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

**BOARD OF MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS
REGULAR MEETING**

Board Meeting Minutes from
Thursday, May 3, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.
921 NE 23rd Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-239-7141
And via videoconference at
1115 W. 17th St., Tulsa, OK 74107
918-295-3400

In conformity with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, advance notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Oklahoma Secretary of State on December 8, 2017 at 11:51 AM 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, OK and on the front door of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Eastern Division, 1115 W. 17th, Tulsa.

Members present: Mr. Rocky McElvany, Mr. Glen Huff, Mr. Chris Ferguson and Mr. Rick Adams

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

Members absent: Dr. Steve Vogel and Dr. Roy Zhang

Others Present: Amy Elliott (OCME) Kari Learned (OCME), Lori Shively (OCME), Dr. Marc Harrison (OCME) Timothy Dwyer (OCME) and Jeremy Benavides (OCME). Via video conference, Mary Wilson (OCME), Dale Gross (OCME) and Dr. Ross Miller (OCME)

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

Mr. Huff motioned to adopt the minutes as written from the April 5, 2018, meeting. Dr. Allen seconded the motion. Roll was called, Mr. Adams and Mr. Ferguson abstained, and all others were in favor.

Update from Chief Medical Examiner – Dr. Eric Pfeifer

● Financial update–

~ With the recent budget failure our appropriations took a slight down turn. The monthly deposits are very robust, and are mostly brought in through cremation and out of state transportation permits. They have increased substantially since last November when our administrative rules changed to increase the permit fees. We currently have \$6.7M available funds.

- Update on Tulsa office project–

~ Our agency has strong backing from Oklahoma State University (OSU) leadership planning as well as the Oklahoma Long Range Capitol Planning Commission. We have formally requested from the Oklahoma Legislators, a one-time \$12M appropriation, which is the estimated cost of the project in Tulsa. We have been informed by the Capitol that they intend to bond the project. We placed a phone call this morning requesting clarification of the budget bill that was just signed to see if any of the bond issues that were mentioned include our agency. We are currently waiting to hear back.

~ OSU met a few days ago for architect selection. We expect collaboration meetings to begin soon as we design the space. It's important that the design elements we need are in place as the plans are drawn up.

- Data projections and challenges ahead –

~ Dr. Pfeifer presented data collected over the last seven years regarding the trends in appropriations and receipts. Once our expenditures stabilize, and appropriations hopefully remain the same, the carryover should be approximately \$74K per month.

~ Looking toward National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) reaccreditation, we are working at having greater than 90% of our cases being completed within 60 days or less. However, this may be a little ambitious for the next year. We will look at this again 2-3 years down the road. For now, we will continue to work toward our cases being completed within 90 days.

~ Five years ago we lead the region in salaries for physicians. Yet, there are other ME offices which are getting very aggressive with their physician recruitment. Last year, Phoenix began offering \$100K student loan forgiveness. They have a new facility, are NAME accredited and their physician salaries start about \$20K more annually than ours. This is very attractive to a new physician coming out of fellowship \$300K-\$400K in debt. With the budget climate, it is not wise to bring up payroll increases with the legislators at this time. However, this will need to be addressed at some point in the future.

~ In adopting NAME autopsy performance standards when looking at suspected drug overdoses, we will need to begin performing more complete autopsies on these cases. This could possibly be a few hundred more autopsies per year. As a reminder, per NAME guidelines, a pathologist should not perform more than 250 autopsies per year. This change would require one to two additional doctors to accommodate the extra caseload.

Dr. Stewart commented that the Board supports Dr. Pfeifer in anything that needs to be done to meet the market level of pay and benefits for forensic pathologists. Dr. Allen added that in terms of a recruiting tool, debt forgiveness is a one-time expense, as opposed to a salary increase which would be reoccurring. This is something to consider if both salary adjustments are not possible.

Dr. Allen asked if it is standard practice for a fellow to move into a full-time position in a medical examiner's office once the fellowship is complete. Dr. Pfeifer said, it happens often but is not always the case.

Nomination and election of Board Chairman –

Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Huff if he would be interested in being OCME Board Chairman. Mr. Huff replied that he would be honored to serve as Chairman. Mr. Ferguson motioned to nominate Mr. Huff as Chairman, Mr. Adams seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

Nomination and election of Board Vice Chairman –

Dr. Stewart nominated Dr. Allen to continue as OCME Board Vice Chairman, Mr. Ferguson seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

- No new business.

Mr. Ferguson motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Huff seconded the motion. Roll was called and the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.