

# COMMISSION ON MEDICOLEGAL INVESTIGATIONS MEETING MINUTES

September 26, 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, September 26, 2025.

## **Present:**

Todd D. Fernow, J.D. Chairman (Present)  
John H. Sinard, M.D., Vice Chairman (Remotely)  
Sidney M. Hopfer, Ph.D. Secretary (Present)  
Jennifer Bourn, J.D. (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

## **Absent:**

Michael Krinsky, M.D.  
Elizabeth Frugale, DPH

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Chairman Fernow called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

The minutes from the June 6, 2025 meeting were adopted without corrections.

## **Medical Examiner Summary:**

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

## **Office Announcements:**

1. The Office is exploring different options for microbiology testing.
2. The OSHA's findings report was reviewed, and the Office received 20 citations; 16 of which have been resolved and the remaining 4 will be resolved by the date assigned by OSHA. Due to the findings, the Office was fined \$1,000.
3. The Office is exploring a collaboration with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for a Social Work Intern, who will be outposted at OCME. The purpose is to provide support to the families we serve who have lost someone due to an overdose.

## **Autopsy Workload and Turnaround Times:**

The number of autopsies for 2025 is estimated to be about 2,600, noting this is similar with the number of autopsies completed in 2024.

The case completion data for 2025 was reviewed. As of June, greater than 96% of cases were completed within 90 days, and 97% within 60 days.

**Scene Investigations:** Investigator scene presence was 99%, 99% and 98% for June, July, and August, respectively.

**Storage at Facility:** There is an average between 70 and 80 bodies stored at OCME a day. These numbers can vary drastically during a given month.

**Fellowship:** We have one Fellow who started in July 2025, and two Fellows starting in July 2026.

**Facility Update:** In June, DAS presented a revised study option which included the renovation of the current facility as well as an additional adjoining Medical Examiner Facility behind the current building. DAS is pursuing an additional bond allocation to commence the design phase.

**EDRS Integration Updates:** No additional updates were provided.

**Fiscal Summary:**

Lincoln Dwayne Gordon provided the fiscal update for the office.

**Agency Staffing:** The September organizational chart was provided. As of September 1st, 59 full-time and 22 part-time positions are filled. HR continues their recruitment efforts to fill the vacant positions.

**Fiscal:**

**Expenditures and Grants:** With only being a few months into the fiscal year, we cannot project any deficits. The personnel services line will be monitored closely as there are premium holidays, staff time off and OT shift coverage in the next few months that will have an impact on the budget.

OPM granted \$252,000 to be carried forward from last fiscal year's OE budget (other expenses). The funding will be used to secure goods and service purchase orders into the new fiscal year.

The DPH Overdose to Action is a State Federal receivable. The \$265,365 budget will be primary used for the reimbursement of toxicology testing.

**Fellowship Grants:** The Fellowship grant approval for the 2027 Fellowship is expected to be determined in early January 2026.

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

**Revenue:** A summary of revenue streams was reviewed. Projected revenue fluctuates based on cremation and medical record fees. All revenue goes directly to the State General Fund.

Account Receivables: Outstanding account receivable balances continue to decrease with the increased use of the electronic payments through EDRS.

**Old Business:**

**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:**

**CHRO – Affirmative Action Plan:** The Affirmative Action Plan was submitted in June. The Office is now required to submit the plan annually. Monthly meetings are being held to assist with developing a better plan which reflects efforts of the Office to recruit and hire diversely and that the hiring goals of a diverse workplace are met. Agency policies and staff training courses are being reviewed and updated to ensure compliance.

**Legislative Agenda:** Legislative statute change agenda items are due in October. No statutory changes noted.

**The Connecticut Network (CT-N):** CT-N contacted the Office to inquire about COMLI meetings and the possibility of televising a meeting. It was determined that their inquiry seemed to be based on their search of the Connecticut State Agency Public Meeting calendar, not necessarily based on the work of the Office. Chairman Fernow informed the Commission that CT-N withdrew their request prior to the meeting.

**Crime Lab DNA Testing:** The Crime Lab is seeking to build a DNA database to assist with solving cold cases. They are pursuing the possibility of including DNA collected from decedents during autopsies. There are statutes that prohibit the Office from collecting DNA for purposes unrelated to either criminal investigations, decedent identification, or to determine the of cause of death. After considerable discussion of the concerns for the legal and ethical position of the Office, it was determined that collecting DNA for testing would be inappropriate.

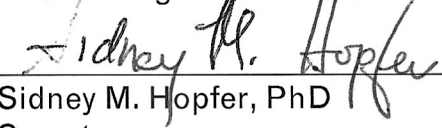
**Executive Session:**

An Executive Session was not needed.

**Next Meeting:** The next COMLI meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2025.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

  
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Sidney M. Hopfer, PhD  
Secretary