

CENTRAL OFFICE
921 NE 23rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
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 March 3, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.
921 NE 23rd Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105
and Via Videoconference

In conformity with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, advance notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Oklahoma Secretary of State on December 3, 2021 at 12:45 P.M. 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, 921 NE 23rd Street, Oklahoma City, .

Members present: Mr. Ricky Adams, Mr. Robert Hoisington, Mr. Tyler Stiles, Dr. Michael Magguilli and Dr. Eric Pfeifer.

Members present via videoconference: Dr. Robert Allen, Dr. Eric Harp, and Dr. Doug Stewart.

Members absent: Mr. Keith Reed

Others Present: Margie Weaver (OAG), Kari Learned (OCME), Lori Shively (OCME), Renee Steward (OCME), Michele Krizan (OCME).

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

Dr. Harp motioned to adopt the minutes from November 16, 2021, meeting with one change of the word annual to annual from page 3 paragraph 4. Dr. Allen seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

● Update from the Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Eric Pfeifer

~ Dr. Pfeifer advised the Board the caseload has increased approximately 25% over the last 2 years. Historically, the growth rate has been 11% per decade. Meaning the agency caseload has increased about 2 decades worth of growth in 2 years. This alone is the work of 4 additional physicians and additional investigators and chemists. Since COVID is subsiding, Dr. Pfeifer and Dr. Lanter will watch this until June/July and see if the trend reverses itself. If it does not, the agency will not be able to achieve the performance standards required by the Nation Association of Medical Examiners (NAME).

Financial snapshot –

The proposed Executive Budget Summary is less than flat. If this doesn't change, we will enter a situation where we will start to deplete our reserve account quickly. We cannot stay flat if we are going to open the new Tulsa practice and hire more staff.

Available cash is currently at \$10M. This allows us a little bit of a cushion.

Legislative update –

A couple of Bills were recently proposed or changed without notice to the agency. SB 1123 would permit funeral homes to transport decedents from a motor vehicle fatality without a scene investigation by the medical examiner investigator. The bill as written has a lot of holes that need to be addressed before it's discussed on the floor.

HB 4121 from Representative Frix allows county sheriffs to complete and sign medical certification if it isn't complete within 48 hours. Our agency and the State Health Department are very much in opposition to this bill.

SB 354 would eliminate issuing permits for out-of-state transport for Oklahoma counties that border other states. Dr. Pfeifer has not heard of any new activity on this bill this year and it appears to have died.

Case completion parameters –

Open autopsy cases greater than 90 days old currently total 489.

Fellowship program –

Both fellows were offered a staff position. The Oklahoma City fellow politely declined and accepted a position in Chicago. We will immediately begin to recruit to fill this vacancy.

Administration –

Renee Steward will be retiring at the end of March. She has saved the agency millions of dollars over the years. Lori Shively introduced Michele Krizan who will be filling the position Renee is vacating. We have appointed Garrett Rosser as an Administrative Officer in the Tulsa office to assist Michele. Renee is in the process of training both employees.

State climate survey – The survey shows very good engagement compared to years past. We saw a positive change in engagement, positive change in satisfaction and positive change in intent to continue employment within the agency.

Investigations –

Last time the scene response time was 1 hour and 24 minutes. We would like to see this closer to 1 hour or less. Until more investigators are in the field, this will not change.

Permit turnaround times have increased to 15 hours 56 minutes average per permit. The goal has always been 48 hours or less.

Toxicology –

We are in the process of purchasing 3 more instruments for a total of about \$750K. After these purchases are finalized, we will not purchase any new equipment until Dr. Pfeifer has a better idea of agency appropriations for next year.

Priority projects –

The Tulsa project appears to be on budget and on time. Photos of the new Tulsa practice were shown to the group.

Dr. Allen asked Dr. Pfeifer the source of the increase in the current case load. Dr. Pfeifer said more people appear to be dying and it seems to coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to COVID deaths we are seeing an increase in motor vehicle accidents, overdoses and homicides. Mr. Adams added partner agencies are also seeing an increase in case load.

Mr. Adams asked Dr. Pfeifer if he'd had an opportunity to speak with any of the appropriation leaders about the agency's budget. Dr. Pfeifer said during the budget performance hearings it was made very clear the agency needs more staff and the appropriations needed to cover the increase in FTE. Additionally, during yesterday's discussion of HB 1123 with Senators George Burns, Frank Simpson and Becky Gooch, Dr. Pfeifer made it clear to solve the problem of the proposed bill is to allow the agency to hire 10 more investigators and 2 more doctors. The appropriations needed for these positions was also discussed.

No new business.

Mr. Hoisington motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Stiles seconded the motion. Roll was called and were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 pm.