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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, February 13, 2025, at 02:00 pm
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 06, 2024, at 8:37 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 1627 Southwest Blvd., Tulsa, OK 74117.

Members present in Oklahoma City: Ms. Angela Marsee, Mr. Keith Reed, Mr. Steven Carter, Mr. Tyler Stiles, and Dr. Eric Pfeifer.

Members present in Tulsa: Dr. Eric Harp

Members absent: Dr. Jason Beaman and Dr. Michael Magguilli, Representative of the Oklahoma State Medical Association (OSMA).

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

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

Ms. Marsee motioned to adopt the minutes as written from the December 5, 2024, meeting. Dr. Harp seconded the motion. Roll was called, Mr. Reed and Mr. Carter abstained, and all others were in favor.

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

~Dr. Pfeifer presented the agency update to the Board.

Dr. Pfeifer announced that the overarching priority has been and continues to be the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) reaccreditation. After one final verification of the NAME checklist, Dr. Pfeifer would like to formally apply for inspections by NAME. The Oklahoma City and Tulsa offices will be inspected for accreditation independently. Dr. Pfeifer is confident that both offices will have no issues passing inspections.

Physicians-

We have established performance standards for case turnaround times, and as of today, 90% of cases are closed within 90 days. After NAME accreditation, Dr. Pfeifer aims to set a goal of closing 90% of cases within 60 days. The Oklahoma OCME is one of the busiest practices in the United States, with yearly examinations exceeding 8,000 per year.

Fellowship-

In July, two new fellows began their training, one at each office. Interviews for 2026-2027 are currently underway. The Match program will start soon, and the results should be available by May. Our fellowship training program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The program offers formal training in postmortem radiography and CT to all fellows; a distinction held by only four other programs in the country. Additionally, our presence on social media has been highly effective in recruiting both fellows and staff.

Administration-

The agency has been actively engaged in budget management, the procurement of a new case management system (CMS), legislative development, as well as facilities and equipment maintenance. Strategic budget planning for the 2026-2027 fiscal year will begin soon.

Anthropology-

We now have four full-time forensic anthropologists, two at each office. As a result, OCME has one of the largest forensic anthropology departments in the country, second only to Houston. Prior to 2012, the agency did not have anthropology services.

Autopsy Services-

Our autopsy services are supported by a formalized and regularly updated Quality Assurance (QA) program that adheres to rigorous standards. This program aligns with NAME requirements, particularly in areas such as body processing protocols, ensuring precision and consistency across all operations.

Information Technology-

OCME is highly dependent on technology and having Franklin as our embedded Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) IT representative continues to be incredibly valuable to us.

The agency continues to work on acquiring a new case management system (CMS). A new CMS has been selected to replace the existing Access-based data system. While this is expected to be a multi-year project, the bid process is currently under legal review.

Investigations-

The average scene response time is 1 hour and 18 minutes, which is an average across all 77 counties.

Permit turnaround time has increased slightly to 11 hours 40 minutes. The goal is to have permits issued in 48 hours (2 business days) which we are well under.

Toxicology-

The current average turnaround time for toxicology results is under 90 days. In January the tox lab completed over 900 cases, which greatly exceeds the autopsy lab examination case numbers. However, our goal is to reduce the turnaround time further, aiming to complete 90% of cases within 60 days. Part of

the five-year plan is to add a 4th toxicologist. The lab needs more equipment, space, and additional personnel to get us to that goal.

The OCME toxicology lab maintains dual accreditation with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT). In terms of caseload, we rank among the top ten busiest forensic toxicology labs in the nation. Our toxicologists and chemists conduct significantly more testing than the national average.

Legislation-

FY25 we were awarded \$300K in additional appropriations. During recent budget hearings at the Capitol, we emphasized the need for \$3.5M in recurring appropriations for FY26 to fund new staff salaries and benefits. We hope to receive an increase in administrative rules which will add approximately \$1M annually.

Last year's additional appropriation failed to cover even basic inflationary costs for supplies and services, as previously reported to the Board and Legislature. As a result, we have relied on cash reserves to maintain operations.

Priority projects-

The number one priority for OCME continues to be the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) re-accreditation. We anticipate obtaining NAME re-accreditation in the next few months.

Financial-

Dr. Pfeifer addressed the financial profit and loss data. We're currently in the red but drawing from the agency's available cash. As of January's statement, the carryover balance is \$6.2M.

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

NAME accreditation remains our top priority. We have faced challenges with the independent inspections of the Oklahoma City and Tulsa offices, particularly in splitting data for review. The loss of accreditation in 2009 was primarily due to staffing shortages at both facilities, which prevented compliance with NAME's prescribed autopsy performance standards. However, with adequate staff and improved facilities now in place, Dr. Lanter does not anticipate any issues with the Tulsa office regaining NAME accreditation.

New business-

No new business.

Mr. Stiles motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Marsee seconded the motion. Roll was called and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 2:19 pm.