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

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING**

Thursday, November 3, 2022, 2:00 PM.  
1627 Southwest Blvd., Tulsa, OK 74107, 918-295-3400

The Board may discuss, vote to approve, vote to disapprove, vote to table, or decide not to discuss any item on the agenda.

- I. Roll call
- II. Adoption of minutes from the August 4, 2022.
- III. Discussion and possible action regarding 2023 meeting dates for the Board of Medicolegal Investigations, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
- IV. Nomination, discussion, and possible election of Board Chairman.
- V. Nomination, discussion, and possible election of Board Vice Chairman.
- VI. Update from the Chief Medical Examiner
  - ◆ Agency update.
- VII. Update from Deputy Chief Medical Examiner
  - ◆ Tulsa office updates.
- VIII. Adjourn

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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 August 4, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.  
921 NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
and Via Videoconference at 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 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, OK.*

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

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

Members absent: Dr. Doug Stewart

Others Present: Madalynn Martin (OAG), Kari Learned (OCME), Dr. Marc Harrison (OCME), Tricia Everest (Cabinet Secretary), and Dr. Josh Lanter (OCME) Via videoconference.

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

Mr. Stiles motioned to adopt the minutes as written from the May 5, 2022, meeting. Dr. Harp seconded the motion. Roll was called, Mr. Reed abstained, and all others were in favor.

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

~ Dr. Pfeifer presented an overview of agency operations to the Board.

The new Tulsa building is now in operation. We had a wonderful ribbon cutting ceremony on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Adams mentioned that some Board members were able to attend the ribbon cutting. It was a nice ceremony and a beautiful facility.

Dr. Pfeifer continued with the top concern being NAME (National Association of Medical Examiners) reaccreditation. Now that the Tulsa office is operational, the agency needs to get our staff levels up and begin checking items off the NAME list to regain accreditation. We are hopeful this can be accomplished in the next year.

The caseload data trend is still concerning. The caseload rose at the same shape as the curve for COVID-19 infections. COVID-19 infections have gone down, however, our caseload has remained flat/high. We need to calculate the number of staff pathologists needed as prescribed by NAME which factors 250 autopsy equivalents per pathologist per year to gain accreditation. We'll work on this in the next few weeks to see how many extra staff we need to request for next year, if any. During COVID-19 our caseload increased by approximately 25%. This historically represents 2 decades of growth for this agency.

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.

Mr. Adams asked if there is any particular type of case that has been on the rise. Dr. Pfeifer answered it's been all types of cases.

Due their complexity, anthropology cases take a tremendous amount of time to complete, and these cases remain steady. We have been funded this year for a third anthropologist and are currently looking for someone to join the team.

We estimate that the agency needs 16 full time forensic pathologists and 2 fellows: for a total of 18 for NAME reaccreditation. We currently have 2 open slots. There is potential to extend offers to the current fellows; pending a few more months of observation.

One Tulsa staff physician has announced retirement.

Fellowship –

Two new fellows joined us July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. They are currently in their radiology rotation getting experience in radiography and how to use the CT scanner. The agency received notice from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) notifying us of our continued accreditation status for 2 fellows. At this time, we have one fellow scheduled for next academic year. This leaves us with one open slot which we continue to try and fill.

Administration –

Salary adjustments were given to all administrative staff.

State agencies, including OCME are transitioning to WorkDay which is a new system for payroll and Human Resources data entry.

The agency's budget workbook is complete.

#### Anthropology –

With the completion of the Tulsa office, both anthropologists now have the necessary equipment and space to conduct their exams and perform their tasks.

The anthropologists were also given a salary adjustment and we have approval to for an FTE increase for an additional anthropologist.

#### Investigations –

Scene response time average for the month of July was 1 hour 25 minutes. The only way to reduce this time is to add more staff.

Salary adjustments for investigators commenced July 2022. We were approved for 4 additional investigators and recruitment is underway. We would like to add 6 more district investigators next year.

#### Permit turnaround time –

Permit turnaround time has decreased slightly to 11 hours 48 minutes. The goal is to have permits issued in 2 business days or less.

#### Toxicology lab –

The agency has hired our 3<sup>rd</sup> forensic toxicologist who will begin in September. She is a fully trained forensic toxicologist who comes to us from the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration).

