

Washington State Funeral and Cemetery Board meeting transcript

May 28, 2025

Sydney Muhle (00:00:00):

All right. Everyone is in. It is 10:00, and we have the recording going, so whenever you would like to start.

Dave Ittner (00:00:13):

Perfect. Thank you so much. All right. Good morning. I'm David Ittner, Chair of the Washington State Funeral Cemetery Board. The time is now 10:00 AM on Wednesday, May 28th, 2025, and I'm calling this regular board meeting to order. We'll 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 are 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.

(00:00:48):

Agenda item number two is roll call. Alyssa, would you please call roll? Board members, please respond if you are in attendance.

Alyssa Woods (00:00:56):

Okay, I'll start with you. Chair Ittner?

Dave Ittner (00:01:01):

Present.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:04):

Vice Chair Gutierrez?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:01:09):

Here.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:09):

And then Board Member Ward?

Angela Ward (00:01:16):

Here.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:17):

Board Member Little?

Richard Little (00:01:19):
Here.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:21):
Board Member Cameron?

Pete Cameron (00:01:23):
Here.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:24):
Board Member Lovgren?

Paul Lovgren (00:01:24):
Here.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:29):
And I believe that's everybody.

Speaker X (00:01:32):
[inaudible 00:01:32] awesome.

Alyssa Woods (00:01:33):
Back to you.

Dave Ittner (00:01:34):
Where is [inaudible 00:01:35]?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:01:34):
I have [inaudible 00:01:36].

Dave Ittner (00:01:37):
I don't know.

Speaker X (00:01:38):
All [inaudible 00:01:41].

Dave Ittner (00:01:41):
All right, [inaudible 00:01:42].

Speaker X (00:01:41):

Did you solve the problem of getting power out there?

(00:01:43):

[inaudible 00:01:43].

(00:01:44):

Nope.

Dave Ittner (00:01:44):

We have someone that needs to mute their mic, please.

(00:01:52):

All right, moving on to agenda item number three, Approval of the Agenda, we need a motion for that approval.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:02:01):

This is Dante. I move that we approve the agenda.

Dave Ittner (00:02:07):

Thank you, Dante.

Pete Cameron (00:02:10):

This is Pete. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (00:02:14):

Thank you. Are there any discussion or additions to the agenda? All right, hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:02:26):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:02:26):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:02:26):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:02:26):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:02:26):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:02:31):

Any opposed? All right, motion passes. Approval of Minutes, agenda item number four, also looking for an approval for the minutes of the February 19th, 2025 meeting.

Richard Little (00:02:48):

This is Rick. I'll go ahead and approve the minutes.

Dave Ittner (00:02:53):

Thank you, Rick. Do we have a second?

Paul Lovgren (00:02:56):

I'll second. This is Paul.

Dave Ittner (00:02:59):

All right. Thank you, Paul. Any discussion, corrections, changes? All right, hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:03:08):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:03:09):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:03:09):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:03:09):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:03:13):

Any opposed? All right, the minutes are approved. Thank you so much. Moving on to agenda item 5.1, report from the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Board's annual conference. I'm going to open the floor for the folks that attended that to provide their reports or comments.

Pete Cameron (00:03:37):

Well, this is Pete. I was the only folk to attend. It was another great annual meeting, as those who have been to their meetings can attest to, full of information, lots of good sessions, lots of relative discussions, including labor shortages and how different states are looking at tackling the upcoming labor shortage. So I've got some good information for our committee for that. I got lots and lots of questions during the breaks, and on lunches, and afterwards about natural organic reduction, there's a great deal of interest around that now around the country, and fielded a lot of questions and had some follow-up conversations and emails for some folks asking questions on that. Very well-

attended. I'd encourage next year anybody who's thinking about it to please go. You will learn a lot. You'll make some good connections and meet a lot of good people.

Dave Ittner (00:04:51):

Great. Thank you, Pete. Appreciate the report on that. All right, look forward to talking about what you learned down there relative to labor shortages and other issues. Moving on to agenda item 5.2, we have a rulemaking discussion. And I'll turn it over to Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (00:05:13):

All right, thank you. This is going to be a continuation of some conversations that we've had with the board recently regarding some rulemaking activities that we've been trying to move forward with. In particular that was in the packet provided to the board ahead of the meeting, we did identify some areas of risk that have come up with some of the rulemaking that we've been trying to do and trying to move forward with just as part of our due diligence. And as we've been working through those processes, we've identified some of those risks. And then as we were preparing for this discussion with the board, just to have the conversation, make sure that we come back and are making the board fully aware of all of the risks, Pam and Riley reached out to me and said that they also have quite a few areas of the rules that they've identified that needs some update, things that they're seeing in the field and are coming across, and just some loopholes and just some general holes that we want to make sure that we're fully closing as we work through this process.

(00:06:30):

So rather than trying to piecemeal the rulemaking, we thought we'd just have one or two items and those we could push forward on. But given that we've identified so many areas of the WAC that need to be updated now, we wanted to kind of shift the conversation a little bit with the board and see if the board would be willing to look at setting up a WAC review committee to help us make those changes and really do a thorough review of our rules, make sure that we're catching all of those potential areas for update, that we are able to do our due diligence through all of our processes, catch any areas of risks that are out there, and that we address it kind of all as one.

(00:07:16):

If it were one or two seemingly small things, that would be one thing. But it's grown enough and, I've kind of been joking with the team in the background, we have several WAC updates going on right now, so this is definitely not something we went looking to request, but I do think it's probably the safest route to go for the board and for our licensees, just to make sure that we're fully addressing everything that we need to all at once and doing it right one time rather than trying to piecemeal it.

(00:07:51):

So with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions taken from the board and see if that's something the board would be willing to look at.

Dave Ittner (00:08:05):

So just to clarify, Sydney, so the five-year cap on the internship, that discussion, that piece would be part of this process for sure?

Sydney Muhle (00:08:15):

It would be. We've identified some risks on that. We've also had several constituents reach out to us before the rulemaking paperwork could even start, raising several concerns and questions that we want to make sure are fully discussed. And just given that there are so many different pieces that we're now having come in, we feel like it's better to move that conversation forward with a committee and then bring all of that information back to the full board for a decision on a WAC update.

Dave Ittner (00:08:52):

Okay, thank you. My thought would be, again, I agree with what you're saying. I understand the need to make sure we're dotting I's, crossing T's, and looking at the risk analysis. Just given the importance that I've felt and heard from constituents on the labor shortage issues and the five-year internship piece, I would request that that committee get set up rather quickly and starts getting to work so we can make that piece, at least make a decision. I mean, I think we've already made a decision on it, so I just want to make sure that it doesn't get delayed too much longer, but I understand the need for evaluating the risk that's been, I guess, talked about, or discussed, or discovered.

Sydney Muhle (00:09:46):

And with that five-year cap, part of the risks that we've identified are, when the cap was put in place, there were some other components that that five-year cap kind of got tied into just as a procedural thing. And now, trying to unwind that, it's proving to be a little more complicated than simply removing the cap. We want to make sure that we're looking at all of the different components and pieces, and have a chance to thoroughly discuss those, and that we unwind any of that properly so that we don't have another issue down the line.

