

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Vermont Board of Funeral Service
National Life Building North Fl 2,
Montpelier, VT 05620-3402

December 6, 2010
11:00AM – Board Meeting

Board Members present: John Coffin, Chairman, Lyndon Mann, Robert Covey, Ercel Harvey, Peter Beck and Larry Giles. Staff Attending: Dan Vincent, OPR Inspector and Christopher Winters, Executive Director. Visitors: James Johnston

1. Meeting called to order at 11:00AM by Chairman Mann.
Director Chris Winters attended the meeting to discuss the proposed fee increases that had been tabled from the last meeting pending more information. Board members discussed many alternatives to a fee increase, including: halting or decreasing the frequency of inspections, outsourcing inspections, charging licensees for the cost of prosecutions, reducing frequency of board meetings, calling on legal counsel less often, and reducing unprofessional conduct complaints.

Director Winters explained that this year's proposed budget is larger for one year only due to a large number of cases filed (18) which is unusually high. On a four year average, the board's annual budget is about \$46,000.00. This includes inspections (approx. \$24,000.00) and board member direct expenses such as mileage, per diem, and mailings (approx. \$4,000.00).

This leaves approximately \$19,000.00 as the Board's share of allocated expenses for OPR, including their portion of shared legal counsel, administrative services, personnel, budgeting, licensing staff, administrative staff, office space, equipment, supplies, website, and IT, including a share of the Director's time as he meets with the Board, with the association and consumer groups, and represents the board at the Legislature every year when issues arise regarding funeral.

The Board concluded that the inspections program has been a success and is critical to the continuing education and improvement of the profession. Reducing inspections could actually have the unintended consequence of higher costs in the form of increased complaints. Decreasing inspections or sending them elsewhere was not feasible or in the best interest of the public or the profession. The Board also found that there is very little room for decreasing the expenses of the Board. They also concluded, after receiving more information from the Director, that there were good public policy reasons for not charging a licensee for the costs of a prosecution.

After much discussion the Board concluded that it must concur with the recommended fee increases and voted to approve the changes to be included in the 2011 fee bill for enactment as of July 1, 2011. Motion made by Lyndon Mann, Seconded by Bob Covey. Motion passed unanimously.

The Director noted that while budget projections are not an exact science, this fee increase is recommended with the understanding that the Board will continue to see balanced budget through fiscal year 2015 with no need for another fee increase in that time frame. The Director also noted that unfortunately, with a relatively small number of licensees, the impact of raising fees is going to be more painful as those costs must be borne by the regulated profession.

7. Adjournment at 11:40PM

8. Next Meeting – January 11, 2011

Respectfully Submitted,