



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
FUNERAL & CEMETERY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

DATE: August 21, 2024
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

BOARD MEMBERS: **David Ittner**, Cemetery Member & Chair
Dante Gutierrez-Zamora, Funeral/Embalmer Member & Vice Chair
Pete Cameron, Funeral/Embalmer Member
Richard Little, Funeral/Embalmer Member
Angela Ward, Public Member

STAFF MEMBERS: **Tanya Hessler**, Program Manager
Pam Griese, Funeral Director & Embalmer Inspector
Nick Quijas, Assistant Attorney General
Sydney Muhle, Program Specialist

1. Call to Order

Board Chair David Ittner called the meeting to order at **10:00 a.m.**

2. Roll Call

Program Specialist Sydney Muhle conducted Roll Call. All Board members were present except Board Member Angela Ward who was absent.

3. Approval of Agenda

Board Member Richard Little made a **MOTION** to approve the order of the agenda as presented. Board Member Pete Cameron **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Minutes from May 29, 2023

Board Member Little made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as presented. Board Member Cameron **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

5. Old Business

5.1. Case Update

Staff will provide an update regarding Columbia River Cemetery (formerly Columbia Memorial Gardens).

Funeral & Cemetery Investigator and Trust Examiner Pam Griese provided an update on a case regarding cemetery trust funds for a particular cemetery. She said it was having a positive impact on the community. She provided a detailed update on the impacts of the investigation, and subsequent follow-up by the Department of Licensing (DOL).

6. New Business

6.1. Death Rate Surge Discussion

The Board has requested a discussion item to address public comments regarding steps to address an anticipated surge in death rate.

Ms. Muhle, Chair Ittner, and Board member Cameron provided high-level details on the steps that DOL and the Board were taking to increase the number of licensed professionals in the industry.

A member of the public, Casey Husseman, addressed the Board and requested clarification on the steps being taken and to ensure that the funeral director position would not be kept at internship level beyond a reasonable timeframe.

Ms. Muhle provided additional details including, considering alternative pathways to licensure, removing time cap for internships, and reviewing and updating educational requirements.

6.2. Disposition Facility Equipment Discussion

The Board has requested a discussion item to address public comments regarding steps to address replacement of disposition facility equipment.

The Board formed an ad-hoc committee to address this issue. Committee members: Chair Ittner, Vice Chair Dante Gutierrez-Zamora, Board Member Cameron.

6.3. Request from IOOF Cemetery and High Valley Cemetery

The Board will consider a request from IOOF Cemetery and High Valley Cemetery in Ellensburg to reduce cemetery prearrangement trust fund to the minimum liability.

Ms. Griese said two cemeteries had been depositing 100% of cemetery prearrangement merchandise and services into their trust fund and at the time of a maturity or cancellation of those contracts, only withdrawing the amount that was deposited. She said this resulted in a higher fund balance than was appropriate.

Ms. Griese provided a detailed report to the Board prior to the meeting, outlining a plan to correct the error. She said the cemeteries were requesting approval of the plan, as it was not a typical approach. The Board discussed the details with Ms. Griese.

Board Member Cameron made a **MOTION** to approve the proposal as presented. Board Member Little **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

7. Complaint Cases for Review

Case managers that present their recommendations to the Board shall recuse themselves from voting on the case outcome.

7.1. 2024-04-0719-00FDE (Little)

Board Member Little read the Case Manager Report to the Board as the Case Manager.

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora made a **MOTION** to close the case with no further action. Board Member Cameron **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

7.2. 2023-05-0905-00CEM (Gutierrez-Zamora)

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora read the Case Manager Report to the Board as the Case Manager.

Board Member Cameron made a **MOTION** to close the case with no further action. Board Member Little **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

7.3. 2024-05-1172-00FDE (Gutierrez-Zamora)

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora read the Case Manager Report to the Board as the Case Manager.

Board Member Little made a **MOTION** to close the case with no further action. Board Member Cameron **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

7.4. 2024-06-1511-00FDE (Gutierrez-Zamora)

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora read the Case Manager Report to the Board as the Case Manager.

Board Member Cameron asked whether the complainant was made aware that the respondent was not a fraternal benefit society. Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora confirmed that they had been.