Dave Ittner (00:10:23):

Yep, that makes sense. I'd be happy to serve on that committee.

(00:10:37):

Any other comments from the board?

Richard Little (00:10:40):

This is Rick Little. I would be glad to serve on that, but I don't know how long I'm going to be on the board since I'm just a fill-in for a while here.

Sydney Muhle (00:10:48):

So as of right now, we are not aware of any applicants to fill your position. We've been asking.

Richard Little (00:10:57):

That's okay.

Sydney Muhle (00:10:58):

So if anybody knows of any applicants that would like to submit through the governor's office. But as of right now, we don't have any.

Richard Little (00:11:06):

That would be for a cemetery representative, to represent... yeah.

Sydney Muhle (00:11:11):

Mm-hmm.

Richard Little (00:11:11):

So I would be glad to help with this if that's the case.

Speaker X (00:11:16):

[inaudible 00:11:20].

Dave Ittner (00:11:26):

Any further discussion?

Sydney Muhle (00:11:31):

All right, [inaudible 00:11:31].

Dave Ittner (00:11:31):

No.

Sydney Muhle (00:11:31):

We will be reaching out and scheduling that committee meeting as soon as possible and we'll get moving on that work quickly. We'll also have Pam and Riley involved in those discussions, so hopefully we've got a really good start to them. We just want to make sure we're doing our thorough due diligence and reviewing the chapter in its entirety so that we catch all of it at once.

Dave Ittner (00:11:53):

Make sure. No, it makes sense. I appreciate that.

Sydney Muhle (00:11:55):

All right, thank you.

Dave Ittner (00:11:57):

All right, thank you, Sydney. We'll move on to item 5.3, Discussion of the 2025 Board Goals and Priorities.

Sydney Muhle (00:12:05):

So this is going to be me again, and I've emailed with Chair Ittner and Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora about the board goals for 2025. We haven't identified any new areas of focus for the year, so we'll just kind of be staying the course, focusing on pet cemeteries and then barriers to licensure, and continuing to address the licensing future. So those are the priorities that we've been focused on, and I think the work that we continue to bring to you is very much in line with that. So if it's all right, we don't need a formal motion or anything from the board. Just as long as everybody's in agreement that those are good to move forward with, we'll just set that as the intention for the year and start looking at 2026.

Dave Ittner (00:13:07):

Yeah, I think all those items are still on the list. Although we've made, I think, some good headway in a lot of different areas, we still have to close the loop on a few of those. And also, there's the disposition facility equipment concern that we'll be keeping at the forefront of things as well.

(00:13:31):

All right, that takes us to agenda item number six. 6.1 is the Election of Officers. At the second meeting of every year, the Funeral and Cemetery Board holds elections for officers for the following 12 months. So we will need nominations and votes for the chair and vice chair positions. First position to elect is the chair. And at this time, I would open the floor for nominations. And this does require a motion for approval.

Dante Gutierrez-Zamora (00:14:04):

This is Dante. I'll go ahead and move that we retain and keep David Ittner as our chair.

Paul Lovgren (00:14:15):

This is Paul. I'll second that.

Dave Ittner (00:14:20):

All right. Thank you, Dante and Paul. Is there any discussion? All right, hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Richard Little (00:14:32):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:14:32):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:14:32):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:14:32):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:14:32):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:14:38):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, hearing none, the motion passes. All right, we'll move on to the same process for the vice chair position. We have a nomination from the floor.

Pete Cameron (00:15:04):

This is Pete. I'm going to nominate Dante to remain in his position as vice chair for the next term.

Dave Ittner (00:15:12):

Thank you, Pete.

Richard Little (00:15:13):

This is Rick. I'll go ahead and second that.

Dave Ittner (00:15:19):

Thank you, Rick. There any discussion about the motion?

Alyssa Woods (00:15:26):

This is Alyssa. Can I just clarify, Pete, are you making a motion to nominate? I just want to be clear for our meeting minutes.

Pete Cameron (00:15:35):

Yes.

Alyssa Woods (00:15:36):

Okay. Thank you.

Dave Ittner (00:15:38):

All right. Any discussion? Don't believe so. All right. Moving on, all in favor, say "aye".

Richard Little (00:15:53):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:15:53):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:15:53):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:15:53):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:15:58):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Thank you. Moving on to agenda item 6.2, Licensing Future Task Force Discussion, Sydney will begin that piece as well.

Sydney Muhle (00:16:20):

Yep. And really, this is just going to be an introduction, then I will turn it over to the Licensing Future Task Force Committee members. At the last board meeting, we had a member of the public ask a question about what the board is doing to address the potential shortfall of future licensees with the anticipated rising death rate. And so, just wanted to reintroduce that that was where this item moved up into new business rather than in our usual committee and task force reports. It was really an opportunity for the board to be able to answer that question when they couldn't during the public comment portion as well as to provide just a general update of what's going on with the task force. So with that, I will turn it over to the task force members to address.

Dave Ittner (00:17:16):

All right. Thank you, Sydney. So I'll just kind of begin to, I guess, reference what we've been looking at. We've kind of talked about it a little bit already, but, again, looking at, how do we bring in and retain good quality people into the profession? And one of the things we've obviously looked at is the five-year internship cap and being able to have folks that have been in the industry who maybe don't have the means, or the ability, or the timeframe at this point to go back and get the educational piece or finish the educational piece, extending that internship piece so that we don't end up inadvertently forcing folks out of the profession. So there's that piece.

(00:18:11):

And the other piece that we've been reviewing and looking at is the alternative pathways to licensure. I think Sydney brought an example to our attention in one of the meetings early on of what the architecture board does in terms of an alternative pathway to becoming a licensed architect that includes... And, Sydney, you can provide a little more detail here, I would imagine, but it's essentially the equivalent of the on-the-job training piece, along with you meeting certain criteria and other metrics, but maybe the educational requirement is met with that on-the-job piece. So, Sydney, if you have any commentary on that particular item, please feel free to jump in.

Sydney Muhle (00:19:03):

Yeah, I'd be happy to share more about that. So with the architect program, on a national level but with Washington kind of leading the charge, they set up an experience program where additional experience can be utilized in place of education. And it doesn't replace the education component, it's just an alternative way of obtaining that. So they still have to demonstrate knowledge and experience in certain levels and in certain areas and show that they have met that education through an alternative means. So that's one of the components that we've talked about with the task force is, is there a way to mirror that within the funeral and cemetery, in particular, the funeral director and embalmer space, to see if that's an opportunity to kind of pioneer something new.

(00:20:06):

And so looking at just different opportunities that way, they've also discussed similar professions that bring a good amount of education in the same areas that we look for and that we require as part of our licensure. For example, like EMT paramedics, firefighters, who have that strong science background, they have quite a bit of education in a lot of the areas that we require for licensure but maybe don't fit identically with what we see in the traditional education pathway. And so just looking at, are there opportunities for some crossover work with that? So just exploring different potential areas.

Dave Ittner (00:21:02):

Thank you, Sydney. Elizabeth, I see you have your hand up there.

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:21:07):

Yes. So the one thing I'll note about architects, and engineers, and many of the professions is that they have statutory authorization to use experience in place of education. I think in order to use experience in place of education, you need the statutory authority to do that. Right now, you have a very limited ability to... You have a very specific description of what education looks like for you, and it's required. So I think [inaudible 00:21:47].

