

# Washington State Funeral and Cemetery Board meeting transcript

May 29, 2024

David Ittner (00:00:02):

Wednesday, May 29th, 2024, and I'm calling the special board meeting to order. We will be providing an opportunity for public comment later in this meeting. As a courtesy, we encourage everyone to mute their mics or your phone if you called in when you're not speaking to reduce the background noise when others are speaking. Also, for board members, to help us capture information correctly, please state your name when making comments. Thank you.

(00:00:34):

All right, we'll do a roll call. Susan, would you please call the roll?

(00:00:37):

Board members, please respond if you are in attendance.

Susan Nieves (00:00:41):

I'll start with you, Chair Ittner.

David Ittner (00:00:44):

I'm present.

Susan Nieves (00:00:46):

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora has an excused absence, so I'll move on to board member Cameron.

Pete Cameron (00:00:56):

Here.

Susan Nieves (00:00:59):

Board member Little?

Richard Little (00:01:00):

Present.

Susan Nieves (00:01:02):

Board member Smock?

Cameron Smock (00:01:04):

Present.

Susan Nieves (00:01:06):

Board member Ward?

Angela Ward (00:01:08):

Present.

Susan Nieves (00:01:10):

Thank you.

David Ittner (00:01:13):

All right. Thank you, Susan.

(00:01:14):

We'll move on to item number three, approval of the agenda. Do I have a motion for approval?

Cameron Smock (00:01:21):

This is Smock. I move for approval as presented.

David Ittner (00:01:27):

Thank you. Is there a second?

Richard Little (00:01:30):

This is Little. I'll second it.

David Ittner (00:01:33):

All right. Any discussion, additions, changes? All right. All in favor, say aye.

Richard Little (00:01:42):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:01:42):

Aye.

Cameron Smock (00:01:42):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:01:47):

Any opposed? All right, motion passes. Item number four, approval of minutes. Everyone had a chance to take a look at the minutes. Is there a motion for approval?

Cameron Smock (00:02:02):

This is Smock. I approve as presented.

David Ittner (00:02:07):

Thank you. Is there a second?

Pete Cameron (00:02:13):

This is Cameron. I'll second.

David Ittner (00:02:18):

All right, first and second, any discussion, changes? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Richard Little (00:02:27):

Aye.

Cameron Smock (00:02:27):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:02:33):

Any opposed? All right, minutes are approve. Moving on to item number five, old business, the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards Report. It looks like Angie and Ric both attended. If you guys have any comments or things you'd like to speak to, that would be fantastic.

Richard Little (00:02:58):

I believe Angie is prepared to make comments.

David Ittner (00:03:00):

All right.

Angela Ward (00:03:05):

Oh, thank you, Ric. Appreciate that. I had been one time before in, I think, 2018 and had such an excellent experience. I was really looking forward to going again, and it did not disappoint. The conference did not disappoint, the connections that were made. For me, as a public member, I think it cemented when I went the first time and again this time what a great board we have. We are really serving the public with the work that we do and we're progressive. I think our malleability in the face of all these changing dispositions is really the thing that I noticed the most when I looked at some of the wriggling that I saw from other states there. Ric was amazing in his panel presentation in talking about some of those, how they're working in these new methods of disposition.

(00:04:12):

I mean, I was all warm and fuzzy when you came off the stage, Ric.

Richard Little (00:04:17):

Thank you.

Angela Ward (00:04:20):

I can be a cynic sometimes, but I just really appreciate the chance to go and learn. I wish I had more specifics about anything that was trendsetting or groundbreaking, but it seems like we're always ahead of that curve here in Washington, so thanks again for sending me.

Richard Little (00:04:42):

Yeah, there's been a huge response in the country for NOR. Some states are totally against it, but then others are really open, and it's getting more and more as we go along.

David Ittner (00:05:03):

Great. Well, thank you for that wonderful report. I attended that conference myself, and it's certainly worth attending for anybody who would be interested in the future. There's a lot of information especially for first-timers when they have the first-timers' session where they just throw you in and just feed you a fire hose of information. It's very helpful. They do a really good job.

(00:05:28):

All right. Well, thank you so much. Moving on to item number six, new business 6.1, election of officers. The board will elect the chair and vice chair for the upcoming year. I'd like to open the floor to nominations for chair and vice chair.

Cameron Smock (00:05:50):

If I may be able to indulge myself, I would like to nominate David Ittner to be the chair again and Dante to be the vice chair for a second term.

Richard Little (00:06:06):

This is Ric. I will definitely second that.

David Ittner (00:06:13):

All right. Thank you, gentlemen. Are there any other nominations? All right. Hearing none, it sounds like we have a first and a second. Any discussion, comments? All right. Actually, we should have a motion per individual. Correct?

Cameron Smock (00:06:41):

Yeah. I move that we close the nominations and we vote unanimous ballot for you as the chair and Dante as the vice chair.

David Ittner (00:06:51):

Okay. Is there a motion for each?

Sydney Muhle (00:06:56):

If I can interrupt, if we can do a separate motion for each? That's guidance that we've received both from the AGs office, as well as comments from the public, that when they're going back through and reading the transcript, it can be hard to follow with a unanimous ballot, so if we can just do one for each, we would appreciate it.

Cameron Smock (00:07:12):

Sydney, when you slap my hands, you do it so gently.

Sydney Muhle (00:07:22):

It's new. This is a new one for us this year. It took us by surprise, but, at the same time, it makes sense in the virtual.

Cameron Smock (00:07:24):

No worries. I move then that we elect David Ittner as the chair for a second term.

Richard Little (00:07:32):

I'll second that. This is Ric.

David Ittner (00:07:36):

All right, we have a first and a second. Any comments, discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Cameron Smock (00:07:45):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:07:45):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:07:45):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:07:48):

Any-

Richard Little (00:07:48):

I would also like-

David Ittner (00:07:51):

Oh, go ahead. Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, motion carries. Okay. Looking for a motion for vice chair.

Cameron Smock (00:08:06):

I move that we elect Dante as the vice chair for a second term.

Richard Little (00:08:13):

I will second that. This is Ric.

David Ittner (00:08:18):

All right. We have a first and a second. Any comments, discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Richard Little (00:08:27):

Aye.

Cameron Smock (00:08:27):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:08:27):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:08:27):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:08:32):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, motion carries. Thank you very much. Okay. Moving on to agenda item 6.2, Board's Consideration for Oromo Cultural Center's Request for Review of Requirement for Licensure.

(00:08:52):

Sydney, will you please lead the discussion?

Sydney Muhle (00:08:56):

Absolutely. Thank you. I think Pam and I may need to tag team this one since this request actually came through Pam. Oromo Cultural Center in South Seattle has requested guidance related to requirements. This is a religious facility, a mosque in South Seattle. They've requested guidance from the board on whether or not licensure is required for them to install and utilize a washroom within their facility. They are currently contracting through an area funeral home that sometimes, as you all know, can struggle to meet the 24-hour religious requirements within Islam for washing and burial. They've requested permission to install a ceremonial washroom within their facility for their own use. Because this isn't fully technically addressed in the RCWs and the WACs, what has happened historically is similar requests have come to the board for guidance. I believe we've had a couple of these requests historically, and the guidance from the board was that licensure was not required, but because these were taken in individual basis, we wanted to maintain that consistency and bring those requests to the board for clarification. I don't know if Pam has anything to add, but, with that, we'd be happy to answer any questions.