Board Member Cameron made a **MOTION** to close the case with no further action. Board Member Little **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

8. Legal Issues for Deliberation

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board may, at its discretion, meet in executive session to discuss certain enforcement actions with legal counsel, as allowed by RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). The chair will announce the purpose and estimated duration for the Executive Session. No formal actions will be taken during the Executive Session. Once the Executive Session concludes, the Board will take a break to announce and invite visitors to the Open Session.

8.1.8.1. 2023-12-2842-00FDE

Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Nick Quijas will be presenting a Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Default Order.

AAG Quijas presented the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Default Order to the Board.

Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora made a **MOTION** to accept the default order as presented. Board Member Little **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 3-0 with Board Member Cameron abstaining as the Case Manager.

8.2. 2023-02-0215-00FDE

AAG Quijas will be presenting a Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Default Order.

AAG Quijas presented the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Default Order to the Board.

Board Member Cameron asked whether the respondent had prior violations or incidents. AAG Quijas said they had not.

Board Member Little made a **MOTION** to accept the default order as presented. Board Member Cameron **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4-0.

8.3. 2023-01-0099-00FDE / 2021-11-2856-00FDE

AAG Quijas will be presenting a Stipulated Finding of Fact, Conclusion of Law and Agreed Order.

AAG Quijas presented the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Default Order to the Board.

Chair Ittner asked for additional information on how the decision of a stayed suspension was reached, which AAG Quijas addressed.

Board Member Cameron made a **MOTION** to accept the agreed order as presented. Board Member Little **SECONDED** the motion, and it was **APPROVED** by a vote of 3-0 with Vice Chair Guterrez-Zamora abstaining as the Case Manager.

9. Reports

9.1. Committee/Task Force Reports

9.1.1. Licensing Future Task Force Report

Ms. Muhle addressed the Board and said no meetings had been scheduled for this task force since the last Board meeting.

9.1.2. Pet Cemetery Review Committee

Ms. Mule addressed the Board and said draft legislation had been completed by staff, reviewed by the Committee, and was going through the proper channels needed in order to be submitted to the legislature during the 2025 session. She said the Committee was waiting on feedback as part of that process.

9.2. Staff Reports

9.2.1. Centralized Investigations and Audits Unit Reports

9.2.1.1. Complaint Status Report

Ms. Muhle reviewed the Complaint Status report with the Board.

Board Member Little asked how the data compared with past years and Ms. Muhle said it was a little about average and that she would provide a report of the past five years for comparison at the next meeting.

9.2.2. Licensing & Customer Support Services Reports

9.2.2.1. Licensee Count Report

Program Manager Tanya Hessler reviewed the Licensee Count reports with the Board.

9.2.3. Boards, Commissions and Outreach Services Reports

9.2.3.1. Action Item List

Ms. Muhle reviewed the Master Action Items list for the Board and provided an update on the status of each item, and Ms. Griese provided additional clarification on an item.

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 DOLBoards@dol.wa.gov no less than two business days prior to the meeting with the subject line "Public Comment: Funeral and Cemetery Board". 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.

None.

11. Conclusion

11.1. Announcements

None.

11.2. Requests for future agenda items

Chair Ittner asked the Board for recommendations for agenda items at the next meeting.

Board Member Cameron requested an update on the recruitment to fill the vacant board seat.

11.3. Review of action items and items for next meeting

Ms. Muhle provided a review of the new action items from this meeting:

- Ad hoc committee to look at disposition facility equipment.
- Staff to provide 5-year data on complaint cases.

12. Adjournment

Chair Ittner adjourned the meeting at **11:06 a.m.**

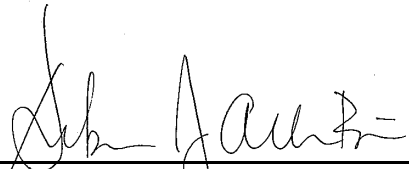
Next Board Meeting:

November 20, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Virtual via Teams

Submitted by:



Debra Allen-Ba, Assistant Administrator

November 20, 2024

Date

Approved by:



David W. Ittner, Board Chair

November 20, 2024

Date