Sydney Muhle (00:21:46):

They've been looking at that in the context of, okay, what do we have the authority to do, what would require a legislative change, but trying to take a very holistic look at, what are some opportunities that are available to us, and then what would be the pathway to achieve that.

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:22:01):

Right.

(00:22:02):

Right, okay. Just wanted to make it clear that this isn't necessarily rulemaking, it might have to be some legislative changes as well.

Dave Ittner (00:22:10):

Absolutely, yeah.

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:22:11):

So just thought I'd-

Dave Ittner (00:22:12):

Yep, yeah, absolutely, yep. They told me I didn't have the power to do anything like that. No, I'm just kidding.

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:22:21):

All by yourself.

Dave Ittner (00:22:23):

Yep. All right. Any other commentary from committee members on that piece? Pete, I know you've been heavily involved.

Pete Cameron (00:22:34):

Yeah, nothing more than what has already been discussed. One of the issues that was brought up at the annual conference meeting is the different education levels that are required for different states. And with Washington having an associate's degree, there are several states that require a bachelor's degree, and those states are facing a bigger uphill battle than we are. And discussion has been raised about just lowering the degree requirement, whether that's something to look at for those states. I don't believe that we should be dealing or talking about dropping education completely, but it's complicated and there's a lot of discussion going on around the country on it right now. There is no easy fix.

Dave Ittner (00:23:31):

Well, it's good that we're... As a board, this is an important item for us. I know it's important for people in the profession. And so, we'll keep working towards it. And I appreciate Sydney's help in keeping us organized and moving forward towards some path forward.

(00:23:55):

All right, moving on to agenda item 6.3, College-Level Examination Program Discussion. Sydney, I'll turn it back over to you.

Sydney Muhle (00:24:06):

All right, thank you very much. So we have received a question from our licensing team regarding the acceptance of College-Level Examination Program credits as part of a college course requirement. These are courses, such as English 101, 102, that college students can essentially test out of. Meaning that their knowledge already encompasses that level of understanding in that area, and so they take an examination and it allows them to still receive that college credit. And it shows on their transcript as receiving credit for that level of course, but they don't go through the entire course. So they're essentially just not repeating the knowledge that they've already gained.

(00:25:06):

And so this is one that we weren't really certain on and was kind of a new question for us, so we wanted to bring this to the board. Again, it shows on the transcript that they've received credit for those courses, but I think we've had an applicant who has been very upfront and sharing that the credit showing on their transcript, a portion of that was obtained through these CLEP examinations, and so they were questioning whether or not that was acceptable to the board. And so that's where this came from, and it's wanting to help provide us with some direction on whether or not that is acceptable to the board.

Dave Ittner (00:25:53):

All right, thank you, Sydney. I'll open it up for comments here.

Pete Cameron (00:26:06):

Well, this is Pete. I guess my initial reaction in reading this and hearing about it, is this something that should be reviewed by the License Future Task Force first or is this just a general question for the board?

Sydney Muhle (00:26:24):

I would defer to the board's discussion on that. If you guys would like to take a deeper look at it, we could certainly ask the Licensing Future Task Force to do that for you and bring back a report on it. Or if you guys want to move forward with a direction, we're okay either way. Like I said, this was a new one for us, so we kind of wanted to see how the board wanted to proceed.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:26:50):

So this is Dante. Before we bounce this to another committee or discuss bouncing it to another committee, is this just a one-off or does this happen often? I'm assuming this is probably one individual and it doesn't happen on a regular basis. We could definitely just say that we approve it. I mean, like you said, the person could have just let this sail by; they had to disclose that it was on their transcript.

Sydney Muhle (00:27:23):

And that was my thinking as well is, this could be occurring much more widely, and we just happened to have somebody who was very upfront in their question. And that's where this came from. This was given to us in a very aggregate, we don't have a specific applicant that this is coming from, but it was a new question for us from the licensing team. And so it could be more prevalent than what we are aware of or it could be, again, with some of the changes in education, different things that we've seen post-COVID, that this is just something that's maybe becoming a bit more prevalent. And given that it was a new one, we wanted to bring in for clarification.

Dave Ittner (00:28:10):

Paul, you had your hand up there.

Paul Lovgren (00:28:12):

Yeah, I just wanted to say that that was a major part of my bachelor's degree. I had worked in the field for 12 years and then went back to get my bachelor's. And the stuff that they were teaching in the 400-level classes, I was way past that. And I was able to prove my knowledge and test out of those classes that, yes, I know how to write an obituary; yes, I know how to meet with a family; yes, I know embalming techniques that were not even being taught in school. So it was a major help for me while I was working to try to get my bachelor's degree.

Dave Ittner (00:28:56):

Yeah, appreciate that comment. Anyone else have any input on this? I would simply say, if it's in line with the statute, I can't think of a reason why we wouldn't accept it. I will freely admit that I am not a funeral director, so that's just my cemetery view of things.

Sydney Muhle (00:29:42):

All right.

Pete Cameron (00:29:46):

Well, I was-

Dave Ittner (00:29:46):

Any other comments?

Sydney Muhle (00:29:46):

Go ahead.

Pete Cameron (00:29:46):

I was going to say, this is Pete, and I agree with what Paul said. And I think this kind of lends itself along the avenues of what we're looking at about trying to get quality people in and, not necessarily simplify the process, but if you've demonstrated the knowledge and it's on your transcript, so it's official from the college, I don't know why the board wouldn't accept that.

Dante Gutierrez-Zamora (00:30:15):

Yeah. Thank you, Pete. I think, yeah, that's kind of the line that I'm going down is maybe making a motion, and just kind of spitballing, but that as long as the credits are accepted by an accredited institution, how those credits were reached, whether it was sitting in a class or CLEP-ing out of it, is not something... I mean, if we're going to dig into every credit on every institution, but if it's... So my motion would be, if it meets our requirements and it's by an accredited institution, that we accept it.

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:31:00):

I don't know that you need to-

Dave Ittner (00:31:01):

Thank you, Dante, [inaudible 00:31:01].

Elizabeth Lagerberg (00:31:01):

I don't know that you need to vote on that. It's in your law that you have to accept the 60 semester or 90 credit quarter-hours of instruction. So it says "at a school". I think if the college is accepting the credit hours, then you don't have a choice, really. You can't say, "Well, even though you, college, accepted those credit hours, we're not going to." At least that's my thought. I don't know that you need to vote on it. I think it's outside your authority to deny those credits.

Dave Ittner (00:31:44):

Interesting. Okay. Well, I think in general, at least from the board's perspective, we seem to be all in favor of the concept, whether we have the authority or not.

Sydney Muhle (00:31:58):

I think just having the general direction and agreement of the board just kind of reaffirming that these credits are acceptable. And then we'll work with the AG's office just to double-check that all of the bases have been covered, but just really kind of needed that affirmation from the board.

Dave Ittner (00:32:18):

Great, appreciate that. And I thank you, Elizabeth, for your clarification and comments when it comes to statutory issues.

