

**COMMISSION ON MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS MEETING MINUTES**  
January 24, 2025

The meeting of the Commission on Medicolegal Investigations was held at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) in Farmington, CT on Friday, January 24, 2025.

**Present:**

Todd D. Fernow, J.D. Chairman (Present)  
John H. Sinard, M.D., Vice Chairman (Remotely)  
Sidney M. Hopfer, Ph.D. Secretary (Present)  
Michael Krinsky, M.D (Remotely)  
Jennifer Bourn, J.D. (Present)  
Beth Frugale, DPH (Present)  
Susan Keane Baker, M.H.A. (Remotely)  
Celia Pinzi (Remotely)

**Also Present:**

James R. Gill, M.D., Chief Medical Examiner  
Maura E. DeJoseph, D.O., Deputy Chief Medical Examiner  
Lincoln Dwayne Gordon, OCME Administrator  
Holly Cuomo, OCME Executive Secretary

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Chairman Fernow called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

The minutes from the November 8, 2024 meeting were adopted without corrections.

Dr. Gill provided an update on the discussions taking place for the new building project, as well as the inadequacies of the current facility and equipment.

**Medical Examiner Summary:**

Dr. Gill provided the Chief Medical Examiner report to the COMLI.

**Office Announcements:**

The Medical Record department has worked, in collaboration with the State Library, to develop a digitalized record retention system. The digitalization process includes a multi-layered audit of our electronic records prior to paper record destruction. The process will eliminate the need to store case records in boxes and will improve our efficiency.

**Autopsy Workload and Turnaround Times:** In 2024, OCME completed 2,653 autopsies, which is a slight decrease from the 2,787 autopsies completed in 2023. The number of homicide cases decreased from 155 in 2023 to 101 in 2024. We anticipate that all full-time medical examiners will perform fewer than 250 full

autopsies this year with the assistance of the per diem staff. The case completion turn around was just under 90% within 60-days and over 90% in 90-days with a few cases pending for 2024.

**Scene Investigations:** Investigator scene presence was 97% and 99% for November and December respectively.

**Storage at Facility:** There are currently 82 bodies stored at OCME, including 25 remains that have been onsite for over 30 days. The average number of bodies that we have at the facility each month has been added to the summary sheet.

**Fellowship:** Fellowship Program has one current fellow, and one fellow for FY26 (July 2025). Fellowship candidate interviews for FY27 (July 2026) are being scheduled.

**EDRS Integration Updates:** Diligently working to finalize the testing of different scenarios and making the necessary adjustments. We will move to production once we ensure that OCME and EDRS systems are integrated and communicating to accurately capture the data.

#### **Fiscal Summary:**

Lincoln Dwayne Gordon provided the fiscal update for the office.

**Agency Staffing:** The January organizational chart was provided. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 60 full-time and 19 part-time positions are filled. Recruitment efforts are being conducted for full and part-time investigators and lab assistants.

#### **Fiscal:**

Expenditures and Grants: There is a projected deficit of \$165,000 for personnel services currently. Changes have been made to staffing to offset the projected deficit, i.e. funeral homes are not able to pick up a body after 8:00 pm. This change will reduce the number of staff needed on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift.

A \$2,500 grant was awarded to OCME but has yet to be posted. This money will assist with the projected deficit.

Lepow Fund: The fund is used for education purposes only.

ARPA: The ARPA money has been fully utilized and expired at the end of 2024.

Revenue: A summary of revenue streams was reviewed. OCME is projecting revenue to be between \$3.3 and \$3.4 million by the end of the fiscal year. The projected revenue fluctuates based on cremation and medical record fees. All revenue goes directly to the State General Fund.

The FY2025 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter cremation reconciliation process has been completed, and everything is accounted for.

Account Receivables: The outstanding account receivable balances continue to decrease with the increased use of the electronic payments through EDRS. There is a push for PCP training of the EDRS system, which will decrease the number of paper death certificates and in turn decrease the outstanding accounts.

Information Technology Server Project: The upgrade of our IT Server room has been started. The project will be executed in multiple stages, the first being the cabling. UCONN Health has given us a switch that they no longer need. This is saving us approximately \$100,000; however, the switch needs to be on a racking system and the current server room will need to be upgraded to fit the equipment. The estimated cost will be around \$150,000 of our money. 4-refreshed servers are being sought using the Department of Public Health CDC-SUDOR's grant. This is a necessary upgrade as we've met the maximum data capacity with our current system.

#### **Old Business:**

**NAME Annual Report Feedback:** The Commission had a chance to review the annual report presented at the November 2024 meeting. There were no additional follow-up questions.

**Jurisdiction:** Chairman Fernow spoke with Assistant Attorney General Elizabeth Bannon about OCME jurisdiction and authority to go into a private area to pick up a decedent and investigate if there's suspicion. AAG Bannon will review the statutes. If the need arises, a discussion with the Chief's State's Attorney will be sought.

**COMLI Officers:** One Law Professor appointee position remains vacant.

**Election of Officers:** Election of Officers remains a standard agenda item. As previously determined, members will stay in their current positions until they no longer wish to, or somebody else wishes to have an election, in which case an election will occur as soon as possible.

#### **New Business:**

**Letter to Legislation:** The Commission discussed writing a letter to the Legislation to show their support for a new facility based on the condition and age of the current facility and equipment.

**Commissioner Picture:** Chairman Fernow's picture has been added to the wall gallery.



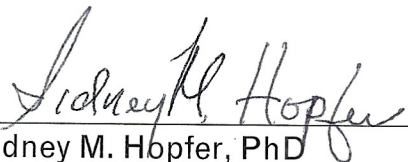
**New Drug Detection:** A member noted that New York and other large cities report seeing a new designer drug call “pink cocaine” and inquired if we have seen any recent cases. The toxicology testing we perform will identify each individual drug present in the body despite what the new drug combinations are being marketed and labeled on the streets.

**Executive Session:** An Executive Session was not needed.

**Next Meeting:** The next COMLI meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2025. This is the annual open meeting, and constituents will be sent invitations if they wish to attend.

**Adjournment:**

There were no other matters to address. Followed by a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:49 pm.

  
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Sidney M. Hopfer, PhD  
Secretary