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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, April 5, 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, Dr. Steve Vogel and Dr. Roy Zhang

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

Members absent: Mr. Chris Ferguson and Mr. Rick Adams

Others Present: Kari Learned (OCME), Lori Shively (OCME), Dr. Byron Curtis (OCME) and Thomas Schneider (OAG). Via video conference, Dr. Joshua Lanter (OCME) and Mary Wilson (OCME),

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

Dr. Zhang motioned to adopt the minutes as written from the February 1, 2018, meeting. Mr. Huff seconded the motion. Roll was called, Dr. Vogel abstained, and all others were in favor.

Update from Deputy Chief Medical Examiner – Dr. Josh Lanter

- Operational status of agency –
~ The move to the renovated building is complete. There were some construction problems which caused up to a 9 week delay in toxicology reporting. This has caused a small spike in turnaround times which seems to be resolving itself. The toxicologists and chemists have been coming in on weekends to complete testing and reporting. We expect to be completely back on track by July, possibly sooner.

~ Autopsy efficiency in the Oklahoma City practice has greatly improved with the addition of tables. In the old facility only 2-3 autopsies were performed at a time, some days in the new autopsy lab, we have 5-7 autopsies going simultaneously. This is an issue in Tulsa where we only have 2 tables that can be utilized. As an example, today, Tulsa had 11 cases with 3 of them being homicides. Fortunately we have one physician that comes in very early in the morning to start his day. This gives us more time to get the remaining cases done.

- Financial update–

~ The present scope of operations has not been affected by recent cuts in State appropriations. Although, cuts will alter plans for future recruitment of forensic pathologist and autopsy technicians. These positions are needed in order to meet National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) accreditation standards. If additional reduction in appropriations occurs for FY19, recruitment will be suspended to maintain the present scope of operations. This would be unfortunate, considering we would not achieve NAME accreditation until we are able to meet the personnel level that NAME requires.

- Staff update–

~ Dr. Choi will be retiring at the end of September after 35 years of service. It is virtually unheard of and is quite an accomplishment for a forensic pathologist to remain in one practice for this many years. Dr. Katrina Van Pelt is currently in her fellowship and will join the Oklahoma City staff in July. Dr. Lisa Barton is a pathology resident at the University of Oklahoma and will begin her fellowship in the Oklahoma City office in July. Dr. Jeremy Shelton is our current fellow who is training in Tulsa. He will join us as a staff pathologists in Tulsa once his training is complete.

~ Dr. Pfeifer said we should have 13 forensic pathologists by FY20. This would be 7 in Oklahoma City and 6 in Tulsa. However, this number may still not be enough per NAME standards. This would have to be reevaluated when the time comes.

- Legislative update –

~ We are currently watching a couple of bills, they are HB 2747 and HB 3078. Neither made it out of committee. The first is regarding the Department of Public Safety (DPS) filed fingerprints for identifying purposes of unknown/unidentified decedents. This bill would be extremely useful. We currently use fingerprints from FBI and OSBI to assist in identification. However, unless a decedent has been fingerprinted, they will not have anything on file with those agencies. DPS has more of a database of fingerprints, which is currently very hard to access. To have the ability to use their database for identification purposes, would ease the process for us

The other bill is the Organ Procurement Act of 2018. We believe this bill would give the organ procurement agencies more power to determine what cases they can utilize for procurement. This bill will most likely come back next year.

- Priority projects –

~NAME reaccreditation will remain our target. However, until the Tulsa practice is brought up to NAME standards this will be elusive. Most of the other elements needed for reaccreditation are in place. (staffing and equipment) Leadership and planning at Oklahoma State University (OSU) Health Sciences Center will have an architectural space meeting later this month. We continue to get positive feedback from them. The funding on their end seems to be looking at bonds or a one-time appropriation. By our next Board meeting, we hope to have more information with what will happen over the next 6 months to a year as far as the Tulsa practice is concerned.

~ Challenges – rent and operational costs of the new OKC practice runs approximately \$5K per day. We currently have the appropriations needed to cover these expenses, however, further cuts could hinder operations and recruitment of physicians. Our physician’s salaries are not at the forefront as they were five years ago. Market forces have changed and we are approximately \$20K-\$25K below surrounding states. Cost of living adjustments seem to have little effect in the minds of young physicians. However, some neighboring agencies are using medical school loan repayment programs to aid in recruitment. This is very attractive to new physicians. The Oklahoma City practice site is a huge draw, it’s a beautiful building and would attractive to prospective recruits.

- No new business.

Dr. Vogel motioned to adjourn the meeting, Dr. Zhang seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:19 pm.