(00:32:29):

All right. Well, thank you so much. Moving forward to agenda item seven, Complaint Cases for Review, each one of these needs a motion to approve or to deny the case manager recommendation. And we'll start with item 7.1, Dante.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:32:47):

Sure. This will be case 2024-07-1764-00FDE. Summary: The complainant alleges that the respondent funeral home failed to show up with casketed remains for her sister's graveside service.

(00:33:05):

Facts: The respondent funeral home contracted with the complainant for a graveside service on May 4th at 11:00 AM. An employee for the respondent funeral home misread an email that said the service would be the 4th of May 11th AM and entered the date of service as May 11th.

(00:33:27):

An attorney for the respondent funeral home characterized the error as a simple misreading. The simple misreading resulted in the complainant conducting their ceremony without their loved one present at the time they had contracted the respondent to provide that service.

(00:33:42):

The complainant initially accepted a refund of professional service fees, but has subsequently been offered a complete refund. The complainant's sister was buried later in the day on May 4th, after the respondent funeral home had learned of their error and the attendees had left, the attendees of the service.

(00:34:00):

The respondent funeral home states that they maintain a master service schedule, but does not seem to offer a solution that would keep one employee from misreading one email creating a similar situation.

(00:34:12):

While this error does not quite rise to the level of unprofessional conduct as described in RCW 18.39.410, it does warrant a letter of education suggesting that processes be looked at that will help avoid these issues. So I'm recommending that we close this with a letter of education.

Dave Ittner (00:34:35):

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

Paul Lovgren (00:34:42):

This is Paul. I'll make that motion.

Dave Ittner (00:34:46):

Thank you, Paul. Do we have a second?

Richard Little (00:34:48):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

Dave Ittner (00:34:52):

Thank you, Rick. Is there any discussion?

Pete Cameron (00:34:58):

This is Pete. Has the letter been drafted and sent, approved?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:35:03):

I was actually going to bring that up. I opened all my emails this morning. I have several of these that are letter of education and, did I miss something or did things not get sent? Because no, the answer to your question, Pete, is, no, I have not seen the letter of education on this.

Pete Cameron (00:35:26):

Okay.

Dave Ittner (00:35:31):

Perhaps the motion would need to be amended to something similar to approving the letter or approving his recommendation on the assumption that Dante approves the content of the letter of education.

Paul Lovgren (00:35:58):

This is Paul. I'll make that motion to include that.

Dave Ittner (00:36:02):

All right, [inaudible 00:36:03].

Richard Little (00:36:04):

This is Rick. I'll go ahead and second it.

Dave Ittner (00:36:07):

Thank you, Rick. Any discussion on that piece?

(00:36:17):

I would just simply comment that I agree that the process would need to be... I mean, if we're accepting this scheduling based on an email that comes through, I think that that process needs to be fortified fairly significantly. So I would make sure that that letter of education includes that piece.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:36:41):

Amen.

Dave Ittner (00:36:47):

Any further discussion? All right. Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Pete Cameron (00:36:51):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:36:51):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:36:51):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:36:51):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:36:57):

Yep.

Dave Ittner (00:36:57):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Thank you. Moving on to agenda item 7.2, Dante again.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:37:13):

All right. This one will be case number 2024-08-2096-00FDE. The complainant alleges that respondent disinterred a deceased individual prior to obtaining a disinterment permit. Also, the complainant alleges that the respondent threatened an intern because the complainant knew about this issue. Subsequently, the complainant alleges that the bodies were stored unrefrigerated while she was employed with the funeral home the respondent manages. And finally, the complainant alleges that the respondent threatened to "bury her" and she would have a hard time continuing to work in the funeral industry.

(00:37:53):

Facts: The respondent acknowledges he and an intern disinterred an individual prior to receiving a disinterment permit. The intern made the arrangement and was unaware that the permit was required. The respondent is well aware that a permit is required, but failed to make sure one was issued due to being focused on the affidavit for correction of the decease date on the deceased's death certificate. The respondent attempted to get the permit the same day as the disinterment. The disinterment was completed, the remains of the deceased were taken to the respondent funeral home, and the permit was obtained the next day. The complainant had no involvement in this process other than to reach out to the cemetery authority after the fact and to file this complaint.

(00:38:39):

As to the intern being threatened after this incident, neither the respondent nor the intern make mention of this allegation.

(00:38:48):

As to the allegation that bodies were being stored without refrigeration, the respondent admits that COVID-19 challenged his group's refrigeration capacity and states that his group has added 25 more spaces.

(00:39:02):

And as to the allegation that the respondent threatened the complainant, there is currently a trial pending in superior court against the complainant related to her employment with the respondent funeral group.

(00:39:15):

And with all of that, we're going to go ahead and recommend, because of the disinterment prior to the permit, that there be a letter of education.

Dave Ittner (00:39:31):

Okay. Thank you, Dante. Quite a bit here. I would ask for a motion to that effect.

Pete Cameron (00:39:45):

This is Pete. I'll so move.

Dave Ittner (00:39:48):

Thank you, Pete. Is there a second?

Paul Lovgren (00:39:54):

This is Paul. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (00:39:58):

Thank you, Paul. All right, opening it up for discussion.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:40:05):

This is Dante. If you guys want to add to all these letter of education [inaudible 00:40:09] pending review of that letter, I would not mind that at all.

Dave Ittner (00:40:17):

Okay. I think... Because you haven't received-

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:40:19):

Yeah, this...

Dave Ittner (00:40:20):

... These letters.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:40:21):

Yeah, again, none of the letters...

Dave Ittner (00:40:24):

Okay.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:40:24):

Most of these are letter of education. None of those letters I've seen.

Dave Ittner (00:40:34):

All right. Is there a motion to that effect?

Pete Cameron (00:40:36):

This is Pete. I'll go ahead and amend my motion to accept based on the acceptance of what's in the letter by Dante.

Paul Lovgren (00:40:46):

This is Paul and I'll second that with that amendment.

Dave Ittner (00:40:52):

All right. Thank you, Paul. Any questions or comments on the letter of education associated with the latent permit issue? Just for clarification, Dante, the letter of education is specifically about that piece and not the other parts of this complaint?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:41:20):

I would hope that the primary focus of that letter is, yeah, the knowingly disinterring without the permit and trying to fix it the same day as opposed to just stopping the disinterment and then waiting for the fix before moving forward with the disinterment, yes.

Dave Ittner (00:41:37):

Okay. And then relative to the refrigeration, can you provide maybe some context or further detail as to what transpired there?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:41:50):

Sure. I don't know that I communicated it well necessarily in the paragraph, but basically, the allegation, I believe, has been addressed already with the 25 extra spots.

Dave Ittner (00:42:03):

Got you. All right. Any further comments or questions? All right. All in favor, say "aye".

Pete Cameron (00:42:19):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:42:19):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:42:19):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:42:27):

Any opposed?

(00:42:33):

Any abstentions?

Richard Little (00:42:34):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:42:38):

All right, it sounds like the motion passes. Thank you, Dante.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:42:45):

All right.

Dave Ittner (00:42:46):

All right, we will move on to item 7.3, Dante again.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:42:52):

Perfect. So this one will be case 2024-09-2440-00FDE. The complainant alleges that the respondent funeral home failed to honor their religious traditions by not allowing certain items to be cremated, and delaying the witness cremation by two hours while items were inventoried, and their deceased was taken out of a rental casket. The complainant also alleges that the services of the respondent funeral home were unacceptable due to a lack of communication, respect, empathy, and sensitivity.