Pam Griese (00:10:44):

I don't have anything to add. If there's any questions, I'm happy to give an answer.

Richard Little (00:10:54):

I have a question, and I don't know a lot about it, so I may be speaking out of ignorance. The Jewish Chapel, does it have a funeral establishment license or not?

Pam Griese (00:11:08):

The Jewish Chapel does not have a license, and they are relying on a decision that was made by the Department of Licensing. When I started in 1999 here at the Department of Licensing, it was already well-established, and so they were given an exemption by somebody at the Department of Licensing. It was not the board.

Richard Little (00:11:47):

Okay. This is, I guess, my editorial comment. It seems to me we should strive for consistency based on the information that was provided to us by the Attorney General and based on the fact that we at least have one if not more operators of a similar nature who do not have a funeral establishment license. It seems reasonable to me that the board would not now burden them with this requirement.

Pete Cameron (00:12:27):

Yes. This is Pete. I would agree with that. There's no refrigeration facilities. They're not doing any other preparation. Remains are brought in from a licensed establishment. It's strictly for religious purposes. I can't see anything that would make the board have any interest in changing what's been unofficially established for all these years already.

David Ittner (00:13:07):

All right.

Sydney Muhle (00:13:08):

I do believe we would need a motion to that effect.

Cameron Smock (00:13:11):

This is Smock. I move that we affirm that the board is not going to require a funeral establishment license for the Oromo Cultural Center and Mosque for the stated purposes.

Pete Cameron (00:13:42):

This is Pete. I'd second that.

David Ittner (00:13:47):

All right. Thank you, gentlemen. Is there any discussion or further questions, comments? All right.

Richard Little (00:14:01):

I just had a quick question. Is there any concern what the decedent would look like as far as if there's a biohazard or anything like diseases to prevent them from doing the washing or is it just open for anybody, that's a kind of word that I doubt, to bring anybody in there that's Muslim or they have a contagious disease or something? Is that overseen at all by a funeral home?

Sydney Muhle (00:14:51):

Pam, would you want-

David Ittner (00:14:51):

Pam had some discussion with them. Yeah, go ahead.

Pam Griese (00:14:54):

Yeah. I was just going to say I would think that would be, as in a setting of a funeral home, the Public Health Officer's discretion of whether physical contact could be made with a decedent who may have a communicable disease. I do know that they would employ a licensed funeral establishment to assist with the death certificate requirement as well as transportation, so a funeral home is involved.

Richard Little (00:15:29):

Good. All right.

David Ittner (00:15:35):

Thanks, Pam. All right, any further discussion? All right, hearing none, all in favor say aye.

Richard Little (00:15:48):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:15:48):

Aye.

Cameron Smock (00:15:48):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:15:48):

Any.

David Ittner (00:15:52):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, motion passes. Thank you. Moving on to agenda item 6.3, budget discussion. Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (00:16:08):

For this, I'm actually going to introduce administrator Bill Dutra who can provide the subject.

Bill Dutra (00:16:17):

Good morning and thank you. Thank you for bringing me to this meeting. My name is Bill Dutra. I work with the Department of Licensing, and I work with our boards and commissions.

(00:16:28):

This is a general discussion. There is no concerns or issues that I'm going to share with you today regarding the funeral and cemetery budget other than it looks like, with the most recent fee increase, things seem to be stabilizing a bit right now. We will be looking at some other forecasting.

(00:16:48):



About a couple of weeks ago, I was fortunate enough to meet with Chair Ittner and Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora. We talked about a couple of options that are available to the Funeral and Cemetery Board that the department is doing some research in. This would be moving the Funeral and Cemetery Board to what we call the Business and Professions Division pooled account or 06L account.

(00:17:12):

The best way that I can describe the 06L account is that many professions are within this account. However, you are still charged, and we look at expenses directly from those accounts for those programs. They are still directly funded by your accounts and by your licensing fees. It's not as if we'll be pooling money to help support Funeral and Cemetery programs or pulling money from the funeral and cemetery program to support another program.

(00:17:45):

The advantages to this type of moving Funeral and Cemetery back to 06L account, which they were in many, many years ago, the best way I can describe it is that it would give some sort of overdraft protection. The department, for all programs, is required to have a three-month operating budget or operating capital in all programs. This 06L account helps ensure that all programs involved have that three-month cushion or operating capital knowing that, if you have to drop below that, this would stop us from having to do some very drastic fee increases to bring that revenue number back up. If we can project out, that that money will come back into that program through renewals or new applications.

(00:18:34):

We left that meeting with the, I don't want to say the blessings, but the request to do some more exploring of what this would look like for the Funeral and Cemetery programs only. We would bring back some more hard data and more examples later in the year. I think, at our next meeting, this is what we would plan on doing. If we move down this pathway and we go forward with this, the department would be asking for legislation. We would be sponsoring some legislation to move this program into this 06L account. At any point, if the industry or the board says we no longer want to entertain this, that is fine for the department as well.

(00:19:23):

One of the other advantages that we are hoping that this would do is that, in the future, if there was the possibility or there was the need to have to do future fee increases, we would be able to stagger those fee increases out over a couple of different renewal periods instead of having to do a very large fee increase all at once. That would be a slight advantage for moving into what we call our 06L account or our business and professions account. Many of our programs already exist within this pooled amount of funding right now. That's all I have. If there's any questions from the board members, I'll try to answer them.

David Ittner (00:20:13):

Thank you, Bill. I know when we met over the phone and discussed this, we talked about any potential, I guess, downsides to this, and we couldn't really come up with any. Have you considered that any further in terms of any possible detrimental effect to-

Bill Dutra (00:20:34):

No. We've continued to do that. We've looked at it with not only this group, but many groups. We have not found any potential downsides to it. It's more beneficial. We cannot find a very negative con to doing this right now. For the department, it does not make a difference. For us, it's the same amount of work because we still must identify all of the expenditures going in and out only for this profession. We can handle it either way. It is a more benefit to this program if there's a downturn, or the example that I have come to use or remember, is that dipping into that three-month reserve account that we're required to have, that can happen at any point in time. One of the examples would be if you have a very contentious case that goes through the legal process. Your AG costs will go up very quickly at that point in time. What we're trying to is make sure that we have a buffer for all of those potential things that might happen.

David Ittner (00:21:46):

Great. Thank you. Are there any questions from the board with regards to this? I don't think them. There's no motion or anything today. We're just simply looking for some feedback.

Bill Dutra (00:21:58):

Sure. I just wanted to make sure we all knew that we're still exploring this and we're still moving forward, and we hope to bring back more information to your next board meeting with some examples of where your budget is at and some other information.