Two new GC (gas chromatograph) instruments and an LCMS (liquid chromatograph mass spectrometry) have been installed in the toxicology laboratory.

Salary adjustments for the toxicologist and forensic chemist commenced July 2022.

#### Legislation –

Dr. Pfeifer has not seen any interim studies that directly affect the OCME this year.

#### Priority projects –

Re-accreditation by NAME remains our #1 priority. Now that the agency has the buildings we are working on the needed staff. At this point the focus is on the NAME checklist and to complete a couple of required policies.

#### Financial snapshot –

The \$500K monthly payment for the Tulsa building construction has ended, correspondingly that has dropped off our appropriations. The agency still has a robust amount of available cash.

Dr. Allen asked Dr. Pfeifer if there is pressure placed on the medical examiner's office from the state legislators to obtain NAME accreditation. Dr. Pfeifer replied, yes and no. Occasionally we have attorneys inquire why the medical examiner's office does not have accreditation. They question if the work product does not qualify under Oklahoma law due to the lack of accreditation. We've argued this is

the practice of forensic pathology, a medical endeavor and not a laboratory science in the way the OCME toxicology lab would be. The OCME toxicology laboratory is accredited and has maintained their accreditation throughout by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT). Dr. Pfeifer has not felt any pressure from the legislature in the last couple of years on this subject.

Mr. Adams asked Dr. Pfeifer if the \$10.8M carryover will this be rolled over to the next year? Dr. Pfeifer said there are a few things that still need to be purchased. Digital retina cameras and an x-ray system for both offices and a couple of other items. We will have a sizeable amount left over and may not need to ask for much of an appropriations increase. However, this is a large agency now and is not inexpensive in terms of salaries and equipment. Mr. Hoisington asked if the carryover could be used for salaries and Dr. Pfeifer replied yes it can.

- Update from the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Josh Lanter  
Dr. Lanter advised the new Tulsa office is up and running. Over the next couple of months, the primary focus is to continue the moving process. Last Friday they were able to perform exams on 23 individuals and had 4 physicians working at the same time. This is the first time that has ever happened for Tulsa.

There are still a few mechanical and technology issues they are still trying to iron out.

The ribbon cutting ceremony went very well and was a great experience. The tours given were very much appreciated and respectful of what our agency does. The participants were impressed. If anyone would like a tour, they can contact Dr. Lanter, and he will be happy to show them around the new facility.

Dr. Lanter thanked Dr. Pfeifer and the Board for their support. Without it, we would not have the new building. The old building is scheduled to be demolished in September.

- New business.

Mr. Adams announced his retirement from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations and today would be the last OCME Board meeting he would attend. Collectively, the Board thanked Mr. Adams for his service and his contribution to the agency.

Dr. Allen motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Reed seconded the motion. Roll was called and were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 pm.

# Calendar for Year 2023 (Observed)

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

July						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## OK State Holidays:

**Jan 2** 'New Year's Day' observed  
**Jan 16** Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
**Feb 20** Presidents' Day

**May 29** Memorial Day  
**Jul 4** Independence Day  
**Sep 4** Labor Day

**Nov 10** Veterans Day observed  
**Nov 23 & 24** Thanksgiving  
**Dec 25 & 26** Christmas

# **OCME Report to the Board of Medicolegal Investigations, November 2022**

**Eric Pfeifer, MD**

## **Top Concerns for OCME operation**

### **NAME RE-ACCREDITATION**

As the new Tulsa practice location is in operation, the principal focus will turn to satisfying all the checklist items necessary for re-accreditation by the Nation Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). We plan on operating and collecting data for at least the next year prior to requesting an inspection by NAME.

### **FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT/RETENTION:**

One of the last hurdles to attaining NAME standards is achieving full physician staffing. We are looking at caseload trend data to see how much, if at all caseloads have subsided. The caseload determines our staffing need. The caseload for body examinations had increased approximately 25% in the last two years. We are watching this trend and hope it subsides by this summer (2023). This increase will not be sustainable in the long run without adding appropriate numbers of staffs. We estimated we need at least 16 staff and 2 fellow physicians (18 total) to meet re-accreditation requirements.