(00:43:28):

Facts: The complainant and her cousin initially met with the respondent funeral home after the death of the complainant's father. The complainant's family requested a different arranger from the respondent funeral home and had a subsequent meeting where a chapel service followed by witness cremation were scheduled.

(00:43:46):

In their response, the respondent funeral home focused on the fact that the next of kin signed a contract stipulating a rental casket. From the response of the complainant and others present at the witnessing, it appears as if the process for a rental casket was not clearly communicated and understood. Also, the complainant states that they had requested similar services for another family member where a rental casket was not used. The respondent stated that the intern who arranged the services was not aware of that request.

(00:44:19):

In their response, the respondent also relies heavily on its policy for what and what cannot be cremated. Again, from the response of the complainant and those present at the witnessing, it appears that this was not clearly communicated at the arrangement.

(00:44:35):

While no laws were broken, it seems apparent that Respondent did not adequately communicate with or understand the traditions of the complainant's family. The respondent not only offered a casket for the cremation, but also refunded the cost of the services. Further training on best practices for serving the complainant's community and communicating expectations and policies is advised. And I would put that advice in a letter of education. That is my recommendation.

Dave Ittner (00:45:07):

All right, thank you so much. And I would look for a motion to approve the recommendation and also Dante reviewing the letter of education prior to sending it out.

Paul Lovgren (00:45:24):

This is Paul. I'll make that motion.

Dave Ittner (00:45:27):

Thank you, Paul.

Richard Little (00:45:29):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

Dave Ittner (00:45:32):

Thank you, Rick. Any discussion or questions? All right. Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Pete Cameron (00:45:43):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:45:43):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:45:43):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:45:43):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:45:49):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Thank you so much. Moving on to agenda item 7.4, Dante.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:46:02):

Sure. This one's 2024-11-3185-00FDE. Summary: The complainant, daughter to the deceased, alleges that the respondent failed to file the death certificate for her father within the allotted five days.

(00:46:20):

Facts: The deceased died on September 28, 2024. The respondent created the record and assigned it to the deceased's primary physician on September 30th, 2024. The primary physician did not sign, and the respondent repeatedly contacted their office until October 16th, 2024. On October 16th, the respondent contacted both the medical examiner's office and the decedent's wife, and was able to get another doctor to whom she could assign the death certificate.

(00:46:54):

The cremation took place on October 17th, 2024. Cremated remains were mailed and received on October 23rd, 2024. The respondent refunded the deceased's spouse the costs for the arrangements.

(00:47:08):

While the respondent cannot force medical providers to sign death certificates, she could have contacted the medical investigator's office as well as the deceased's wife in a more timely manner. And again, I would advise that in a letter of education. That is my recommendation.

Dave Ittner (00:47:24):

All right. Thank you, Dante. I would look for a motion to accept that recommendation pursuant to Dante reviewing the letter of education.

Pete Cameron (00:47:45):

This is Pete. So move.

Dave Ittner (00:47:54):

Thank you, Pete. Do we have a second?

Paul Lovgren (00:47:55):

This is Paul. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (00:47:58):

Thank you, Paul. Any discussion? Questions?

Pete Cameron (00:48:07):

Well, this is Pete. I would just make the point that this has been a bone of contention for funeral directors forever. We're required to get a death certificate filed, but we can't force medical officers to do anything. So it's a common problem.

Dave Ittner (00:48:27):

Yep. All right. Thank you. Looking forward to the vote, all in favor, say "aye".

Richard Little (00:48:37):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:48:37):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:48:37):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:48:41):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:48:43):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes. Thank you so much. Moving on to agenda item 7.5, Dante.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:48:57):

Sure. This one will be case number 2024-12-3700-00FDE. Summary: The complainant alleges that the respondent funeral home did not provide adequate staff for the transfer of her mother's remains from her residence.

(00:49:15):

Facts: Death occurred on December 24th, 2024, Christmas Eve, and the funeral home was contacted at 7:07 AM by hospice. The respondent funeral home arrived at the residence at 12:30 with one transfer associate. The transfer associate was unable to transfer the deceased onto the cot and into the van without the assistance of the complainant and her sister.

(00:49:40):

The manager for the respondent funeral home responded that the transfer associate was responsible for dispatching himself alone and maintaining the transfer equipment. No mention was made of training with the transfer equipment.

(00:49:55):

The deceased was not placed into refrigeration until six hours after the transfer. The transfer associate stated that this was because he had to deliver other deceased he had in his vehicle to another facility prior to taking the complainant's mother to the facility they were using.

(00:50:12):

The manager for the respondent funeral home stated that it was their policy to send two transfer associates to a residential death call, but she was unclear if this was written policy.

(00:50:25):

So, policy should be unambiguous and employees should be supervised and trained. So putting that all into a letter of education so that the onus is more on management rather than an individual out there in the field is which way I'm heading.

Dave Ittner (00:50:45):

Okay. Thank you, Dante. Looking for a motion to accept that recommendation, again, pursuant to Dante reviewing the letter of education.

Paul Lovgren (00:50:59):

This is Paul. I'll make that motion.

Dave Ittner (00:51:02):

Thank you, Paul.

Pete Cameron (00:51:06):

This is Pete. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (00:51:10):

Thank you, Pete. Any discussions or questions on this case?

Pete Cameron (00:51:18):

This is Pete. I just have one. I was a little confused. Was the transfer associate an employee of the respondent or was this a third party transfer service?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:51:29):

Yes. It was an employee. So basically, and you can double check me on this one, I don't know if it was Riley or Pam, but it seemed like they were kind of trying to put the blame on the employee rather than themselves as the organization for the training and the management of that employee. I understand it was Christmas Eve.

Pete Cameron (00:51:52):

Okay.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:51:52):

I understand things get hard and you try to do things, but, again, the, "Well, he did it on his own," well, you're responsible for him.

Pete Cameron (00:52:04):

Right. Okay, thanks for clarifying that.

Dave Ittner (00:52:11):

Any further questions or comments?

(00:52:18):

All right, hearing none, all in favor of the recommendation, say "aye".

Richard Little (00:52:24):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (00:52:24):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:52:24):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:52:24):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:52:30):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Thank you. All right, one more from Dante, agenda item 7.6.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:52:42):

All right. So this one's case 2025-02-0443-00FDE. The summary: Complainant alleges the respondent violated at least one law by requiring an additional urn to be purchased, misrepresenting the activities performed at the location, and delaying cremation by 19 days.

(00:53:10):

So the facts: The complainant's mother died on December 14th, 2024. As part of a member association, the complainant was offered a list of cremation providers to choose from. He chose the respondent based on their address. At the time of the transfer, the complainant was informed that the location he chose was strictly an arrangement facility and that his mother was being transferred to another location for sheltering and cremation. The complainant did not choose a different provider at that time.

(00:53:41):

As to the respondent requiring an additional urn, the contract indicates \$50 for a minimum temporary urn and \$40 for a basic cremation container. It appears as if the complainant does not understand the difference and the requirement. It also appears that the respondent could have communicated that better.