David Ittner (00:22:16):

Great. All right.

Bill Dutra (00:22:19):

All right. Thank you.

David Ittner (00:22:21):

I appreciate the explanation.

Bill Dutra (00:22:24):

You bet. Have a great day, everyone.

David Ittner (00:22:27):

Thank you. All right. Moving on to agenda item number seven, Complaint Cases for Review. It looks like we have five cases. Sydney will be presenting for Dante since Dante has an excused absence today.

(00:22:46):

Agenda item 7.1, Sydney?

Sydney Muhle (00:22:51):

Actually, I am going to turn this over to Pam. My oldest daughter was kind enough to bring home a cold over the weekend and share it with me, so Pam has graciously agreed to read the case manager reports for me.

Pam Griese (00:23:07):

Okay.

David Ittner (00:23:07):

All right.

Pam Griese (00:23:16):

Case number 2023-12-2817-00FDE, the complainant alleges that his sister falsified a cremation authorization and that she obtained a death certificate using false statements. The facts, the respondent funeral home listed in the complaint contracted for cremation with the sister of the complainant for the cremation of their mother. The sister of the complainant misled the respondent funeral home. The sister of the complainant and her actions are outside of the purview of the board, so the case manager recommends this case be closed with no further action.

David Ittner (00:24:00):

All right. Thank you, Pam. Do we have a-

(00:24:03):

All right. Thank you, Pam. Do we have a motion to that effect?

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Cameron Smock (00:24:10):

This is Smock. I so move.

David Ittner (00:24:14):

All right, thank you. Is there a second?

Pete Cameron (00:24:19):

This is Pete. I'll second.

David Ittner (00:24:22):

Thank you, Pete. Any discussion?

Cameron Smock (00:24:27):

I guess my only question is... This is Smock.

(00:24:34):

I guess my only question is, and Dante's not here to answer it, but maybe Pam, you can.

(00:24:43):

It says the funeral home was misled, which I don't doubt. But in the investigation, was there any findings as to whether the funeral home was aware that this other person existed or did they act solely off of the information provided by the sister, that she was the only person with the right to control disposition?

Pam Griese (00:25:09):

The respondent funeral home relied on the information provided by the sister of the complainant, and the sister also signed a document that said she was representing, that she had the legal authorization to give consent for disposition. And the statute was quoted right there and she signed it.

(00:25:41):

So she was not a misstep. The funeral home did ask the question if there was anybody else, and we...

Cameron Smock (00:25:52):

Okay. Thank you, Pam. I have no further questions.

David Ittner (00:26:01):

Any other discussion? All right. Hearing none, all in favor of the motion?

Group (00:26:11):

Aye.

(00:26:11):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:26:17):

Any opposed?

(00:26:20):

Any abstentions?

(00:26:23):

All right. Motion carries. Thank you.

(00:26:27):

Agenda item 7.2. Pam?

Pam Griese (00:26:32):

Okay.

(00:26:33):

Case number 2023-12-2816-00FDE.

(00:26:41):

The complainant alleges that his mother was transferred from the respondent funeral home to another funeral home without his being notified and that the respondent funeral home was negligent, causing his mother to be cremated prior to an autopsy.

(00:26:56):

The facts are the deceased had three children, one who was estranged and not involved in this conflict. The daughter of the deceased had been appointed guardian for her mother in the State of Wisconsin.

(00:27:10):

She, the guardian, had signed a cremation authorization with the respondent funeral home prior to death, but the respondent funeral home refused to carry out cremation because of the dynamic with the three siblings.

(00:27:24):

Another provider was contacted and performed the cremation after the guardian had misrepresented herself as the only child.

(00:27:31):

The respondent funeral home had the daughter/guardian sign a release prior to the transfer to the other provider. The respondent funeral home was not obligated to contact the complainant.

(00:27:43):

The respondent funeral home provided the complainant contact information for the doctor who was signing the death certificate as well as the Pierce County Medical Examiner.

(00:27:54):

An autopsy was not deemed necessary by any official party, and the complainant did not pay for a private autopsy.

(00:28:02):

As to the complainant's sister misrepresenting herself as the only child, neither she nor her actions fall within the purview of this board. So the case manager is recommending close with no further action.

David Ittner (00:28:21):

All right. Thank you, Pam. Do we have a motion to that effect?

Cameron Smock (00:28:31):

This is Smock. I move for approval.

David Ittner (00:28:39):

Second?

Richard Little (00:28:42):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

David Ittner (00:28:47):

All right. Any discussion?

Pete Cameron (00:28:53):

This is Pete. I guess I only had one question, and I'm not sure, Pam, if you know this or not.

(00:28:59):

But it says here that the respondent funeral home had the daughter sign a release prior to the transfer, but the respondent funeral home was not obligated to contract the complainant; but they did provide them information about autopsies and that sort of thing.

(00:29:24):

Do you know if the complainant was notified before the transfer took place or just afterwards?

Pam Griese (00:29:31):

Afterwards.

Pete Cameron (00:29:39):

Okay. Thank you.

Pam Griese (00:29:43):

Welcome.

David Ittner (00:29:54):

This complaint is addressed towards the transferring, the first funeral home. That's correct, yep?

Pam Griese (00:30:05):

Yes.

David Ittner (00:30:06):

And there's, okay. Is there a related complaint?

Pam Griese (00:30:11):

The respondent in this case did not perform the disposition.

David Ittner (00:30:15):

All right. Okay. Okay. Any further discussion? Nope? All right. All in favor say aye.

Group (00:30:31):

Aye.

(00:30:31):

Aye.

(00:30:31):

Aye.

(00:30:31):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:30:36):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? Hearing none, the motion passes. All right. Agenda item 7.3. Pam?

Pam Griese (00:30:51):

Okay. Case number 2023-12-2840-00CEM. The complainant alleges horrible conditions at the respondent mausoleum. Those conditions include lack of heat, lack of soap and toilet paper in the restrooms, dirty floors, and flying gnats.

(00:31:14):

The complainant states she sent two emails and gave the respondent mausoleum a negative Google review, none of which received a response.

(00:31:23):

The facts:

(00:31:25):

The president for the respondent funeral home acknowledges the complainant's concerns. The respondent funeral home has contracted an exterminator and purchased electronic insect illuminators to deal with the flying gnats. They have also contracted a new cleaning service and reduced clutter.

(00:31:46):

Phoridae, commonly known as coffin flies, are common and persistent problems in mausoleums, and the case manager is recommending this be closed with no further action.

David Ittner (00:32:01):

All right. Thank you, Pam. There a motion to that effect?

Richard Little (00:32:07):

This is Rick. I moved to accept this case.

David Ittner (00:32:19):

Thank you, Rick. Have a second?

Cameron Smock (00:32:21):

This is Smock. I second.

David Ittner (00:32:27):

Thank you. All right. Do we have any discussion? Pam, I have a question. Do you know if the respondent has... Has it been verified that this activity in the response has taken place? Any sort of cleanup has appeared?

