

**Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner
Advisory Committee Meeting | July 15, 2016
Office of the Medical Examiner | 2121 W. Harrison Street
Lower Level Conference Room | 11:00am**

Attendance

Present: Dr. Enrique Beckmann, *Medical Profession-Chairman*; Detective Sergeant Jason Moran, *Cook County Sheriff's Office - Vice Chairman*; Susan Dyer, *Funeral Director-Secretary*; Deputy State's Attorney Don Pechous, *Cook County State's Attorney's Office*; Mark A. Rizzo, *Funeral Director*; Deputy Chief Al Nagode, *Chicago Police Department*; Rabbi Moshe Wolf, *Clergy*

Absent: Commissioner Jeffrey R. Tobolski, *Cook County Commissioner 16th District*; Spencer Leak, Jr., *Funeral Director*; Isaac McCoy, *Citizen/Business*; Vuanita Battle-Maze, *Clergy*

Others Present: Robert Meza, CCBOA; Kevin McNicholas, CCBOA; Carlos Aparicio, CCBOC; Rebeca Perrone, Indigent Coordinator-CCMEO; Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, Chief Medical Examiner-CCMEO; Michael D. Rodriguez, Executive Officer-CCMEO; Becky Schlikulman, CCBOA, Steven Smith, Safety Officer-CCMEO

Call to Order/Roll Call

MEAC meeting called to order at **11:15 a.m.** by Chairman Beckmann
Secretary Susan Dyer performs roll call and announces there is a quorum

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of April 22, 2016 are reviewed by Committee

Motion to approve minutes made by Mark Rizzo

Motion seconded by ASA Don Pechous

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by Committee

Public Comment

Kevin Beese from the Cook County Chronicle is present (media reporter) – introduction only

Reports

Chairman Beckmann:

Attendance has become a problem with members Isaac McCoy and Spencer Leak, we meet 4 times a year, absences make transacting Committee's business difficult, bylaws clearly define attendance requirements and said members are in violation. Isaac McCoy contacted me via email and requested to remain on the committee. He explained that his absences were due to being appointed to President Obama's administration, which requires travel to Washington DC. This position will only last until the end of the year and then he will be available to attend MEAC meetings again (January 2017).

-Vice Chairman Moran: Isaac McCoy contacted me as well, but via telephone. He related substantially the same information as reported by Chairman Beckmann – requesting to be

retained on committee – will return in January 2017. Due to Isaac McCoy's commitment to civic duty, Vice Chairman Moran recommended to the committee that he be retained.

Motion by Rabbi Wolf: To accept Isaac McCoy's explanation of absences and retain him as a Member of the MEAC

Motion seconded by Secretary Dyer

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by Committee

Spencer Leak has also recently missed multiple Committee Meetings. In 2014, the bylaws were amended to accommodate Mr. Leak's daily business schedule and the committee voted to retain him as a member after multiple absences in previous years. Chairman Beckmann recommends to committee that he notify President Preckwinkle of Spencer Leak's absences and request a replacement according to the bylaws.

Motion by Mark Rizzo: Authorize Chairman Beckmann to inform President Preckwinkle of Spencer Leak's absences and request a replacement according to the committee bylaws

Seconded by Vice-Chairman Moran

Discussion:

- Mark Rizzo: The funeral business, as well as some other professions represented on the Committee, make it difficult to predict conflicts, but Spencer Leak has displayed a pattern of absences. Would like to suggest to President Preckwinkle that she seek another funeral director to replace Leak on the Committee.

- Vice Chairman Moran agreed

Motion passed unanimously by Committee

Commissioner Tobolski has not attended one meeting since his appointment. Carlos Aparicio from the Commissioner's Office has always attended in the Commissioner's place. The absence of the Commissioner position on the committee is different in that there is no term limit for them.

- Vice Chairman Moran: The problem with Mr. Aparicio attending in Commissioner Tobolski's place is that Mr. Aparicio has no voice or vote.

-Carlos Aparicio: Explained that in addition to his duties as Commissioner he is also a Mayor of a village and that items come up that require the Commissioner's time. He recommends that Commissioner Tobolski continue to represent the CCBOC by attending at least two meetings per year starting at the October meeting. Committee accepts Mr. Aparicio's recommendation.

Congratulations to Dr. Ponni Arunkumar for her unanimous appointment to the Chief Medical Examiner position. She worked very closely with Dr. Cina to achieve N.A.M.E. accreditation and continues to advance the Office of the Medical Examiner.

Dr. Arunkumar:

Cooler count-168

Storage Cases-37 (Cooler Level is down)

- Next Indigent Burial scheduled for July 27th which will include Unidentified and Fetal Cases and the rest of 2014 Unclaimed Cremated Remains
- Annual Report copy distributed to Committee for information and review.
- Maintain N.A.M.E. accreditation
- Several open positions still at office. They include Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Chief of Toxicology, Compliance Officer, and Assistant Medical Examiner

- 3 Forensic Pathology Fellowship positions started in July and are all doing well

-Chairman Beckmann asked whether she would continue to pursue a new facility. She replied that discussions with Capital Planning Committee have started.

Unclaimed Veterans Subcommittee (Chairman Susan Dyer):

Previous recommendation by the committee – Unclaimed Veterans should never be cremated by the Medical Examiner’s Office while the federal burial benefit is available to them. The Medical Examiner’s Office, the CCBOC, and the MEAC should work on solving the processing delays at the Office of Veteran’s Affairs rather than subvert the system through cremation. Subcommittee has been working on the issue with CCMEO Indigent Coordinator Rebeca Perrone.

-Rebeca Perrone: Hines VA Hospital stated that there were four vendorized Funeral Homes listed in their pamphlet. Andrea has been contact person for CCMEO; John in National VA Office does not know how, why or when the current CCMEO Unclaimed Veteran process began. It would be more efficient to run unclaimed decedents through the National VA Office rather than the local office staffed by Andrea. Andrea does not have access to complete list of veterans, Illinois only. We recently cremated a veteran because of local offices failure to recognize his status. The cremated remains will be interred at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery by CCMEO.

-Mark Rizzo: We should not be utilizing a single funeral home for final disposition either. We should allow many funeral homes to participate in providing final disposition. Rebeca can use the current Cremation Permit Account List for assistance.

The subcommittee makes the following recommendations to the full committee:

- CCMEO should route unclaimed decedents through the National VA Office only. This process is faster and more complete than using the Local VA Office.
- Establish a policy to release Veteran’s Remains to Funeral Homes for timely burial at the National Cemetery
- Inform CCBOA that the vast majority of unclaimed veterans have been provided to a single funeral home for many years by the CCMEO at the request of Andrea at the Local VA Office

Old/New Business

None

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn made by Mark Rizzo

Motion seconded by Secretary Dyer

No discussion

Motion passed unanimously by Committee

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15pm