(00:54:02):

As to the cremation being delayed 19 days, the respondent states that they tell their customers that cremation will be completed 10 to 15 days after payment. Because the respondent offered to make arrangements at a location separate from the one chosen by the complainant and the complainant was not able or willing to go to that location, electronic arrangements were made, and the complainant paid on December 20th, 2024. The complainant's mother was cremated on January 3rd, 2025, 14 days after that payment.

(00:54:39):

The complainant alleges that he was told that part of the delay was due to Vital Records being closed for the holidays. Vital Records was only closed for two days, Christmas and New Year's. The death certificate was signed on December 20th, '24 and was filed on December 31st, 2024.

(00:54:58):

After cremation was complete, the complainant made an appointment to receive his mother's cremated remains at the location initially chosen because of their address. He stated that the office space for this location is not what is pictured in the respondent's advertisement. It is not. It is a suite used for the purpose of releasing cremated remains. The respondent did not have cremated remains for the complainant on the day scheduled. The respondent delivered the cremated remains to the complainant's home on a Saturday, because they didn't have the cremains there. The complainant asked for and received a discount for services.

(00:55:39):

No laws appear to be broken, but the complainant's expectations and the respondent's service delivery could have been better addressed. So on this one, I'm going to recommend a letter of education specifically for miscommunicating reasons for the delay in getting a burial transit permit and also for using a photo of one location while advertising another.

Dave Ittner (00:56:06):

All right. Thank you, Dante. I'll be looking for a motion to approve the recommendation with review of the letter of education.

Pete Cameron (00:56:21):

This is Pete. I'll so move.

Dave Ittner (00:56:23):

Thank you, Pete. Is there a second?

Richard Little (00:56:28):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

Dave Ittner (00:56:32):

Thank you, Rick. Any discussion? All right. Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Paul Lovgren (00:56:40):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (00:56:40):

Aye.

Angela Ward (00:56:40):

Aye.

Richard Little (00:56:40):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (00:56:46):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right. Thank you. Dante, you get a little bit of a break here.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (00:56:56):

Thank you all.

Dave Ittner (00:56:57):

Moving on to agenda item 7.7, Rick.

Richard Little (00:56:58):

Okay. This is case number 2024-07-1677-00CEM. The complainant reported that a burial took place without the death certificate being filed or the burial transit permit issued for the disposition.

(00:57:19):

The facts are: A social worker reached out to the funeral home in question to ask what a family needed to do after an infant's death. The funeral director stated that the family could act as the funeral director, provide shelter, and transport the deceased to the cemetery, as long as they had all the paperwork together, and that the funeral home would help them with no charge.

(00:57:45):

A newborn died at two days old. The doctor started the death certificate through WHALES and added the funeral home in question without any contact. Once the funeral home saw that they were the designated funeral home, they reached out to the hospital to get any information so they could make contact with the family.

(00:58:04):

The funeral home was not successful in contacting the family. The family did call back the funeral home to let them know that they were on their way to the cemetery and needed a death certificate. The funeral director explained that they needed a permit so that they can bury their infant and that they could not bury without the proper paperwork. The family called back an hour later and told the funeral home that they were not involved and that they were taking care of the documents by hand. The funeral director called the vital records to let them know of the issue, but did not reach out to the cemetery.

(00:58:48):

The family, who was familiar with the staff at the cemetery, delivered their infant for the ceremony and the burial. The cemetery officials did not ask for a permit. Once the mistake was realized, the family reached out to another funeral home, who then took care of the death certificate and permit, dated 10 days after the burial. The funeral home in question never had any custody of the infant's remains. Even though the funeral home did not reach out to the cemetery, the cemetery should not have done the burial without the permit.

(00:59:20):

I recommend that this case be closed with a letter of education to the cemetery that they should not accept a decedent for burial without the burial permit itself.

Dave Ittner (00:59:36):

All right. Thank you, Rick. I would look-

Richard Little (00:59:37):

And I have not received a letter yet.

Dave Ittner (00:59:44):

Okay. So we would look for a motion to approve the recommendation, again, subsequent to Rick being able to review the letter of education.

Paul Lovgren (00:59:57):

This is Paul. I'll make that motion.

Dave Ittner (01:00:05):

Thank you, Paul.

Pete Cameron (01:00:06):

This is Pete. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (01:00:08):

Thank you, Pete. All right, discussion or comments?

Pete Cameron (01:00:17):

This is Pete. Has this cemetery had any other previous violations or anything like this before, or history of doing this prior to this one?

Richard Little (01:00:30):

I'm not familiar with any of that. I don't know if Pam knows.

Pam Griese (01:00:37):

This is Pam. I don't think this cemetery's had any issues previous to this.

Rylee Melot (01:00:43):

They have not had any issues prior to this, sorry, this is Riley, and none since this complaint was received.

Pete Cameron (01:00:52):

Okay, thanks.

Dave Ittner (01:00:57):

For clarification, Rick, the respondent is the cemetery or the funeral home in this particular complaint?

Richard Little (01:01:11):

It's actually the funeral home itself. The cemetery, excuse me.

Dave Ittner (01:01:17):

Okay. Oh, it's the cemetery. Okay.

Richard Little (01:01:17):

Yeah.

Dave Ittner (01:01:21):

Okay.

Richard Little (01:01:22):

Sorry about that.

Dave Ittner (01:01:24):

Yep. All right. Any further questions? All right. All in favor of the recommendations, say "aye".

Paul Lovgren (01:01:37):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:01:37):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:01:37):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:01:37):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:01:41):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Moving on to item 7.8, Paul.

Paul Lovgren (01:01:56):

This complaint alleges that the respondent funeral home failed to disclose additional charges to receive cremated remains, it should say on a weekend. Additionally, the complaint alleges that the viewing room was too warm and the decedent's body had condensation, which they described as sweat, of embalming fluid during viewing.

(01:02:13):

Facts of the case: During the investigation, it was confirmed that the decedent was not embalmed. There was condensation as seen in a photo due to the heat generated by two crematories down the hall from the viewing room.

(01:02:28):

The complaint stated that the date the remains would be picked up, the funeral director was not in the office or near a calendar and did not realize that the date given was a weekend. Because of that, there was no discussion regarding the additional fees for

weekend calls. The complainant ultimately did not receive the remains that day and had another family member pick them up later that week.

(01:02:49):

My recommendation for this is a letter of education to make sure that these folks know their days and schedule when they're going to have folks come to pick up. Because if we don't, then we don't have the discussions about those other charges. This is an opportunity to help them. That's my take on it.

Dave Ittner (01:03:16):

All right. Thank you, Paul. And, Paul, have you reviewed the letter of education?

Paul Lovgren (01:03:25):

I have not received a letter of education.

Dave Ittner (01:03:28):

Okay. All right, so we would be entertaining a motion to approve the recommendation based on Paul's report, but subsequent to his approval of the letter of education.

Richard Little (01:03:45):

This is Rick. So move.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:03:50):

This is Dante. I'll go ahead and second that motion.

Dave Ittner (01:03:52):

All right, thank you. Any discussion, questions, or comments? All right, hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:04:08):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:04:09):

Aye.