Pam Griese (00:32:54):

Yeah, I have not followed up with this respondent or personally checked the mausoleum.

David Ittner (00:33:06):

Okay. Great. Any other further discussion or questions?

Pete Cameron (00:33:19):

This is Pete. Does this location, have they had any kind of this issue before or is this the first time this has come up?

Pam Griese (00:33:28):

No, this has been an ongoing issue for this mausoleum, and they have employed numerous things to try to eliminate the presence of these flies/gnats. So it's been an ongoing situation for them.

Cameron Smock (00:33:52):

Pam, this is Cameron. The other conditions, not so much the lack of heat or I guess, but general cleanliness or it says dirty floors, no toilet paper in the restrooms, et cetera.

(00:34:14):

When inspections have been done or maybe have inspections been done in the past? And is that kind of a consistent state of how this mausoleum appears during those?

Pam Griese (00:34:27):

So we don't usually inspect mausoleums unless it's related to a complaint. So I cannot personally speak to whether those conditions have been improved.

(00:34:43):

I believe the respondent when they said they've employed a new cleaning service, but certainly, I would be willing to revisit this mausoleum and verify and perhaps report out at the next board meeting.

David Ittner (00:35:02):

I think that would be helpful.

Cameron Smock (00:35:09):

I'll speak in favor of the motion, but I guess the editorial comment I would make is if it sounds like this has been an ongoing issue, it wouldn't hurt to be proactive and revisit it and just see if... And maybe it's not even a visit, maybe it's just reaching out to the respondent to be able to verify that they took the steps that they said they were going to take in response to the complaint.

David Ittner (00:35:47):

All right. Thank you, Cameron. Thank you, Pam. Appreciate it. All right.

(00:35:54):



Any further discussion on this case? All right. All in favor of the motion?

Group (00:36:08):

Aye.

(00:36:08):

Aye.

(00:36:08):

Aye.

(00:36:09):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:36:11):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right. Motion carries. Thank you. Agenda item 7.4. Pam?

Pete Cameron (00:36:27):

Case number 2024- 01-0139-00FDE.

(00:36:37):

The complainant alleges that the respondent was negligent in packaging and shipping her father-in-law's remains.

(00:36:47):

Facts:

(00:36:48):

The complainant's husband and the durable power of attorney for the spouse of the deceased are at odds and communicate only through attorneys. The durable power of attorney for the spouse of the deceased does not fall under the purview of this board.

(00:37:06):

The respondent advised the complainant that there might be issues if the deceased's cremated remains were shipped in an urn rather than a plastic shipping container.

(00:37:17):

As per photos submitted by the complainant, there were issues. The urn arrived unsealed, and there were cremated remains in the packaging. The respondent reused a box that had been previously shipped, and packaged the urn with bubble wrap. This was negligent.

(00:37:40):

The United States Postal Service provides at no cost a cremated remains kit that includes a clearly labeled unused box Priority Express tape, bubble cushioning, and most germane to this

case, a self-sealing plastic bag. These can be ordered five at a time by any individual or funeral home. The case manager is suggesting close this with a letter of education.

David Ittner (00:38:10):

All right. Thank you, Pam. Do we have a motion to that effect?

Pete Cameron (00:38:20):

This is Pete. So move.

David Ittner (00:38:24):

Thanks, Pete. Second?

Cameron Smock (00:38:32):

This is Smock. I second it.

David Ittner (00:38:36):

All right. Thank you, first and second. Is there discussion?

Cameron Smock (00:38:41):

Has the letter been... I didn't see. Did the letter go out?

Pam Griese (00:38:47):

I don't think it's gone out yet. I think we have to wait to see what the board has decided.

Cameron Smock (00:38:59):

Pam, this is Cameron. I have a question.

(00:39:02):

The first paragraph under facts, is that even germane to the complaint or is that extemporaneous?

(00:39:12):

I mean, I guess another way to ask it is, did the respondent... I'm sorry. Did the complainant have the authority to make arrangements for the disposition of the cremated remains, or is that also an issue in this complaint?

Pam Griese (00:39:33):

No. That's not an issue in this complaint. The respondent did not perform the cremation. All they did was assist with the packaging and mailing of the cremated remains.

Cameron Smock (00:39:59):

Okay. Thank you.

Pam Griese (00:40:00):

So, yeah.

Cameron Smock (00:40:04):

I have no further questions.

David Ittner (00:40:11):

Any further discussion? Just trying to recall the language in the statute with regards to packaging and shipping. Does it speak to anything with regards to the quality of the packaging material being new? I can't recall.

Pam Griese (00:40:45):

It does not. And it is more speaking to the crematory who provided the cremation. Our regulations are geared more to them. This person was cremated by an unknown crematory, so this respondent funeral home just assisted with the mailing of the cremated remains. And as the facts said, they had suggested that maybe a plastic container would be preferable, but the durable power of attorney who was acting on behalf of the spouse of the decedent was advised by her attorney to ship it as is.

David Ittner (00:41:53):

Got it. Okay. Thank you. All right. Any further discussion? All right. All in favor with the recommendation, say aye.

Group (00:42:09):

Aye.

(00:42:09):

Aye.

(00:42:09):

Aye.

(00:42:09):

Aye.

David Ittner (00:42:13):

Any opposed?

(00:42:17):

Any abstentions?

(00:42:20):

Motion carries. Thank you.

(00:42:21):

All right. Agenda item 7.5. Pam?

Pam Griese (00:42:26):

Okay. Case number 2023-05-0905-00CEM. A complaint was open May 17th, 2023. The complainant seeks assurance that the respondent's cemetery will not sell further rights of interment in the grave that he has purchased.

(00:42:48):

The facts:

(00:42:48):

The complainant first contacted the board March, 2023 by phone stating his concern that the respondent would sell additional rights of interment in his grave after his death.

(00:43:01):

The complainant got the idea that this could or would happen on July 31st, 2015 when he received an email from a representative of the respondent's cemetery, stating his grave could accommodate up to 16 interment rights.

(00:43:17):

The grave and interment rights are owned in a trust for the complainant. The respondent contends that ownership will transfer upon the death of the complainant and that his heirs will be able to purchase and use subsequent interment rights in his grave.

(00:43:34):

While it would put the complainant at ease if the respondent would assure him that no further rights would be sold, the respondent is not responsible to compel the complainant's heir to abide by his wishes.

(00:43:48):

Also, it is beyond the scope of the board's authority to compel the respondent to modify their policy of selling property owner's rights to subsequent interment. So the case manager is recommending this case be closed with no further action.

David Ittner (00:44:12):

All right. Thank you, Pam. Is there a motion to that effect?

Cameron Smock (00:44:23):

This is Smock. I make the motion.

David Ittner (00:44:29):

Thank you. Do I have a second?

Pete Cameron (00:44:34):

This is Pete. I'll second.

David Ittner (00:44:38):

Thank you, Pete. Any discussion?

Cameron Smock (00:44:43):

This is Cameron. I'm confused.

