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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, November 5, 2015, 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 12, 2014, at 12:42 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. Rocky McElvany, Dr. Barbara Bane, Mr. Chris Ferguson, Dr. Eric Pfeifer and via videoconference, Mr. Thomas Mortensen, Dr. Karlis Sloka and Dr. Doug Stewart.

Members absent: Dr. Steve Vogel

Others Present: Amy Elliott (OCME), Dr. Byron Curtis (OCME), Dr. Marc Harrison (OCME), Kari Learned (OCME), Lori Shively (OCME) Tiffany Wythe (OAG), Alyssa Harrison (United Tissue Network) and via videoconference, Dr. Josh Lanter (OCME) and Mary Wilson (OCME).

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

Mr. McElvany motioned to adopt the minutes from the August 6, 2015 meeting. Dr. Bane seconded the motion. Roll was called, Mr. Curtis abstained, and all others were in favor.

Update from Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Eric Pfeifer

- Financial update: Dr. Pfeifer provided net income information for the previous 4 months. The Agency currently has \$5.3M available.

- Budget strategy: With the Governor's mandate to reduce expenses by 10% on non-critical costs by December 1st, there are 2 things that need to be known. Will the Agency pay for a new/remodeled building out of our present appropriations, for Oklahoma City and update for the Tulsa practice? If so, what will the cost be per year? A couple of areas that can be looked at for cutting expenses are to renegotiate with fleet management or privatizing which could save the Agency approximately \$10K per year. We are also looking at increasing our permit fees to the statutory maximum, which could potentially bring in another \$1M per year. Mr. Curtis advised the 10% cut is to non-mission critical expenses. Mr. Curtis suggested Dr. Pfeifer speak to Representative Earl Sears, Appropriations & Budget, Chair to discuss the plans for funding the new building for Oklahoma City and the remodel for the Tulsa office.

- Priority projects –

- ~ Modernization of the Oklahoma City and Tulsa offices
- ~ Continued push to become NAME (National Association of Medical Examiners) reaccredited.

- Staff accomplishments –

- ~ Our staff have been scientifically productive, specifically the Tulsa office. We have had multiple publications, along with national platform and poster presentations at the last NAME meeting.
- ~ A recent survey from the Society of Forensic Toxicologists has our toxicology lab in the top 10 nationally for workload and rapid turnaround time for results.
- ~ Two more investigators passed their ABMDI (American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators) boards.
- ~ In the last year our forensic anthropologists have made positive identifications in at least 16 cold/high profile cases.
- ~ Dr. Niblo, Dr. Miller and Dr. Arboe just passed their forensic board exams. The staff is now 100% forensically board certified.

Mr. Curtis commented that these accomplishments say a lot about Dr. Pfeifer's leadership and the staff. The progress that has been made is tremendous and the whole office should be applauded.

Update from Chief Administrative Officer – Amy Elliott

- Office updates –

- ~ With the assistance of our general counsel, Tiffany Wythe, we will be asking for an exemption to the fleet management vehicles. Our current vehicle expense with fleet management is over \$20K per month. We are looking at purchasing our own vehicles which would be a substantial monthly savings.
- ~ The Agency recently participated in a mock drill with the city of Ardmore and prepared for 50 casualties. The response for the request of refrigerated trailers did not go well. The situation was addressed; the trailers arrived and cooled properly. This was a great training experience and showed what areas need attention.
- ~ At the request of the long range planning commission, a meeting was held to discuss the Tulsa office reconstruction. The architectural estimate of \$9M was discussed.
- ~ The Tulsa office is having electrical wiring installed for a generator transfer switch.
- ~ The SurfacePros are being deployed to the investigators and pathologists.

Mr. Ferguson asked about the status of the online permit process. Mrs. Elliott advised the current turnaround time is approximately 4-8 hours. The staff is very good about emailing funeral homes when there is an issue causing a delay in providing a permit.

Dr. Stewart inquired about staff vacancies and turnover. Mrs. Elliott responded, there has been no turnover and currently there are no vacancies in Oklahoma City. Dr. Lanter will address staffing in Tulsa.

Update from Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Joshua Lanter

- Tulsa office updates –

- ~ Dr. Lanter introduced Mary Wilson as the new Tulsa office manager.
- ~ There were a total of 5 investigator vacancies which were recently filled. The Tulsa location currently has 12 investigators; 6 in-house and 6 in the districts. (3 in the northeast district and 3 in the southeast district) One of the new investigators is bi-lingual. He will be utilized as an interrupter for communicating with Spanish speaking families.
- ~ Dale Gross was promoted to investigative supervisor overseeing the investigators who report to eastern office.

Dr. Lanter added, past NAME president, Dr. Schmunk stated to Timothy Dwyer at a meeting in Charlotte, N.C., that he foresees Oklahoma as being one of the most impressive medical examiner systems in the country by the time everything is finished.

Mr. Ferguson asked Dr. Pfeifer about having the members of the House and Senate stop by to tour the Oklahoma City office again. Mr. Curtis added that there are new legislators who have been elected since the last tours and it would be beneficial for them to see the office. Dr. Pfeifer agreed that this is a good idea.

Mr. Curtis asked Dr. Pfeifer to advise the Board of the meeting with the Governor's staff regarding the budget. Dr. Pfeifer said the Governor is in favor of the Agency raising the fees to the statutory maximum. He has the impression that they do not want to cut our budget and that they will also allow us to raise the fees. Mr. Curtis added information about the meeting with Earl Sears, Clark Jolly and Preston Doerflinger who advised the agency should offer a flat budget this year.

There was discussion regarding the 2016 OCME Board meeting dates. Mr. Ferguson recommended the first Thursday of the month during legislative session, thereafter, quarterly. Mr. McElvany suggested also meeting in January to discuss the December budget hearings.

Mr. Ferguson motioned to approve January 7, February 4, March 3, April 7, May 5, August 4 and November 3 as OCME 2016 Board meeting dates. Mr. McElvany seconded the motion, roll was called and all were in favor.

Dr. Bane motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. McElvany seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 pm.