Richard Little (01:04:09):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:04:09):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:04:14):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion passes. Moving on to agenda item 7.9, Paul again.

Paul Lovgren (01:04:28):

Case number 2024-12-3542-00FDE. The complainant alleges that the contracted transport company had acquired business by passing itself off as the contracting funeral home in their advertisements and while staff were performing their official duties.

(01:04:48):

The investigation found out this was all due to a Google search. The respondent contracts with Google directly to advertise the business and bids on sponsored advertising space. This bidding on sponsored space results in prioritizing of the web page associated and appear as sponsored ads in the Google searches. The Google algorithm is responsible for determining which results appear and in what order. This is not a direct action taken by the transport company.

(01:05:17):

I recommend that we close this with no further action. Simply stated, it was a Google search, and the ad came up first, and that's what the complainant clicked on.

Dave Ittner (01:05:31):

All right, thank you. I'll be looking for a motion to approve the recommendation upon review of the letter of education. I'm sorry, there is no letter of education. Move to close this without no further action.

Pete Cameron (01:05:51):

This is Pete. So move.

Dave Ittner (01:05:55):

Thank you, Pete.

Richard Little (01:06:00):

This is Rick. I'll second it.

Dave Ittner (01:06:06):

Thank you, Rick. We have a first and a second. Any discussion?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:06:09):

So this is Dante. I think I got this from what you said, Paul. The people Googled "funeral home" or "crematory" or whatever they were alleging these people advertised themselves as, and then these people came up because they had paid to be prioritized as an ad.

Paul Lovgren (01:06:25):

Well, what happens with the Google search, the complainant, who owns a funeral service, typed in his funeral service name, okay, and the other place came up as a sponsored place. Now, if you search something on Google, Google remembers all that

information and it plugs that stuff into its algorithm, so you get, what's the word I'm looking for, familiar results and then sponsored results as well.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:07:00):

Yeah.

(01:07:06):

I'm fine with that. All right.

Dave Ittner (01:07:10):

Any further questions? All right. Hearing none, all in favor, say "aye".

Richard Little (01:07:19):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:07:19):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:07:19):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:07:19):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:07:23):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, the motion carries. Okay, we are on agenda item 7.10, Paul.

Paul Lovgren (01:07:42):

Case number 2025-01-0344-00FDE. The complaint summary says the next of kin and other family members from out of state were upset that estranged family members held a public memorial service for the deceased at a funeral home in Washington State without notifying the next of kin that it was occurring.

(01:08:05):

Facts: There are no known requirements in the RCW or the WAC for this type of notification. There was no financial burden placed on the next of kin regarding this memorial service. The Washington State funeral home was contracted by family members that were excluded from the next-of-kin arrangements. Final disposition arrangements were arranged and conducted by the next of kin and their contracted non-Washington State funeral home.

(01:08:30):

I recommend we close this with no further action. This was just a case of family members who didn't get to go to the service having their own service.

Dave Ittner (01:08:42):

All right, thank you so much. Is there a motion to that effect?

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:08:49):

This is Dante. I'll move.

Dave Ittner (01:08:57):

Do we have a second?

Pete Cameron (01:09:00):

This is Pete. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (01:09:04):

Thank you, Pete. All right, any discussion? All in favor of the motion, say "aye".

Richard Little (01:09:13):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:09:13):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:09:13):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:09:13):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:09:18):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? The motion carries. Moving on to item 7.11, Rick.

Richard Little (01:09:32):

Okay. This is case number 2023-12-2705-00FDE. The complainant states that the funeral home failed to cremate the complainant's father in a reasonable amount of time. There was also a lack communication as to where the complainant's father's remains were being held. The funeral home also failed to dress and take fingerprints of the decedent.

(01:10:01):

The facts: From the date of the death to the cremation was 10 days. The crematory cremated the decedent the day after the funeral home stated that the cremation would be done. Prints were taken electronically and was sent by email to the person who had the right to control disposition, which was not the complainant. As far as the dressing of the decedent, the staff member did not particularly remember dressing this decedent since they dressed so many.

(01:10:33):

All of this is due to an unfortunate lack of communication with the complainant's family. There was no violations in this complaint. I recommend this to be closed with no further action.

Dave Ittner (01:10:50):

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

Pete Cameron (01:10:57):

This is Pete. So move.

Dave Ittner (01:10:59):

Thank you, Pete.

Paul Lovgren (01:11:02):

This is Paul. I'll second.

Dave Ittner (01:11:05):

Thank you, Paul. Any discussion or comments?

(01:11:19):

Just to verify, Rick, the complainant in this case was not the person with the right to control disposition?

Richard Little (01:11:26):

No, it was not.

Dave Ittner (01:11:38):

Okay.

(01:11:38):

All right. No further discussion, all in favor of the recommendation to close, say "aye".

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:11:45):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (01:11:45):

Aye.

Pete Cameron (01:11:45):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:11:45):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:11:51):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? All right, motion carries. Agenda item 7.12, Pete.

Pete Cameron (01:12:07):

This is case number 2020-03-0166-00FDE. The board received an anonymous complaint alleging unlicensed practice being conducted by the respondent.

(01:12:22):

During the course of the investigation, it was verified that the respondent does not hold an active funeral establishment license and has had the previously held license revoked.

(01:12:31):

Since action has been taken on the more recent complaints and the establishment has had the establishment license revoked, I'm recommending that this case be closed with no further action. Basically, there is no establishment that the board still has jurisdiction over.

Dave Ittner (01:12:51):

All right. Thank you, Pete. Do we have a motion?

Richard Little (01:12:58):

This is Rick. So move.

Dave Ittner (01:13:03):

Thank you, Rick.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:13:04):

This is Dante. I'll go ahead and second it.

Dave Ittner (01:13:07):

Thank you, Dante. Any discussion?

(01:13:10):

All right, hearing none, all in favor of the recommendation, say "aye".

Richard Little (01:13:20):

Aye.

Paul Lovgren (01:13:21):

Aye.

Angela Ward (01:13:21):

Aye.

Dante Gutierrez–Zamora (01:13:21):

Aye.

Dave Ittner (01:13:26):

Any opposed? Any abstentions? The motion passes. All right. Moving on to section eight, Reports, item 8.1a, Pet Cemetery Review Committee Report. I'll turn it over to Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:13:46):

All right, thank you very much. This will be a very brief update. We really don't have any updates at this point. As the board will remember, late last year we had received a quick update on the language that had been proposed regarding the pet cemeteries, and there had been some concerns raised both through Representative Orwall's office as well as by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. We have not had any contact regarding this topic since then, but we know that Representative Orwall was quite busy throughout the legislative session, which has just recently adjourned within the last several weeks. So I imagine we will hear something over the summer, but there's nothing new to report at this point.

Dave Ittner (01:14:43):

All right. Thank you, Sydney. Appreciate the continued work in the background there with DAHP and DOL. All right, moving on to 8.1b, Disposition Facility Equipment. The committee will provide an update. I was not able to be in attendance, but Vice Chair Gutierrez-Zamora and Board Member Cameron?

(01:15:19):

Any...

Pete Cameron (01:15:22):

Well, this is Pete. Just a quick update, we did have our first meeting, and we agreed that we needed to gather some more information and bring in some more expert opinions from the board inspectors. And we have a second meeting scheduled. I think it's June 10th, if I've got it written down right. So we'll be meeting again and proceeding.