(00:44:47):

If I'm reading this correctly, the cemetery authority has the right to arbitrarily sell additional rights of internment in a grave already owned by someone else; and that person who owns the grave has no right to prevent that? Is that...

Pam Griese (00:45:13):

That was what the complainant was trying to prevent. He didn't want to share his grave with anybody else. And the case manager is indicating that the heirs of the owner of the grave have a right to purchase additional internment rights. That's the view of the case manager.

Cameron Smock (00:45:43):

Isn't that contrary to law? My interpretation of the law is the original person who owns that right, if he purchased the grave with the understanding that it was for one right of placement, he has the right to and really the authority to not allow additional rights of placement to be purchased if allowed by the cemetery authority.

(00:46:14):

So either I'm misreading this or I take the opposite view of the case manager.

David Ittner (00:46:25):

I would concur with your assessment.

Pete Cameron (00:46:32):

This is Pete. I would as well.

David Ittner (00:46:43):

All right. Any further comment? Discussion? Sydney, as a matter of order, do we proceed with the vote in this scenario?

Sydney Muhle (00:46:57):

Yeah, you can proceed with the vote, and if the motion does not pass, then what we'll do is we'll move the case back to CAU and Pam and Grace's team to get with Dante and reassess. And then it'll be brought back to the board once that's been completed.

Cameron Smock (00:47:21):

Just to be clear, I'm going to vote and I'll speak in opposition to the recommendation of the case manager.

Sydney Muhle (00:47:29):

Yeah, so if you are not wanting to... If you're wanting to vote opposite of what the case manager's recommendation would be, then you will vote nay on this motion.

Cameron Smock (00:47:39):

Thank you, Sydney.

David Ittner (00:47:42):

All right, great. Any further comment? All right. All in favor say aye.

(00:47:55):

Any opposed?

Group (00:47:59):

Nay.

(00:47:59):

Nay. Nay.

(00:47:59):

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

David Ittner (00:48:01):

Any abstentions? All right. Motion does not pass. Okay, well thank you, Pam, for filling in and working through all of those cases. All right, agenda item number eight, legal issues for deliberation. We have 8.1. Case number 202305090800FDE. AAG Quijas will be presenting the order.

Nick Quijas (00:48:40):

Good morning everyone. I apologize. I just realized I need to pull this back up. This is, as indicated, in the matter of 202305090800FDE. As a brief summary of the facts in this case, this is an incident where the respondent, who is a crematory operator, mistakenly cremated the remains of an individual who was set to be embalmed and have a viewing before a cremation.

(00:49:24):

And she mistakenly, unfortunately, swapped this individual with someone who was set for cremation and prematurely cremated the body before it had been embalmed and had the viewing ceremony by the family, and in fact, before full authorization for those had been received. And so, this is a action involving the crematory operator involved.

(00:49:49):

During the investigation, she did take responsibility for this incident and admitted that it had happened, however, indicated that it was also the result of lax procedures within the establishment that she worked with and issues with properly identifying decedents.

(00:50:08):

The funeral establishment did indicate during the investigation that they were aware she had made a number of complaints about these things, but that, in the end, they felt that they had informed her and felt that it was her responsibility in the end, if she had questions to ensure that the proper decedent was cremated.

(00:50:26):

This matter did go into settlement negotiations and the order before the board today is a result of this negotiations. And what it did result in, and I apologize, I'm pulling up that order, is a recommendation from the case manager, an agreed recommendation, for a probation or state suspension, as we often refer to it, of one year for this individual, contingent, of course, upon no further violations.

(00:51:01):

This was very much informed by a variety of factors. For one, the respondent's consistent discussions that really just indicated her deep remorse over this incident having occurred. Having spoken with her, I can indicate that she has expressed that over and over again. And has indicated this is something that she will, independent of any sanctions, live with having made this mistake, and is not sure she'll be, whether she will be continuing in this industry or not following this incident.

(00:51:33):

As well, as discussed before, the issues with the funeral establishment itself, which seemed to indicate that there was some blame here to be spread around and not entirely on this respondent. And so, that is what informed this recommendation being put forward before the board of a one-year probation. And I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

David Ittner (00:52:02):

All right. Thank you. AAG Quijas. Any questions relative to this case? Should we... We do need a motion, I'm assuming, for this. Yep. All right.

Cameron Smock (00:52:24):

Just a point of order. Can we ask questions before we have an official motion?

Sydney Muhle (00:52:29):

Yes, you can.

Cameron Smock (00:52:33):

Thank you. This is Cameron. So Nick, you used the right language regarding a suspension that is then stayed, but the agreed order uses wording that I don't think I've seen before in 4.1, and that's probation. Just for consistency, should we update the language so it's consistent with past practice or is that not necessary?

Nick Quijas (00:53:11):

And I'm happy to answer that question as far, I'm not sure if Ms. Kim might want to weigh in that as well. But I, personally I'm comfortable with the language, as long as the understanding, the

board understands what is being agreed on here is the equivalent of a state suspension. However, I certainly take your point about consistency.

Cameron Smock (00:53:36):

Thank you. I think the only other question I have is, since it appears that the funeral establishment played a part in this, is there going to be a subsequent action that will be brought before the board specific to the funeral establishment's in this or is it limited to the crematory operator?

Nick Quijas (00:53:59):

My understanding is that it is limited to the crematory operator. I do believe this started as an investigation involving the funeral establishment after they did self-disclose this incident, and I don't believe any action was taken against the establishment.

Cameron Smock (00:54:17):

Thank you, Nick. I have no further questions.

Pete Cameron (00:54:25):

This is Pete. Nick, you had mentioned that the crematory operator had brought issues up before and had questions, and I think that's what Cameron was getting to is that there may be some procedural issues or systemic issues at the location. Has there been any history of any type of action like this before?

Nick Quijas (00:54:59):

That question I do not, I'm not personally aware of what other actions there may have been against this. I do know, as part of the settlement discussions, that the case manager indicated that she was aware there had at least been prior complaints against this establishment. But I'm not sure that either of us were aware whether that resulted in any formal action against them.

Pete Cameron (00:55:29):

Okay. I guess my concern would be if there were some issues before and then this was a very large one that's harmed two families that, concerned that there should probably be some follow-up with this location, whether that comes through a additional recommendation or follow-up by the case manager. But if there's a chance that there's a pattern or a history here, then I think that's something that the board should probably take a look at.

David Ittner (00:56:14):

So this issue was self-disclosed in that situation. What is the precedent? I mean, I guess we're getting slightly off track of the original, what we need to do with this particular case. But what is the precedent for self-disclosed violations and complaint process?

Cameron Smock (00:56:41):

Well, this is Cameron. I don't know if I can speak to that, David. But I can speak from personal experience. There have been mistakes that our company has made and we have self-disclosed, in essence filed a complaint against ourselves. And, as part of that process, we've had



discussions with the licensing staff about why the mistake happened and was there anything, from a process standpoint, that the company could've done to prevent it from happening.

