

**Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner
Advisory Committee Meeting | January 15, 2016
Cook County Building | 118 N. Clark Street
Conference Room | 11:00am**

Attendance

Present: *Dr. Enrique Beckmann, Medical Profession - Chairman; Detective Sergeant Jason Moran, Cook County Sheriff's Office - Vice Chairman; Mark A. Rizzo, Funeral Director - Secretary, Susan Dyer, Funeral Director, Isaac McCoy, President/CEO Urban Mosaic, Donald Pechous, Assistant State's Attorney*

Absent: *Vuanita Battle-Maze, Vitas Hospice, Spencer Leak, Jr., Funeral Director, Rabbi Moshe Wolf, Police Chaplain-CPD/CFD, Commander Al Nagode, 1st District-Central Chicago Police Department, Jeffrey R. Tobolski, Cook County Commissioner 16th District*

Guests Present: *Dr. Arunkumar, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner - CCMEO, Nadine Jakubowski, Deputy Executive Officer - CCMEO, Robert Meza, Legal Counsel - CCBOA, Rebecca Perrone, Indigent Coordinator - CCMEO, Steven Smith, Safety Officer - CCMEO, James Sledge, Executive Officer - CCMEO*

Call to Order/Roll Call

MEAC meeting called to order at 11:14 a.m. by Chairman Beckmann

Secretary Rizzo does roll call, do not have a quorum

Vice-Chairman Moran arrives at 11:20 a.m. and Chairman Beckmann announces there is a quorum

Chairman Beckmann: This is our Annual Meeting of the MEAC; we will select Officers for nomination and go over the Annual Report prior to submission to the CCBOC. Happy New Year!

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of October 16, 2015 are reviewed by committee

Motion to approve minutes made by Secretary Rizzo

Motion seconded by Isaac McCoy

No Discussion

Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously by committee

Reports

Chairman Beckmann: Discussion regarding Annual Report. Absences throughout the year are addressed. Isaac McCoy attended 2 out of 5 Meetings scheduled during year. The MEAC By-Laws require that Members attend over 50% of Meetings held in one (1) calendar year. Isaac McCoy apologized to Committee and related that the absences could not be avoided due to business commitments.

Motion to give authority to chairperson to inform appointing authority of the absences and to seek replacement for Isaac McCoy made by Secretary Rizzo

Motion seconded by none, motion fails

Annual Report Subcommittee (Chairman Beckmann): Draft annual report is reviewed by committee. Chairman Beckmann reviewed report with committee and provided detailed explanation for each report section.

Motion to approve Annual Report made by Secretary Rizzo

Motion seconded by Isaac McCoy

Discussion: Spencer Leak expressed concerns about nursing homes being dependent on Leak and Sons Funeral Home to service families without funds. Forcing the funeral home to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses. His funeral home experiences calls on a daily basis from nursing homes with the same issues. The CCMEO Storage Case Policy directly affects this issue reminding funeral homes to verify Authority to Remove with next of kin.

Motion to approve Annual Report passed unanimously by committee

Medical Examiner's Office (Dr. Arunkumar):

- Newly renovated conference room
- 612 homicides in 2015
- Fentanyl overdoses up 133% over past year. Working with Vice-Chairman Moran to notify law enforcement of rise in Fentanyl deaths. Vice-Chairman Moran has notified law enforcement community in Cook County through publishing information in police bulletins
- Cooler Count Today 188 – December was closed to storage cases
- Toxicology Lab has been accredited
- N.A.M.E. Phase 1 deficiency corrected by appointing Acting Chief of Toxicology, with Chief Position still waiting to be filled

Veteran's Affairs Subcommittee (Chairman Dyer):

Recommendation – 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.

Motion to approve subcommittee recommendation made by Secretary Rizzo

Motion seconded by Spencer Leak

No Discussion

Motion passed unanimously by the committee

Chairman Beckmann appoints Commissioner Jeffrey Tobolski to Veteran's Affairs subcommittee due to his role with the office at the county government level

Old Business:

Spencer Leak: Nursing Home facilities to assist in and take calls without verified "Authorization for Removal by Next of Kin"—nursing homes with high census of Public Aid patients have become dependent on CCMEO to hold Storage Cases until family is notified or identified. Certain patients with DNR orders have been transferred to hospitals to skirt current CCMEO Storage Case policy and procedure, past practice has brought us to this point. CCMEO can no longer act as County Morgue to hold decedents until funds are secured by family for funeral services and has had system wide effect on hospitals, nursing homes and funeral homes alike. Without Public Aid Burial Funds available in the past year, current year and most likely, coming year, it is incumbent on funeral homes to work backwards by securing necessary documentation prior to transferring a decedent to the funeral home in order to ensure payment of funds.

New Business

Chairman Beckmann nominates Vice-Chairman Moran to retain the Vice-Chairman position for 2016 and nominates Susan Dyer to the Secretary position for 2016. No other nominations. Chairman Beckmann calls for a vote on the nominations and the committee passes them unanimously. Chairman Beckmann thanks outgoing Secretary Rizzo for his service.

Committee discusses the need for the CCMEO to provide for a burial option for unidentified decedents and unclaimed cremated remains. Will be further discussed at a subsequent meeting.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn made by Mark Rizzo at 1:02 p.m.

Motion seconded by Vice-Chairman Moran

No Discussion

Motion passed unanimously by committee