Dave Ittner (01:15:51):

All right. Thank you, Pete. We will move on to item 8.2, Staff Reports, Sydney.

Sydney Muhle (01:16:04):

All right. So we will start off with our complaint status report. This is current as of May 9th. Right now, we have two cases that are still in complaint intake, five that are in investigation, one that is in a legal review, 32 that are in a management review, 12 of which we cleared today, 34 cases that have been closed, for a grand total of 74 cases. Are there any questions on the complete status report?

(01:16:39):

Okay, then we can move on to the licensee count report.

Dave Ittner (01:16:44):

[inaudible 01:16:45].

Sydney Muhle (01:16:45):

As the board will remember, we are going to be doing the deep dive on the statistics from the quarterly basis to an annual basis so that we can get a bigger idea of the trends over the course of the year. But it was included in the packet for the board, so were there any questions on that?

Dave Ittner (01:17:10):

No, thank you.

Sydney Muhle (01:17:12):

Okay. Then with our legislative update, very, very quick one. As the board will recall, at the last meeting, we had three potential pieces of legislation that had been introduced impacting this program. One of them, our move for consolidating the Funeral and Cemetery Program account to the Business and Professions account, our O6L [inaudible 01:17:44] account, that was signed by the governor on Monday, May 12th. That has moved forward and that will be effective as of January 1 of 2026.

(01:18:00):

Then we had two other pieces of legislation that were introduced. One discussed pre-arranged funeral services, and the other one was for family burial grounds. Neither of those bills passed. Were there any questions on the legislative update?

(01:18:15):

Okay, then I will.

Dave Ittner (01:18:22):

[inaudible 01:18:22].

Sydney Muhle (01:18:22):

turn it over to Alyssa to review the action item list for you.

Alyssa Woods (01:18:29):

So on May 2nd of 2022, the Licensing Future Task Force Committee report and recommendation was added to the action item list, and this is still in progress.

(01:18:41):

November 30th of 2023, the Pet Cemetery Review Committee, this is still in progress. And Sydney had actually commented on this earlier, so there's nothing currently, but we'll update as we have more information.

(01:18:58):

November 20th of 2024, staff will provide draft WAC language update to the board for approval at the next meeting. This is still in progress. And then staff will schedule a disposition facility equipment subcommittee meeting with a report out at the next meeting. That has been complete. Board staff will work with Board Member Cameron as the voting delegate for the ICFSEB annual conference, and that is complete. Assign public comments regarding licensee counts to the Licensing Future Task force, that is complete. Ms. Muhle to schedule a meeting with the chair and vice chair to prepare the priorities and goals discussion for the next meeting, that has been completed. And then we had moved some cases from the last meeting to this meeting, so those are now complete.

Angela Ward (01:19:50):

And I believe that that is it.

Dave Ittner (01:19:51):

All right, thank you.

Angela Ward (01:19:53):

Yep.

Dave Ittner (01:19:55):

Thank you, Alyssa. All right, we will now move to the public comment section of the meeting. 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. 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.

(01:20:36):

All right, looks like we have one hand up here, Casey.

Casey Huston (01:20:42):

Thank you, Board. I have a question following up the 6.2 conversation around the Licensing Future Task Force discussion addressing the shortfall of licensed funeral directors in lieu of the rising death rate we're observing in our state. My question is couched under my understanding that one of the primary functions of this body is to be reviewing complaints from the general public and policing actors in the funeral home and cemetery sectors.

(01:21:17):

My question, in response to something that was raised by this board, was, why not pursue a path of abolishing all education requirements for funeral director licensure? To help balance this, I know this board could increase its policing of bad actors, could make more use of publicly denouncing individual actors, or even do things like levy fees

based on reports from bad actors. I feel like I've heard in just this session alone this board administering a lot of letters of education to people that were reported to this board. Does this board have the ability to strip individual actors of their license? Does this board have the ability to administer warnings, which may tally up but then lead to later licensure strippings? And does this board have the ability to administer fines to individual actors? Thank you. I'll yield my time.

Dave Ittner (01:22:20):

All right, thank you. With that, I guess there are some items in there that we would, perhaps, be able to discuss in the Licensing Future Task Force Committee, so perhaps I would maybe look to Sydney to add that to our next discussion.

Sydney Muhle (01:22:40):

Yes, and I would also be happy to have a phone conversation with Mr. Huston and address some of his other concerns as well if the board would like.

Dave Ittner (01:22:49):

I think that would be appropriate.

Sydney Muhle (01:22:54):

Okay.

Dave Ittner (01:22:54):

All right. I don't see any other hands up. Are there any other comments? All right. Appears to be none. We'll move on to agenda item 10, the Conclusion, item 10.1, Announcements. Do any board members have any announcements or additional reports that they would like to make at this time?

Pete Cameron (01:23:26):

This is Pete. It's not really an announcement, but just kind of a generalized question since it was brought up at the beginning of the meeting. Could we get a quick update on addressing the vacancies on the board? Everybody knows we're running a little bit short, but are there any applicants in the process or status of going through getting approval? Can you just update us on that real quick?

Sydney Muhle (01:23:54):

Yeah, so we can't talk about it too much because this isn't an agenda item, but I can let the board know that we are still struggling to get applicants and we are still working with the governor's office on getting appointments made timely. So we're continuing to work on it, but if anybody out there would like to apply or if any of you know particularly of a cemeterian who, that's the position that we are down right now, would be interested in applying, we could certainly use the applicants.

Dave Ittner (01:24:31):

I would concur. All right. Thank you, Pete. Moving on to agenda item 10.2, Requests for Future Agenda Items. Are there any additional future agenda items that have not yet been discussed that any board members would like to request for the next meeting?

(01:24:50):

All right, hearing none, we'll move on to item 10.3, Review of Action Items and Items for the Next Meeting. Alyssa, will you please review the action items list?

Alyssa Woods (01:25:11):

Yes. So I have, from item 5.2, we said that Dave Ittner and Rick Little will serve on the rulemaking committee. So I will schedule some meetings for all of us, and including Pam and Riley. And then, also, the task force will continue to meet to determine alternative pathways to licensure. And then I did also hear that in, I think item 5.3, during goals and priorities, that the Disposition Facility Equipment Committee would continue to meet. And then, let's see, Sydney will address the public comment and, I guess, bring conversation to the Licensing Future Task Force if necessary. And then, I guess I'm wondering, would you all like a recruitment update added to our next agenda, just so that's something that we can consistently keep you updated on?

Dave Ittner (01:26:21):

I don't see the harm in that. I think that would be ideal.

Alyssa Woods (01:26:27):

Okay. Otherwise, I think that's all I have. And if I've missed anything, please let me know.

Dave Ittner (01:26:36):

Thank you, Alyssa. All right, that leads us to agenda item number 11, Adjournment. The time is now 11:26 AM, and this meeting is officially adjourned. Thank you so much for attending, appreciate everyone's time and effort, and have a great day.

Speaker X (01:26:56):

Okay, you as well. Thank you.

(01:26:59):

Thank you.

(01:26:59):

Bye.