

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 November 3, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.
1627 Southwest Blvd, Tulsa, OK 74107

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, OK, and 1627 Southwest Blvd., Tulsa, OK.

Members present: Dr. Robert Allen, Dr. Eric Harp, Mr. Brad Green, Mr. Robert Hoisington, Dr. Michael Magguilli, Mr. Keith Reed, Mr. Tyler Stiles, and Dr. Eric Pfeifer.

Members absent: Dr. Doug Stewart

Others Present: Dr. Josh Lanter (OCME), Madalynn Martin (OAG), Kari Learned (OCME),

Dr. Harp called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Roll was called, the members identified themselves along with who they represent; a quorum was established.

Dr. Allen motioned to adopt the minutes as written from the August 4, 2022, meeting. Mr. Stiles seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

● 2023 meeting dates for the Board of Medicolegal Investigations, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Dr. Allen motioned to accept February 2, May 4th, August 3rd, and November 2nd as regular OCME Board Meeting dates for 2023. Mr. Reed seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

Dr. Allen motioned for the May 4th and November 2nd meetings to take place at the OCME Tulsa office. Mr. Hoisington seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

● Nomination, discussion, and possible election of the Board Chairman. Dr. Harp opened the floor for discussion and nomination for Board Chairman. After some discussion, Mr. Stiles motioned to nominate Dr. Harp as Board Chairman. Roll was called and all were in favor.

- Nomination, discussion, and possible election of the Board Vice Chairman.
Mr. Stiles volunteered to serve as Vice Chairman. Dr. Allen nominated Mr. Stiles as the Board Vice Chairman. Dr. Harp seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor.

- Update from the Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Eric Pfeifer.
Dr. Pfeifer announced after 12 years of hard work, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner now has 2 state of the art facilities. The last hurdle will be getting the needed staff. National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) accreditation prescribes the number of staff required relative to case load. We have offered our current fellows staff positions contingent on a successful completion of the program and both have accepted.

Since the Board last met, we've had 3 physicians resign. The reasons are varied; one wanted to get back in to research, one moved out of state to be closer to family and the other decided to retire. We are currently recruiting to fill these vacancies. One of the Oklahoma City positions will be moved to Tulsa to help alleviate some of the case load for the physicians there.

Due to the severe shortage of forensic pathologists, some offices are willing to pay very high salaries to recruit physicians. Our agency must compete with these salaries to attract applicants. Due to the current situation, the OCME physician salaries were increased by \$25K in October.

Open cases greater than 90 days old –
There are approximately 400 open autopsy cases over 90 days old. An additional 320 external exam cases over 90 days old are open as well. This represents less than 10% of our workload.

Physicians –
The agency has a very busy practice, per capita the homicide rate is on par with Chicago (Cook County, IL). We examine approximately 8,000 cases per year. Presently, we have 14 physicians, including the 2 fellows to perform this work.

Case performance data shows we are currently on track for meeting the NAME guideline of completing 90% of cases within 90 days.

Fellowship –
Both current fellows have accepted offers to stay with the agency. This will be contingent upon successful completion of their training.

We were recently notified by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) of our continued full accreditation for the fellowship program. At this time, we have one fellow starting with the program July 1, 2023. We continue to recruit for the other position.

Effective the 2024/2025 academic year, the agency will participate in a national forensic pathology match program.

Administration –

The state has transitioned human resources data entry, benefits, training, etc. into the WorkDay program. It appears to be working well.

The budget workbook is complete, and appropriations request has been submitted. We're requesting \$802K which is the smallest increase the agency has requested in the last 12 years. This will be funding for 4 new investigator positions and an additional forensic pathologist.

Anthropology –

We were successful in hiring an additional forensic anthropologist. Sara Getz will begin January 2023.

Autopsy services –

With the opening of the new Tulsa office, we now have 18 autopsy tables and are the only practice in the country that has 2 Lodox and 2 CT scanners.

Information technology (IT) –

The IT employee embedded in the agency continues to be a great value.

We're getting close to finalizing the laboratory information management system (LIMS) for the toxicology laboratory. This has been close to a 7-year process. We've also agreed to purchase Qualtrax software which is a compliance management system for the toxicology lab.

We've also started looking into replacing our current case database system. This will most likely be a multi-year project to identify and implement a new case management system. At this time the exact cost of the new system is unknown.

Investigations –

We are in the process of hiring 4 new investigators. They will be positioned mostly in the southeast area of the state. The goal is to have a scene response time of less than an hour. In October 2022, the scene response time was 1 hour, 14 minutes.

With the assistance of the Oklahoma City Police Department, we've formed a wellness unit for OCME employees.

Permit turnaround time –

Permit turnaround time has increased slightly to 11 hours, 56 minutes in October 2022. The goal is to have permits issued in 2 business days or less.

Toxicology lab –

A 3rd board certified forensic toxicologist has been hired. Dr. Angelica Harper is close to completing her orientation and will be signing out cases in the very near future. In terms of case volume, we are among the top 10 busiest toxicology labs in the country.

Legislation –

Dr. Pfeifer has not seen legislation which directly affects the OCME. We are always watching for bills that might impact the agency.

Priority projects –

The priority project has been and will continue to be NAME reaccreditation. This will not happen until the agency is fully staffed. The earliest we anticipate inviting NAME for a site visit is a minimum of a year and a half out.

Financial snapshot –

The Tulsa equipment is almost paid for. As we finalize purchasing items for the Tulsa office, our expenditures will level out.

The agency still has a healthy balance of available cash at approximately \$7M. Nearly \$1.8M is considered in motion, leaving us roughly \$5M available.

- Update from the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Josh Lanter.

There are a few small issues with the new building that are slowly being corrected. Everything is under warranty, so there are no issues that will cost the agency money.

We have hired 5 FTE since moving into the new space. With these hirings, this will improve case turn-around time. The addition of the current Tulsa fellow, Dr. Taylor Doane to a staff position will also help with turn-around time. It was beneficial that she has family ties to Oklahoma and attended the University of Oklahoma. She had offers from other offices and one position that was waiting for her in another state. Dr. Doane decided to stay due to the leadership, new building and everything else we have to offer.

We've had a lot of outside interest in the new facility. We provide tours about 3 days a week to various groups. Recently, federal attorneys from Tulsa and Muskogee and funeral directors came through the facility. The tours have been very successful.

Mr. Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Allen seconded the motion. Roll was called and were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.