 74117, 918-582-0985

In conformity with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, advance notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Oklahoma Secretary of State on November 23, 2016, at 2:33 PM and public notice of this meeting, together with the agenda, was posted in prominent public view on the front door of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 901 N. Stonewall, Oklahoma City, OK and on the front door of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Eastern Division, 1115 W. 17th, Tulsa.

Members present: Mr. Charlie Curtis, Mr. Glen Huff, Dr. Roy Zhang, Mr. Rocky McElvany, Dr. Steve Vogel and Dr. Eric Pfeifer

Members present via videoconference: Dr. Robert Allen and Dr. Douglas Stewart,

Members absent: Mr. Chris Ferguson.

Others Present: Amy Elliott (OCME), Kari Learned (OCME), Lori Shively (OCME), Dr. Byron Curtis (OCME), Jeremy Benavides (OCME), Kathy Valentine (OCME), Tiffany Wythe (OAG) and Cynthia Santos (eCapitol). Via videoconference, Dr. Joshua Lanter (OCME), Dr. Andrea Wiens (OCME), Mary Wilson (OCME).

Mr. Curtis called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was established.

Dr. Zhang motioned to adopt the minutes from the November 3, 2016 meeting. Dr. Stewart seconded the motion. Roll was called, Mr. McElvany and Dr. Vogel abstained, all others were in favor.

Mr. Huff joined the meeting at 2:02 pm.

Update from Chief Medical Examiner – Eric Pfeifer, M.D.

● Financial snapshot –

~ There was an approximate carryover of \$160K which is a little higher than previous months due to the increase of permit fees. We currently have close to \$7M which will be used over the next 6-7 months as we pay for equipment for the new practice.

- Priority projects –

~ The Oklahoma City practice facility is underway and the construction is on schedule. The completion date is set for October 2017 which is when the first rent payment is due.

~ Dr. Pfeifer, Dr. Lanter and Mrs. Elliott met with Oklahoma State University (OSU) leadership and planners in Tulsa this past Tuesday. There was an indication that there is a master plan for their campus which may move the Tulsa practice into a brand new building within a few years or expand and renovate the existing building. At this point, we have no way to pay for the building.

Mr. Curtis asked Dr. Pfeifer if the Medical Examiner's office will still be part of the process once the construction phase begins. Dr. Pfeifer confirmed we will still be part of the decision making process. Wiggins Development Group, Ross Construction, the developer as well as John Houck are all on board with us being there

~ Mrs. Elliott continues to address National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) inspection checklist items. There are over 300 items on the list, some of which are policies and procedures as well as different ways we collect and maintain data. We are very close to having everything done with the exception of the building.

~ Dr. Pfeifer presented the budget and performance PowerPoint given to the Senate committee on Tuesday January 31st. This same presentation will be given to the House committee sometime in February. Our present appropriations are \$8.7M per year with \$2.6M of our budget from permit fees. The available cash in December was \$6.7M. Dr. Pfeifer reiterated to the committee that we currently don't pay rent for either facility. We have one of the top 10 busiest accredited forensic toxicology labs in the United States according to a S.O.F.T. survey that was conducted last year. Per capita, we are one of the busiest medicolegal death investigation agencies in the United States. The agency evaluated over 15K cases last year and brought in over 6500 bodies for examination. Dr. Pfeifer reiterated to the Senate committee that the agency lost NAME accreditation in 2009 due to various reasons. He advised the committee that our primary strategic goal is to get full re-accredited by NAME and explained what was necessary to obtain it. The challenges are that the standards keep getting higher and technology is changing, which is expensive.

Update from Chief Administrative Officer – Amy Elliott

- Staff update –

~ Oklahoma City has hired 4 new autopsy lab assistants. With the addition of the employees, the funeral homes will have the ability to drop off and pick up decedents 24/7. This also eliminates the off-site body storage fees, which currently run approximately \$256K annually. The Tulsa practice has 4 openings for the same position and they are currently interviewing to fill the openings. We have hired 2 additional investigators, one for each practice. Dr. Jeremy Shelton will begin his fellowship July 1st in Tulsa and Dr. Lisa Barton will begin her fellowship in Oklahoma City, July 1, 2018. Based on successful completion of the program, we have already received approval from Cabinet Secretary, Thompson to offer them full time positions. The funding for these employees comes from our permit fee increase.

Dr. Edana Stroberg will interview March 1st, for a forensic pathologist position in Oklahoma City.

~ We met with Mortec to discuss autopsy lab and toxicology lab equipment for the new Oklahoma City practice. We have requested quotes and will then place an order. We are working very closely with the architects to ensure the equipment delivery and installations are coordinated.

~ Mrs. Elliott advised she had submitted a budget justification to increase the one time appropriation for the Tulsa practice from \$9M to \$12M.

~ Mrs. Elliott was just made aware of SB597 introduced by Senator Bice. This bill would require our office to redact all causes of death on autopsy reports.

Mr. Curtis asked if we are requesting any other legislation this year. Mrs. Elliott advised the Board that we do not have any legislation and that SB597 is the only bill that would have a direct impact on our agency. She will continue to monitor the bill.

Update from Deputy Chief Medical Examiner – Joshua Lanter, M.D

- Tulsa office update

~ We are in the process of filling the 4 autopsy lab assistant positions. We currently have 2 positions filled and are still interviewing for the other 2. There are 3 district investigator positions open with interviews starting next week. There are a lot of applicants interested in those positions.

Three physicians from the Tulsa practice will be attending the American Academy of Forensic Science meeting in 2 weeks. Dr. Miller has a poster that he will present.

Some office remodeling will begin upstairs to maximize the space to accommodate new personnel.

Mr. Curtis asked about the poster being presented at the Academy meeting. Dr. Lanter explained the poster is based on case reports on arrow related deaths in Oklahoma. Dr. Pfeifer brought in a copy of the poster for the Board to see.

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations (OSBI) award presentation. – Charles Curtis

Mr. Curtis presented the OSBI 2016 Directors award to Kathy Valentine, OCME district investigator. This award is reserved for those in law enforcement, who, through individual talents and efforts demonstrate outstanding service and a corporative spirit in working with the OSBI. The Medical Examiner's office is part of public safety and therefore qualifies for this award. On December 16, 2015, multiple agencies responded to a scene where a man had shot at least six vehicles along Interstate 40. Kathy responded to the fatality victim in Custer County and also volunteered to respond to the other fatality in Caddo County, which was outside her regular investigative district. This allowed for better communication, processing time, and streamlining of the death investigation.

No new business.

Mr. McElvany motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Vogel seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.