

Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner
Advisory Committee Meeting | July 18, 2014 | REVISED**
Medical Examiner's Office | Lower Level Conference Room
11:00AM

I. Attendance

Present: *Reverend Vuanita Battle-Maze, Vitas Hospice; Dr. Enrique Beckmann, Chairman, ME Advisory Committee; Susan J. Dyer, Funeral Director; Spencer Leak Jr., Leak & Sons Funeral Home; Isaac McCoy, President/CEO Urban Mosaic; Detective Jason Moran, Cook County Sheriff's Office, Vice Chairman, ME Advisory Committee; Mark A. Rizzo, I.D.F.P.R, Secretary, ME Advisory Committee; Dr. Stephen Cina, Chief Medical Examiner of Cook County; James Sledge, Executive Officer, CCME; Nadine Jakubowski, Deputy Executive Officer, CCME; Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner of Cook County; Frank Shuftan, BOA; Consuelo Alvarez, CCME; Peg Walsh, Chief of Staff, Cmsr. Liz Gorman; Steven P. Smith, CCME; Michael Wagner, CCME*

Absent: *Elizabeth Ann Gorman, Cook County Commissioner; Commander Eugene Roy, Chicago Police Department; Rabbi Moshe Wolf, Police Chaplain, CPD/CFD; Daniel Gallagher, State's Attorney; Martha Martinez, BOA; Octavius Jones, CCME; Robert Meza, CCBOA;*

II. Call to Order

Roll Call

Dr. Beckmann calls meeting to order at 11:06 a.m.

C. Alvarez takes attendance, announces there is a quorum

III. Minutes

Minutes of May 16, 2014 completed by R. Brigham were reviewed and found to be totally unacceptable by this committee. Dr. Beckmann instructs Secretary M. Rizzo, J. Moran, and S. Dyer to redo and resubmit

Minutes of March 21, 2014 completed by C. Alvarez were discussed and it was decided that amendments by Dr. Beckmann and Detective Moran will be accepted. Detective Moran makes a motion to approve minutes of 3/21/14 with proposed amendments, seconded by S. Dyer, approved unanimously by committee. Secretary Rizzo will make amendments.

IV. Old Business / Reports from:

A. Doctor Cina

- Meeting regarding budget took place and there is a positive outlook
- As far as staffing, 3 more in toxicology department still needed.
We have gone from 78 to 126 employees over the past three years at the office
- I would like to get a CT scanner for the office, but we can forgo
- Core user training with LabLynx system completed – Still need everyone to do user training –
We will have 1 week of full scale dual entry – We go live with the new system on 8/18/14
- TABLA reporting software will begin monthly going forward
- We have an intern from the President's Office, she has a Masters of Public Health – doing
research on trends of baby deaths here through the end of August
Next she will be mapping where homicides are – she is getting ahead of the game for
information gathering
- There were 15 homicides over the July 4th weekend
- Cooler level lowest to date than it has been in 6 months

- With staffing levels up autopsy and toxicology reports are more “up to date” - We are increasing the percentage of cases and reports are going out quicker
- We have a new doctor starting with the office on July 1st along with 2 fellows - A new doctor starting on August 1st
- Security cameras have been installed – “As is” camera at Intake to take pics of bodies as they come in
- Dr. Michael Wagner has been given 18 months to get toxicology lab certified – this is the last one we have to get knocked out for full NAME accreditation – CAP general lab certification good enough for now
- Burial going on today – 17 burials
6 Unidentified have been vetted
In final phase of getting those buried in special section of Homewood
O. Jones will contact Law Enforcement to review unidentified cases after our office completes a case review
- Cremations – Steve Smith – No complaints from families – current urns don’t comply with burial standards – cremation rate currently at 7 per week
INDIGENT CREMATION PROGRAM – Current Policy and Process Flow Chart –Hand-out distributed to those present