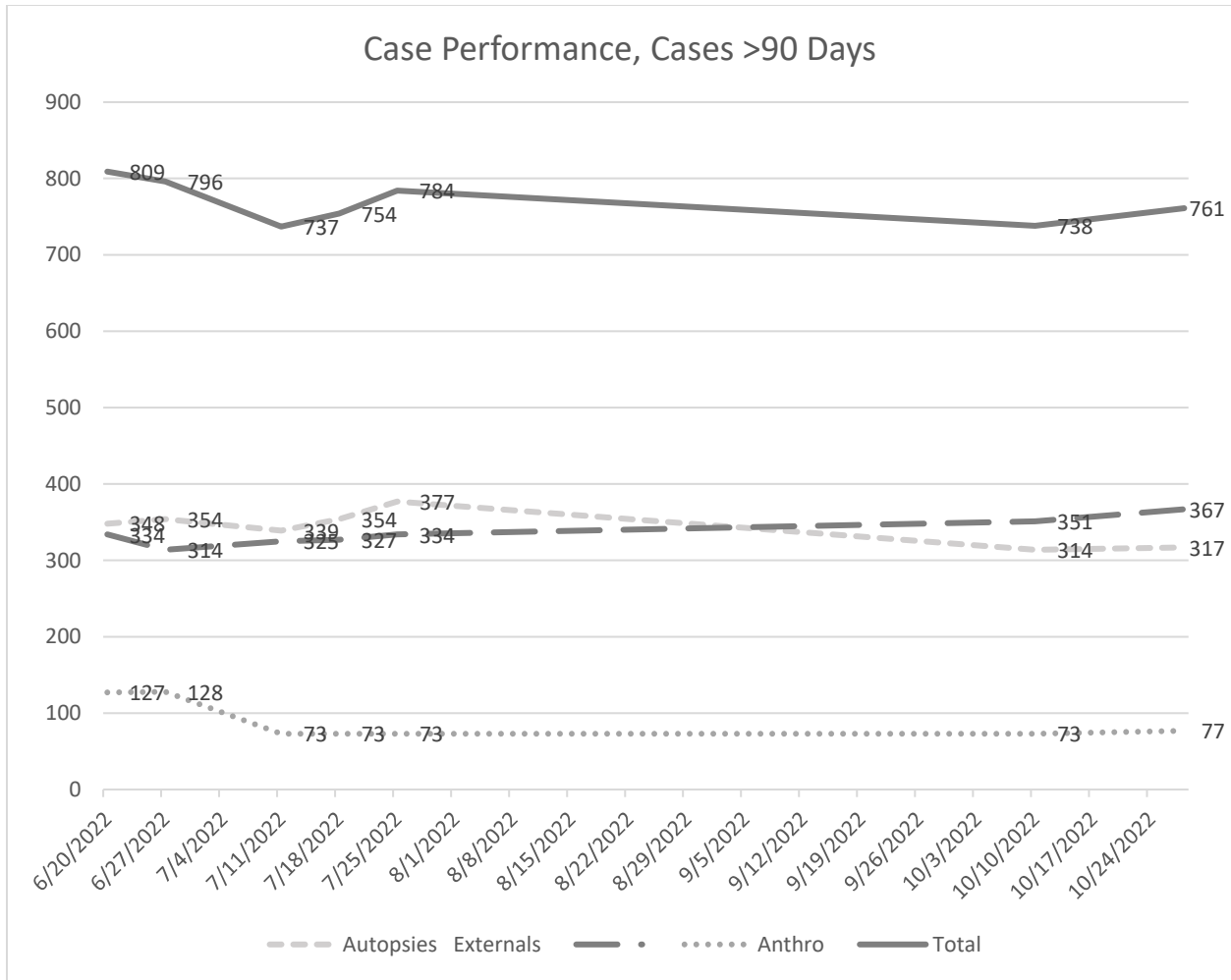
This year's fellows have both agreed to join the staff in July 2023. Unfortunately, three staff physicians have either retired or resigned since this past August. Some reasons given for the departures include the burden of high caseload and court testimonies. One is moving closer to family in Texas. One is leaving patient care to pursue research. Presently our only two other prospects for staff positions are 18 months out from being able to join.

Another concern is the rapidly increasing salary market values of forensic pathologists. Competition is increasingly fierce nationwide.