(00:57:22):

And we've made changes to our processes to ensure that the funeral establishment is doing everything possible to prevent mistakes of a similar nature from happening. So it seems to me, in this instance, even though they self-disclosed the complaint, unless I, they should use this as an opportunity to evaluate their own processes to make sure that they don't have anything in their processes that, in this instance, led the crematory operator to make the mistake that was made.

David Ittner (00:58:14):

All right, thank you. Well, I guess I would look to maybe Sydney from a procedural standpoint, if the board didn't want further investigation into that situation with the establishment, was that something that investigators would take on? How would that work?

Sydney Muhle (00:58:40):

So I'm actually going to rely on Pam's institutional knowledge for this. Pam, when we have agreed orders like this or when we have in the past, do we follow up with those licensees more frequently? They get bumped up the audit list? Does anything like that happen?

Pam Griese (00:59:03):

Usually, it's part of the agreed order that there would be follow-up inspections or follow-up audits, as it were. So it would be part of the agreed order typically. But, in this case, I don't know why the funeral establishment wasn't also included.

Sydney Muhle (00:59:37):

Nick-

Nick Quijas (00:59:38):

And I was going to say, as a point of clarification, the licensee here, just to make sure we're on the same page, the licensee, the respondent here is not the funeral establishment. It is simply the crematory operator rather than the establishment itself. I don't believe she's even employed by the establishment as a result of this incident.

David Ittner (01:00:02):

Yeah. Okay, so I think maybe we should move forward with the voting process here on this particular order, and then separate discussion on the process of the investigation for the establishment or a complaint having to do with the establishment itself?

Cameron Smock (01:00:28):

Yeah. So if I may, let me recommend, first of all, I move that we approve the agreed order as presented.

David Ittner (01:00:40):

All right. Thanks, Cameron. Do we have a second?

Richard Little (01:00:43):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

David Ittner (01:00:46):

Thank you, Rick. Any further discussion?

Cameron Smock (01:00:50):

I think what I would commend is that we just, at the staff level, we note that as a result of this situation, questions were raised about the establishment's role in this, and that we should engage the funeral establishment and informal conversation to just make sure that they have proper processes in place to prevent this type of mistake from happening in the future.

David Ittner (01:01:34):

Agree? All right, any further discussion? Comments? All right, all in favor say, "Aye."

Richard Little (01:01:42):

Aye.

Cameron Smock (01:01:42):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:01:42):

Aye.

David Ittner (01:01:48):

Aye. Any opposed?

Speaker 1 (01:01:48):

Aye.

David Ittner (01:01:52):

Any abstentions? All right. Motion for the agreed order passes. Thank you.

Nick Quijas (01:01:59):

Thank you.

David Ittner (01:02:01):

Okay. All right, moving on to agenda item number nine. Reports, Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:02:12):

Thank you. So we will be starting with the licensing future task force. Unfortunately, this going to be a very quick update, as we have not been able to meet with this group this past quarter due to scheduling conflicts. So we will continue working to meet with this group over the coming

quarter. With the pet cemetery review committee, this committee has met a couple of times, and I believe I reported at the last meeting, we've shifted the focus of this committee to working on proposed legislation in cooperation, conjunction with department and with Representative Orwell's office, who has taken this on as a project.

(01:02:59):

So staff met separate from the committee last week to narrow down and finalize what our proposed recommendation would be and we'll be getting that out to the committee, if not by the end of this week, then hopefully early next week.

(01:03:20):

I'm just going through and doing some final cleanup, and once that committee signs off, we can share that out with the board, if the entire board would like to see that and provide feedback. But otherwise, we'll be sharing it with Representative Orwell's office as a starting point for the pet cemetery discussion moving forward. And so, with that, I'm happy to answer any questions on either committees.

David Ittner (01:03:49):

All right. Thank you, Sydney. With regards to the language in the pet cemetery review committee, would there be an interest from the board to review some of that language beforehand? Is that appropriate, Sydney? I think you mentioned that potentially being an option. So if you're, I guess if you are interested in reviewing that or looking at that and providing comment, that would be helpful. Any questions, comments for Sydney, or committee members? All right. Thank you. Moving on to agenda item 9.2, staff reports.

Sydney Muhle (01:04:36):

So this is going to be our complaint status report and I am going to introduce one of our program managers, Evelyn Manley-Rodriguez. She is program manager in the Centralized Investigations and Audits Unit, and she gets to present the complaint data for you.

Evelyn Manley-Rodriguez (01:04:54):

Good morning, members of the board. This snapshot of the complaint status-

Sydney Muhle (01:05:04):

Evelyn, we're getting feedback.

Evelyn Manley-Rodriguez (01:05:06):

Sorry, can you hear me? Yeah.

Sydney Muhle (01:05:06):

Mm-hmm. Yeah, we're getting feedback.

Evelyn Manley-Rodriguez (01:05:06):

Is this any better?

Sydney Muhle (01:05:09):

Yes, thank you.

Evelyn Manley-Rodriguez (01:05:11):

Thank you. Sorry, technology. Okay. So this is a snapshot of the complaint status, as of May 2, 2024. So we have received 11 complaints. Currently, there is nine cases with investigations, 28 cases under management review, 53 cases with legal, and this represents multiple complaints associated with three different cemeteries. Nine cases closed as of May 2nd, for a grand total of 99 cases.

(01:05:45):

And I'm going to take just a few minutes to discuss trends. So for the, I would like to share the top three trends for complaints that came in during this time. So one being around customer service, and this encompasses complainants feeling that returned calls and emails were somewhat delayed, lack of timely follow-up and, at times, just experiencing rudeness.

(01:06:16):

The other area is communication, specifically around lack of understanding of fees associated with the services being provided. And the third complaint trend is misrepresentation by the next of kin to authorize disposition.

(01:06:37):

We also looked into the potential violations identified during an investigation. And for those areas, one is failure to follow directions or obtain permission from an authorized agent. Another area is unprofessional conduct and the last area is failure to provide merchandise. So let me know there's any questions.

David Ittner (01:07:10):

All right. Thank you so much. Any questions or comments?

Unknown speaker (01:07:16):

So off.

David Ittner (01:07:20):

All right. Agenda item 9.2.2.

Sydney Muhle (01:07:28):

All right, and for this I'm actually going to be introducing another one of our program managers. Tanya Hessler is a program manager in our Licensing Customer Service Support Unit, and she will be presenting on both the complaint, or the licensee count data as well as the implementation for Senate Bill 5261 that changed the renewal dates for several of our licensees.

Tanya Hessler (01:07:54):

Good morning. So here we have our licensee accounts for current licensees through May 1st of 2024. In our cemetery license type, we have a total of 487, and on our funeral licensing types, we have 1,628, for a grand total of 2,115. And the renewals that we've processed from January

to April, we have, excuse me, January to April of '24, grand total of 104 new licenses, and we've processed 1,060 renewals.

