

**Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner
Advisory Committee Meeting - January 16, 2015
CCME Office | Lower Level Conference Room| 11:00am**

Attendance

Present: *Dr. Enrique Beckmann, Chairman; Detective Sergeant Jason Moran, Cook County Sheriff's Office-Vice Chairman; Mark A. Rizzo, Funeral Director, I.D.F.P.R.-Secretary; Susan Dyer, Funeral Director; Elizabeth Gorman, Cook County Commissioner; Commander Eugene Roy, Chicago Police Department; Rabbi Moshe Wolfe, Police Chaplain (CPD/CFD); Reverend Vuanita Battle-Maze, Vitas Hospice; Isaac McCoy, President/CEO Urban Mosaic.*

Absent: *Daniel Gallagher, Cook County State's Attorney's Office; Spencer Leak, Jr., Funeral Director.*

Guests Present: *Dr. Stephen Cina, Chief Medical Examiner of Cook County; Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner of Cook County; James Sledge, Executive Officer of CCME; Nadine Jakubowski, Deputy Executive Officer of CCME; Robert Meza, CCBOA; Kevin McNicholas, CCBOA; Steven P. Smith, Safety IDP of CCME; Frank Shuftan, CCBOA; Dr. Michael Wagner, Chief Toxicologist of CCME.*

Chairman Beckmann informed committee that the sister of Martha Martinez, CCBOA passed away and requested that we keep Martha in our prayers.

Call to Order / Roll Call

MEAC meeting is called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Chairman Beckmann
Secretary Rizzo does roll call and announces there is a quorum

Approval of Minutes

Amended Minutes of May 2014 meeting are reviewed by committee
Motion to approve by Vice-Chairman Moran
Motion seconded by Wolfe
No discussion
Motion passed unanimously by committee

Minutes of November 21, 2014 meeting are reviewed by committee
Motion to approve by Dyer
Motion seconded by Wolfe
No discussion
Motion passed unanimously by committee

Chairman Beckmann and Vice-Chairman Moran both take time to positively comment on the year and the complete set of meeting minutes for 2014

Reports

Chairman

-Chairman Beckmann

Per our by-laws the committee must elect a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary at the Annual Meeting. Requests nominations from the committee for the positions.

Motion by Dyer to retain Vice-Chairman Moran and Secretary Rizzo in their current positions

Motion Seconded by Wolfe

Discussion by committee members supporting Dyers' motion including comments by Chairman Beckmann thanking Vice-Chairman Moran and Secretary Rizzo for their hard work and dedication

Motion passed unanimously by committee to retain Vice-Chairman Moran and Secretary Rizzo in their current positions for 2015

-Chairman Beckmann

Sub-committee on improving communication between the CCME and MEAC has met. It was decided that input and advice from the committee has proven useful to the CCMEO. And that future input is welcome.

-Dr. Cina

Makes offer to issue weekly info bulletins to members of the committee similar to the one provided to the CCBOA and President Preckwinkle's Office. This would improve communication between CCME and MEAC. The committee overwhelmingly refused Dr. Cina's offer. The overall sentiment was that the committee was not interested in managing the CCME or the CCMEO. Instead, it was preferred that Dr. Cina chooses issues to share with the committee on what he believes to be important. In addition, Dr. Cina will continue to reach out to specific committee members based on expertise in individual fields for advice or assistance.

-Chairman Beckmann

Provided overview of 2014 Annual Report on behalf of the sub-committee. If approved, the report will be delivered to the Cook County Board of Commissioners by department and electronic mail via the CCMEO. He noted that the 15 committee member absences matched what the committee experienced in 2013.

Motion by Wolfe to accept the report

Motion seconded by Roy

Discussion by committee included changes to section #4 regarding the pre-mortem wishes of the deceased, section #8 regarding "operational issues", and to make clear that MEAC had no involvement in any RFP process.

Motion passed unanimously by committee to accept 2014 Annual Report with amendments to be made by the Annual Report sub-committee

CCMEO

-Dr. Cina

There is no cemetery contract. Homewood Memorial Gardens Cemetery has been informed that future bids will be dismissed due to contract violations. Specifically, that they denied burials from the CCMEO during the winter months. Cremation is the only option for final disposition currently.

-Steven Smith

50 percent of decedents are disclaimed and of those being cremated, only 25 of the families express interest in picking up cremated remains.

-Dr. Cina

Cooler count was at 166. Dr. Cina feels he is being as transparent as possible with all issues. He will continue to reach out to the committee and to individual experts in the respective fields to advise him on issues. Suggested a possible ordinance amendment to retain cremated remains for only 1 year as required by Illinois Law and not the 2 years in the current ordinance. Also suggested that the Chief Medical Examiner contract be changed from 5 years to 6 years.

The cooler holds 275 decedents. Currently, 160 are identified, 28 remains are unidentified. Dr. Cina will stop storage cases when cooler count hits 225. Indigent remains need to move through the facility faster than the 60 days. Agencies such as the Public Administrator and Veterans Affairs need to be more responsive. Steven Smith is the Indigent Coordinator and will be working full time vetting remains through the CCMEO in a more timely fashion.

The office assisted the Federal Bureau of Investigations with an investigation pertaining to allegations made against Biological Resources Inc.

There are 2 vacant assistant ME positions and 10 interviews have been set with James Sledge for those positions. 2 Fellows are coming in the next several months.

BOA

No report due to Martha Martinez's absence

Sub-Committees

-Vice-Chairman Moran (Cremation Chair)

Due to time constraints, the cremation policy is tabled for further discussion.

Old/New Business

-Gorman

Distributed Proposed Cook County Ordinance Amendment (reference File Number 15-1044) to committee. The amendment specifically affected Section 38-132 which governs MEAC. The overwhelming consensus of the committee after reviewing the amendment was negative. The general sentiment was that the amendments were proposed as retribution for a false perception by BOA that MEAC was overstepping their authority with the CCMEO.

-Vice-Chairman Moran

Distributed Proposed By-Law Amendment - Article 3 Section 4 under "Secretary" – the amendment clarifies the role of the Secretary

Motion to approve the by-law amendment made by Vice-Chairman Moran

Motion seconded by Secretary Rizzo

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by committee

Motion to change the committee meeting schedule from every other month to quarterly which is the minimum amount of meetings established by Cook County ordinance made by Vice-Chairman Moran

Motion seconded by McCoy

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by the committee

The 2015 MEAC Meeting Schedule will be January 16, April 17, July 17, and October 16

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Vice-Chairman Moran

Motion seconded by Secretary Rizzo

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by the committee

Meeting adjourned at 12:43pm