B. Old Business

- Discussion on purpose of MEAC committee
-*To advise the President and Commissioners*
-*This Advisory Board existed in the past – this was a resurrection of this advisory board*
Pres. Preckwinkle resurrected it
-*Primary goal of this committee according to ordinance – dignity of deceased, service to the citizens of cook county – E. Beckmann*
-*You mention in minutes that cost is not our concern and I say it is part of our mandate – J. Moran*
-*This committee is to weigh in on CCME issues and give support and I don’t think the committee has been remiss in this regard*
- *The fundamental driving force of this committee is protecting the dignity of the deceased – How do CCME operations protect the dignity of the deceased – by its policies/operations*
- *This is my understanding – would like to know from other committee members what their understanding is*
- *We are here to advise...*
- *Fundamental issue is to be advocate for deceased*
- *This committee does serve the citizens of Cook County – This facility is for the families – If there is an economic issue (CT scanner, for example) – It may serve both citizens and the dignity of the deceased – They are the same mission – J. Moran*
-*When decedent comes in we need to process all for that decedent, that means budgetary concerns apply to both citizens of the county as well as dignity of decedent*
- *I argue we are all speaking to the same – Among priorities to accomplish by the Annual Report – Standards of protection of dignity of decedent*
- *I do agree with part of what you said about decedent families but we do have responsibility to the actual decedent body and of how the body is treated with respect and dignity*
- *If we make decision to go to cremation instead of burial – saves \$ and allows respect to decedent as well – compromises will need to be made regarding budgetary concerns/dignity of deceased*

V. New Business

- How remains are transported to office?
- Do we have responsibility to respond to citizen's complaints about office?
- Minutes should reflect/be a summary of what goes on during meetings – A, this was said – B, this was said – C, this was said
- May we have a copy of the by-laws at next meeting please? (Secretary will provide a copy of the by-laws) – V. Battlemaze
I agree that families are not the only concern, bodies as well as their families celebration of life is as important
May we get 1976 by-laws to compare with at next MEAC meeting – S. Leak
- 1976 – We went from Coroner to Medical Examiner Office

Meeting minutes of 5/16/14 – General comment – Inadequate, nonsensical, non-sequential – Need to amend and modify - Re-writing of minutes needs to be done

Motion proposed that by-laws be recorded and amended by Secretary and that the Secretary have control of all records of meetings (and his/her designee)

Cremation flow chart policy – will give opinion

- Issues during reconstruction of cooler – rather than do body pick-ups from 8-4, it was changed to 10-6, but now it is 11-8 – Asked FH how it's working out for them and logs reflect they (pick-ups) taper off around 6pm – I believe the change to 8pm was because of staff being here until 8pm
Suggestion made for 9-5 or 10-6 as was in effect during construction
- To help limit costs, have funeral directors bring pouch with them to exchange with the CCME office – M. Rizzo
- Regarding by-law amendment – Article 3, Officers and roles
Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Secretary – To monitor compliance in absence of Chair and Vice Chair
- Amendment proposal – Table until next meeting
- Secretary or their designee shall be responsible for taking of meeting minutes, Annual Reports, Notice to each member of committee by mail or e-mail
Chairperson - Committee to generate Annual Report or assist or delegate to others
Secretary – Mechanics of preparing annual report, minutes
Propose that we get a copy in front of us first to review by-laws – V. Battlemaze
Propose that M. Rizzo take minutes for this meeting – J. Moran

Does this have to be a by-law change? Can't the chairman just make that change? – S. Cina

Please address style of minute taking

Will record meetings – then re-record over them – just use recording to assist minute recording

When this was brought up previously, the issue of recording and saving tapes in public meetings act was brought up

Not clear who would store and maintain recordings – Agreed by S. Leak and V. Battlemaze we will check with R. Meza

Please check with commissioner Gorman regarding someone to record minutes

The 9/19/14 meeting will be the last meeting before a draft of the annual report is due

VI. Adjournment

Motion called to adjourn meeting – M. Rizzo

Second the motion – V. Battlemaze

All of Committee votes in favor of adjourning

Motion carries – Meeting adjourned at 12:26pm

Next Meeting- Scheduled for September 19, 2014