(01:08:37):

So the update I have for Senate Bill 5261, which changed the expiration date for some of our license types, it's going pretty well. We did send out coupons to the affected licensees that basically gave them instructions on how to renew by paper, with the prorated amount, since our licensing system is unable to determine what the prorated amount would be if someone went online and renewed. So that's working pretty well.

(01:09:12):

We have also had quite a few people just go online and renew, and they pay the full fee. So we have a couple hundred renewal refunds that we're doing, because we're still giving people refunds for the prorated amount time, since their licensing time is not for a full year. But they are being charged it upfront in our system.

(01:09:34):

Like I said, our system cannot determine what the prorated amount is going to be. And the last cycle of the prorated renewal coupons will be going out in February, and then it will be business as usual, and the renewal dates will be set to January and March.

David Ittner (01:09:58):

All right. Thank you very much-

Sydney Muhle (01:10:02):

Are there any questions for Tanya?

Pete Cameron (01:10:05):

Actually, this is Pete. If we can go back to the previous slide, the new issues and renewals by month. Yeah, that one.

Sydney Muhle (01:10:15):

Mm-hmm.

Pete Cameron (01:10:16):

Casual observation, and I just had a question on the numbers for the new issues are climbing every month? Is this for all license types? Has that been broken down? Are we, I mean, we've been trying real hard to bring in new funeral directors into the state and everybody's trying to hire, so is there a breakdown on what types of new issues are out, or an explanation of that?

Sydney Muhle (01:10:45):

So I don't believe, I believe this is all license types, but we can certainly put in that request for the next meeting and bring that to you in August, broken out by license type.

Tanya Hessler (01:10:56):

Yeah.

Pete Cameron (01:10:58):

I think that would be some helpful information, especially for those of us on the licensing task force, if we can notice some trends and maybe glean some information from that. I think that would be helpful.

Sydney Muhle (01:11:13):

Absolutely. We will put that request into the data gurus to work their magic on these reports, and we'll get that working out for you for the next meeting.

Pete Cameron (01:11:24):

All right, thank you.

David Ittner (01:11:26):

Good question, Pete. All right. Any further comments, questions on that? Okay, next item.

Sydney Muhle (01:11:38):

All right. Well, for our board commission outreach reports, I'm actually going to turn both of these items over to Susan Nieves, and she's been the one working on them for us. I believe the entire board is aware, but maybe in case there are those that are not, Susan Nieves is going to be leaving us the end of this week. So very bittersweet that I get to-

(01:12:03):

Very bittersweet that I get to turn it over to her for the last time. But we're also very excited for her.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Susan Nieves (01:12:11):

So I have the hybrid meeting item. So the department has authorized our unit to do one hybrid meeting a year for all of our boards and commissions. And the unit is determined that the summer quarter is the best time for travel over the passes. So we have secured a room for the funeral and cemeteries August 20 for the 21st board meeting, and the board meeting will proceed if we're able to get a quorum. A quorum of the board has to be present at the in-person location, which the location will be at our Olympia Black Lake office in a large conference room. So once we get confirmation on who's able to attend, board staff will be reaching out to all the board members that will be attending in person and we will make whatever necessary travel arrangements are needed and provide the location and the address and all of that information. So board staff will be sending out emails regarding attendance and hopefully we'll reach a quorum so we'll have that in-person option for our board members. Does anybody have any questions?

David Ittner (01:13:35):

Do we have an indication yet as of who may be attending the in-person board meeting?

Susan Nieves (01:13:42):

I believe currently we have two that have confirmed for in-person, so we need, I believe it's four total to create the quorum.

Sydney Muhle (01:13:53):

We do, and we also have some transition happening over the summer with terms expiring and new appointments that are waiting to happen with the governor's office. So hopefully once those transitions are completed, we'll have a better idea and be able to confirm that here shortly.

David Ittner (01:14:15):

All right. Well just quick comment. Susan, thank you for all of your service and everything that you've done for our group and you've been extremely pleasant and wonderful to work with and enjoyed getting to know you and work with you and wish you the best of luck in your next role. So thank you very much.

Susan Nieves (01:14:38):

Well, thank you. You guys are an amazing board. I mean, today is a prime example of what a wonderful board this is, to see the important work that you all are doing and how everybody comes together. So it's been an honor to serve with the boards, with the regulatory boards, so thank you.

David Ittner (01:15:02):

All right.

Susan Nieves (01:15:04):

And I will move on to the action item list, which is really small. Like Sydney said, the two committees have not been able to meet. So board staff will reach out soon and try to get some meetings scheduled for good report outs at the next meeting. So those are the only two items on the action item list, which is the Licensing Future Task Force committee and the Pet Cemetery Review Committee. That's all I have for that.

David Ittner (01:15:36):

All right, thank you so much, Susan. All right, I think that concludes the staff reports section. We move on to agenda item number 10, public comments. The public may address the board on matters within the board's jurisdiction, either verbally during the meeting or by submitting written comments in advance. Verbal comments are limited to one three minute comment. Written comments are limited to no more than 500 words and must be emailed to board staff no less than two business days prior to the meeting.

(01:16:08):

In response to all public comments, the board is limited to requesting that the matter be added to a future agenda for discussion or directing staff to study the matter further. Inflammatory comments and language will not be permitted. All right. Do we have any members of the public in the meeting that would like to provide a comment?

Casey Hussman (01:16:28):

This is Casey Huffman on the phone. I would like to comment.

David Ittner (01:16:37):

All right.

Casey Hussman (01:16:42):

Can anyone hear me?

David Ittner (01:16:44):

Yeah, could you please state your name one more time?

Casey Hussman (01:16:54):

Hi. This is Casey Hussman. I'm the Executive Director of People's Memorial Association, an education advocacy nonprofit dealing with the funeral industry. And I represent the constituency of 71,000 Washingtonians that have paid People's Memorial Association for our education advocacy purposes.

David Ittner (01:17:13):

All right, please proceed.

Casey Hussman (01:17:19):

Some recent demographic research projects a dramatic increase in the death rates in our area due to many factors. There've been recent news pieces on [inaudible 01:17:31] and in the Seattle Times made plain that due to an influx intentional overdose death, storage space remains or remains is running low. There was a time when refrigerated storage space was ample enough to comfortably respond to a natural disaster or other mass fatality situation. Given where things are now, what measures are being put in place to reposition our facilities in Washington State to be poised to respond to the anticipated surge in mortality groups or an emergency?

David Ittner (01:18:15):

All right. That perhaps could be an item that would be added to a future agenda item, or potentially a task force enforced of such to discuss those that particular question.

Sydney Muhle (01:18:33):

We can add the discussion item to the next agenda for the board.

David Ittner (01:18:38):

All right, thank you. Any further commentary there?

Casey Hussman (01:18:47):

I know that's a rather large subject, but I do have an additional comment on some of the disposition facilities themselves. Many disposition facilities operate on equipment that is aging and frequently in need of maintenance, which causes significant delays in the turnaround times for client families as well as the storage challenges when queues are becoming backlogged.



Newer and senior technology is available and could replace equipment that is today serving diminishing returns.