## **OCME Agency Departments**

### **PHYSICIANS**

Our case performance is good. The Oklahoma OCME is one of the busiest practices in the United States, with yearly examinations exceeding 8,000 per year. Measurements of case completion seem to indicate we are meeting or close to meeting NAME (Phase II) requirements. See the following graph:



To keep up with market pressure, we have adjusted the salaries of the forensic pathologist staff (effective 10/1/22) and have advertised for the open positions at this new compensation level.

We have maintained an active presence at national meetings with contributions to the medical knowledge base.

#### **FELLOWSHIP IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY**

Two new fellows joined us in July 2022 and have performed well; they have been offered full-time staff positions following completion of their training. Both have agreed to join the staff in 2023.

The Fellowship was just again granted continued full accreditation by the ACGME.

Presently, we have one fellow joining our training program in July 2023.

We have joined the national fellowship match program.



We have opened a social media account to advertise our fellowship program.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The new system of Payroll/HR data entry seems to be working well.

The 2022 budget book is complete and we have proposed an appropriations increase next year to cover four new investigators, and one additional forensic pathologist.

## **ANTHROPOLOGY**

We were successful in hiring an additional forensic anthropologist! She has marvelous credentials, is experienced, and begins in January 2023.

With the opening of the Tulsa office our space and equipment dedicated to forensic anthropology has doubled.

## **AUTOPSY SERVICES**

With the opening of the Tulsa office our space and equipment dedicated to autopsy services since 2011 has almost doubled. Statewide we now have 18 examination tables, two LODOX, and two CT scanners.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Having an embedded OMES IT person continues to be of great value to us. We doubt we would have been able to provision the new Tulsa office and continue present operations as efficiently without this person.

We seem to be close to finalizing a LIMS system for the toxicology laboratory. Also, a data analysis system is being installed to help with analytics, and requirements of ISO accreditation of the tox lab.

We are presently conducting a search for a new, commercial case management system to replace the Access-based database system. This is expected to be a multi-year project.

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

**Scene response elapsed times (average, OCTOBER 2022): 1 hr., 14m.**

Scene response elapsed times (average, July 1): 1 hr., 25m.

Scene response elapsed times (average, April 1): 1 hr., 29m.

Scene response elapsed times (average, February 2022): 1 hr., 24m.

**Permit turnaround times (average, OCTOBER 2022): 11hr., 56 m.**

Permit turnaround times (average, July 2022): 11hr., 48 m.

Permit turnaround times (average, March 2022): 12hr., 21 m.

Permit turnaround times (average, March 2022): 15hr., 56 m.

Permit turnaround times (average, Oct 2021): 16hr., 13 m.

We have been given appropriations for 4 additional FTE investigators and are filling these slots quickly. These folks will occupy district spots and it is hoped we can decrease average response times to less than one hour on average.

With the help of OCPD we have formed a new wellness unit, largely under the auspices of the OCME investigations staff.

#### **TOXICOLOGY**

We have been successful in hiring a third forensic toxicologist! The OCME tox lab maintains its accreditation and is, by caseload, among the top ten busiest forensic tox labs in the entire country. With the addition of this scientist, we will be able to cut turn around times and devote effort toward ISO accreditation.

#### **LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**

There doesn't appear to be any interim studies that directly affect the OCME. We are watching for bills.

#### **PRIORITY PROJECTS**

Re-accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners; anticipated by 2024.

#### **FINANCIAL**

*See reports below.*

END

Snapshot of P & L

FY23	APPROPRIATIONS	MONTHLY DEPOSITS	TOTAL	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	Profit/Loss
July	\$1,267,179.00	\$426,426.00	\$1,693,605.00	\$1,845,618.04	(\$152,013.04)
August	\$1,267,179.00	\$458,158.00	\$1,725,337.00	\$2,725,743.45	(\$1,000,406.45)
September	\$1,267,179.00	\$380,245.00	\$1,647,424.00	\$1,885,128.13	(\$237,704.13)
October	\$1,267,179.00				
November	\$1,267,179.00				
December	\$1,267,179.00				
January	\$1,267,179.00				
February	\$1,267,179.00				
March	\$1,267,179.00				
April	\$1,267,179.00				
May	\$1,267,179.00				
June	\$1,267,179.00				



State of Oklahoma  
 Allotment Budget and Available Cash  
 As Of September 30,2022