(01:19:21):

But there are challenges in permitting newer equipment that prevents the implementation of them to the detriment of client family satisfaction and the speedy availability of services generally. What recommendations can this board make to the funeral professionals caught in the middle of these substandard circumstances?

David Ittner (01:19:44):

This is a matter of clarification. Are you referring to environmental type restrictions with regards to crematory facilities?

Casey Hussman (01:19:56):

That's correct. A lot of new players that are attempting to install new retorts are met with strict environmental standards as in compliance with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and as a result are unable to create a business that does implement new machines. And I think a lot of the older providers that are already operating machines do fear installing newer machines and therefore facing harsher environmental regulations than when the machines were first installed. And as a result, no new machines are being implemented. So even though there are some greener machines on the market today, those are not being installed anywhere in Washington State to my knowledge.

David Ittner (01:20:43):

Okay. Appreciate your comment. I think that's again, something that we could add to the, a future agenda item for discussion. I appreciate your commentary. All right, do we have any other members of the public who would like to make comment? All right. Hearing none, we will move on to agenda item number 11, the conclusion 11.1 announcements. Do we have any board members have any announcements or additional reports they would like to make at this time?

Cameron Smock (01:21:29):

Mr. Chair, this is Cameron. I would like to make an announcement.

David Ittner (01:21:36):

All right, thank you.

Cameron Smock (01:21:40):

So a few of you know, but most of you don't. Four weeks ago I was diagnosed with terminal cancer and it unfortunately is not curable. And so needless to say, my world's been turned upside down in the last four weeks. I am being treated through Fred Hutch. Really the only treatment is to slow the growth, but it has already metastasized to five different areas of my abdomen. So my life expectancy is much shorter than I was planning on four weeks ago.

(01:22:34):

So I announced today to my employee group that I am resigning as president of our company, effective December 31st and will be transitioning into a part-time role with our company starting

in January. My company has gone above and beyond to help support me. I turned 62 in October, and so there's about a three-year gap before I qualify for Medicare if I survive that long.

(01:23:10):

And so I will stay with Bonnie Watson, but resigning as president effective the end of this year. This is officially my last licensing board meeting as well. My term expires, I believe July 1st. So my hope, health permitting is to be at the August meeting in an unofficial capacity. I just want to say what an honor it's been to serve on this board for three or four terms and to have the honor of serving as chair for three terms. I've been involved in many different community things during my professional career and serving on this board has been one of the highlights. So thank you all for allowing me to be part of this board.

David Ittner (01:24:22):

Cameron, first off, thank you for your comments for sharing. I know that's not the easiest thing to do and I just want to thank you for everything that you've done, not only for this board, but for our profession. You've been one of the titans of this industry ever since I've been involved for the last 21 years. And I know that you were around for a long time before that and whether you knew it or not, I think you've been a mentor for a lot of us. You certainly have been for me, whether it was at the conferences, just listening to you speak, interact, reaching out to you for questions and input. You've done an amazing, amazing job for our profession representing all of us extremely well.

(01:25:21):

And like I said, you've been a long distance mentor for me and even as it relates to being a board member here and taking over as chair, being able to watch how you presented yourself and ran meetings and dealt with some pretty difficult scenarios, cases and hearings and things like that. I'm just very thankful for everything that you've done for all of us and that your presence on this board and the committees that we've served on together will be greatly missed. And if you need anything, don't hesitate to reach out.

Cameron Smock (01:26:04):

Thank you very much, David.

Richard Little (01:26:07):

Cameron, you're just a dear friend to me in the industry and I'll talk to you later. But clearly you've been such an important part of my life within the funeral industry and I just truly appreciate our friendship.

Cameron Smock (01:26:32):

Thank you, Rick.

Pete Cameron (01:26:36):

Yeah, Cameron on the simple side I think I would say ditto. You've made an impact on me since you came on here, and I've learned a lot from listening to you and sitting in meetings. We've had a lot of good discussions on basically the history of funeral service and how long we've been

doing this and all the changes and things. And you've been a big part of that and a big influence a lot of people. And you are very well respected and very much looked up to by not just those of us on the board, but those of us who we reach out and teach and help grow in the business from lessons that you taught us. So yeah, we're here if you need anything.

Cameron Smock (01:27:35):

Thank you. Pete.

Angela Ward (01:27:36):

Cameron-

Sydney Muhle (01:27:39):

Cameron, I'll jump, oh, go ahead.

Angela Ward (01:27:43):

Sorry, Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:27:44):

Oh no, go ahead.

Angela Ward (01:27:48):

Just to echo what everyone has said, and as the public member, I have felt extremely seen and validated and deferred to by you personally, and that is no small thing and I think dovetails in with what I was saying about the conference, that the leadership that we have at this point in our board is largely due to you. As David said, your legacy is that transparency that I feel like is still forming on this board. And I just thank you for that. I thank you for your warmth to me always, and we're rooting for you. You are this board's rock and there's just no other way to say it. And thank you for sharing and I will be holding you and your family and my thoughts and in my prayers and wishing you nothing but the best.

Cameron Smock (01:28:56):

Thank you, Angie.

David Ittner (01:28:58):

Well said.

Sydney Muhle (01:29:00):

And I'll jump in on behalf of board staff. I know we're all struggling to keep it together on our side of things, but Cameron, with all of the changes that have happened on the board staff side over the last few years, like David said, whether you knew it or not, you've been just such a steady influence for all of us and provided such gentle guidance and education as we've all been jumping in and learning an industry that was completely foreign to all of us.

(01:29:33):

And we just really appreciate your wisdom and your guidance and your sense of humor as we've all been learning and going through all of this. So we are going to miss you on this board for sure. I've already informed Cameron, but so the rest of the board knows we do have a plaque on order for board members, but it was not ready in time for this meeting. So our plan had been to invite him to the August meeting. So one way or another we'll make sure that we get to recognize him formally and share all of this with him and make sure that he's recognized for all of his wonderful service. But Cameron, just thank you so much for everything you've done for all of us in helping guide and educate us to better help this board.

Cameron Smock (01:30:24):

Thank you Sydney.

David Ittner (01:30:33):

Thank you everybody for your comments. Cameron, we look forward to seeing you at the August meeting. Just moving on-

Cameron Smock (01:30:45):

Yeah, I was just going to say I look forward to being there too. God willing, I will be there.

David Ittner (01:30:59):

Okay, requests for future agenda items. Are there any additional items that have not yet been discussed that any board members would like to request for the next meeting? Hearing none, Susan, review of action items and items for next meeting.

Susan Nieves (01:31:21):

So I have the public comment discussion for an agenda item for the next meeting and for the action items to get a breakdown of the licensee types with our licensee count report and then staff to schedule the committee member meetings. That is what I captured from today.

David Ittner (01:31:45):

All right, thank you Susan. With that, we are on our last agenda item, adjournment. The time is now 11:32 AM and this meeting is officially adjourned. Thank you all for your time and for the excellent reports.

Sydney Muhle (01:32:05):

Thank you all.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:32:09]