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<u>Business Unit</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Dept</u>	<u>Bud Ref</u>	<u>Allocations</u>	<u>Pre Encumbered</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Current Yr Exp</u>	<u>Prior Yr Exp</u>	<u>Allotment Budget</u>	<u>Available Cash</u>
34200										
	191									0.00
	19101	01	21	1,286,430.14	.00	.00	.00	1,286,430.14	.00	
	19101	10	21	8,411,636.19	.00	.00	.00	8,411,636.19	.00	
	19101	90	21	5,500,000.00	.00	.00	.00	5,500,000.00	.00	
	19111	01	22	201.86	.00	.00	.00	201.86	.00	
	19111	10	22	2,073,434.81	.00	.00	.00	2,073,434.81	.00	
				<u>17,271,703.00</u>				<u>17,271,703.00</u>		
	192									2,386,103.36
	19201	01	22	1,219,848.00	.00	.00	.00	1,218,643.24	1,204.76	
	19201	10	22	11,942,209.00	.00	.00	15,211.24	9,542,099.16	2,384,898.60	
	19201	90	22	6,000,000.00	.00	.00	1,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	.00	
				<u>19,162,057.00</u>			<u>1,015,211.24</u>	<u>15,760,742.40</u>	<u>2,386,103.36</u>	
	193									171,124.52
	19301	01	23	1,325,650.00	.00	.00	324,347.43	.00	1,001,302.57	
	19301	10	23	13,880,494.00	.00	1,114,096.14	3,306,065.05	.00	9,460,332.81	
				<u>15,206,144.00</u>		<u>1,114,096.14</u>	<u>3,630,412.48</u>		<u>10,461,635.38</u>	
	200									6,920,381.38
	20000	01	21	30,950.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	30,950.00	
	20000	01	22	33,450.00	.00	.00	.00	662.49	32,787.51	
	20000	01	23	33,449.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	33,449.00	
	20000	10	21	4,402,531.00	.00	218,065.41	.00	2,762,488.29	1,421,977.30	
	20000	10	22	4,375,745.78	5,000.01	934,343.72	291,831.47	2,176,182.48	968,388.10	
	20000	10	23	4,152,447.00	.00	1,841,160.72	466,896.28	.00	1,844,390.00	



State of Oklahoma  
 Allotment Budget and Available Cash  
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<u>Business Unit</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Dept</u>	<u>Bud Ref</u>	<u>Allocations</u>	<u>Pre Encumbered</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Current Yr Exp</u>	<u>Prior Yr Exp</u>	<u>Allotment Budget</u>	<u>Available Cash</u>
34200										
	200									6,920,381.38
	20000	88	21	1,965,757.00	2,477.76	198,495.66	501,412.00	1,169,002.94	94,368.64	
	20000	88	22	2,681,609.90	10,087.29	85,157.23	157,410.33	1,940,658.07	488,296.98	
	20000	88	23	1,359,908.00	24,829.17	630,508.14	337,043.70	.00	367,526.99	
	20000	90	21	500,000.00	.00	.00	.00	500,000.00	.00	
				19,535,847.68	42,394.23	3,907,730.88	1,754,593.78	8,548,994.27	5,282,134.52	
	383									0.00
	38301	10	21	500,000.00	.00	.00	.00	500,000.00	.00	
				500,000.00				500,000.00		
	400									117,115.68
	40000	01	21	25,020.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	25,020.00	
	40000	01	22	23,382.00	.00	.00	13,963.19	.00	9,418.81	
	40000	01	23	24,220.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	24,220.00	
	40000	10	21	56,117.00	.00	.00	.00	51,409.08	4,707.92	
	40000	10	22	46,648.00	.00	.00	.00	46,626.93	21.07	
	40000	10	23	142,161.00	.00	.00	16,695.14	.00	125,465.86	
				317,548.00			30,658.33	98,036.01	188,853.66	
Business Unit Totals				71,993,299.68	42,394.23	5,021,827.02	6,430,875.83	42,179,475.68	18,318,726.92	9,594,724.94



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<u>Business Unit</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Dept</u>	<u>Bud Ref</u>	<u>Allocations</u>	<u>Pre Encumbered</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Current Yr Exp</u>	<u>Prior Yr Exp</u>	<u>Allotment Budget</u>	<u>Available Cash</u>
Grand Totals				71,993,299.68	42,394.23	5,021,827.02	6,430,875.83	42,179,475.68	18,318,726.92	9,594,724.94