NEW MEXICO BOARD OF MEDICAL INVESTIGATORS
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING - March 14, 2022

NM Office of the Medical Investigator
The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
**VIRTUAL MEETING**

BOARD PRESENT:
Michael Richards
Interim Dean, UNM School of Medicine
Acting Chair

Tim Johnson
Chief, New Mexico State Police
Board Secretary

Lynn Trujillo
Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Dept. of Indian Affairs
Board Member

BOARD ABSENT:
David Scrase
Acting Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Dept. of Health
Board Chair

ATTENDEES:
Natalie Adolphi, PhD
Director of the Center for Forensic Imaging, OMI

Albert Arocha
Supervisor of Technical Services, OMI

La Vonda Bowens Woodard
Interim Director of Operations, OMI

Anthony Cervantes
Unit Administrator 1, OMI

Lauren Decker, MD
Medical Investigator, OMI

Monica Eshner
HR Administrator 2, OMI

Felicia Garcia
Fiscal Service Tech, OMI

Heather Jarrell, MD
Chief Medical Investigator, OMI

Thu Luu
Accountant 3, OMI

Robert Noblin
Owner/Licensed Funeral Director

Lori Proe, DO
Medical Investigator, OMI

Alexandra Sanchez
Public Information Officer, UNM HSC

Scot Sauder
Deputy University Counsel, UNM HSC

Shannon Horst
Member of the Public

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM**
   Dr. Richards called the meeting to order at 1:12 PM and confirmed a quorum.

2. **MOTION TO APPOINT ACTING CHAIR**
   Dr. Richards called for a motion to appoint himself as the acting chair for this meeting. Chief Johnson **MOVED**; Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

3. **MOTION TO REORDER AGENDA ITEMS**
Minutes: Board of Medical Investigator General Meeting 3.14.2022

Acting Chairman Richards proposed to reorder the agenda to information items first and reserve action items until Sec. Scrase joins the meeting. Dr. Richards called for a motion to reorder agenda items in the following order:

1. Report from the Chief Medical Investigator: Dr. Heather Jarrell
2. Follow up regarding DMORT mission.
3. Budget – Action Item

Chief Johnson **MOVED** to reorder the agenda to informational items first. Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

4. **REPORT FROM THE CHIEF MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR**
Dr. Jarrell shared a graph illustrating an Overview of OMI 2021.

- Hired 5 forensic pathologists.
  - Last hire was in Feb 2022
  - “Fully staffed” in August 2022
  - 11th FP is posted.
- Performed record number of examinations.
  - 10,508 death reports
  - 2,106 autopsies
  - 2,477 external examinations
- Research: $2.59 M
- Teaching: Held International webinar on postmortem CT (PMCT)

5. **DMORT MISSION AND FUTURE UNCLAIMED/INDIGENT DECEDETS**
**DMORT Mission:**
Dr. Jarrell stated that Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) was present at OMI for two weeks. There was a total of twenty-two DMORT staff, ten at OMI and ten at Bernalillo County. Due to their efforts, there was a 15% reduction in decedent storage at OMI.

- Referred 172 decedents to Bernalillo County (BernCo)
- Non-BernCo: 94
- 104 releases (59 BernCo, 45 other)
- Pending paperwork to counties: 32
Indigent/Unclaimed Process Moving Forward:
Dr. Jarrell noted that some of the items listed were recommendations by DMORT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OMI</th>
<th>COUNTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Dedicated group of 3 LNOK searchers</td>
<td>• Possibility of working group (process analysis and proposal of state statute changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Outsource LNOK searches temporarily if needed</td>
<td>• Two refrigerated trucks at OMI are empty and available for county use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unclaimed decedents posted to OMI website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Institution of storage fees to counties/funeral homes beginning June 1?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Dr. Jarrell reminded the board that in a previous meeting there was discussion regarding information and implementation of the storage fee to counties/funeral homes. Dr. Jarrell reported that a meeting was held with the New Mexico Counties. The group discussed OMI’s role in conducting due diligence for LNOK searches versus the NM Counties role. In the last meeting Dr. Jarrell was asked by Sec. Scrase to provide information regarding when the storage fee was established by the OMI board. Dr. Jarrell reported that an old fee schedule from 1991 did not reflect the storage fee. No information could be found regarding why OMI established the fee.

6. **BUDGET**
Dr. Jarrell opened the budget presentation with Powerpoint slides illustrating Income Statements **FY22 Income Statement Projection 7/1/23 – 6/30/22**
Dr. Jarrell noted pending grant applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Type</th>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDC Grant (Cooperative Agreement for Emergency</td>
<td>$500K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(FY23: $291K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(F&amp;A 26%, $103K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronavirus Response CDC</td>
<td>$1.2 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Public Health Crisis Response Cooperative Agreement)</td>
<td>(FY22, FY23: $177K salary savings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding</td>
<td>$351K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Department of Public Safety)</td>
<td>(FY22, FY23: $197K salary savings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grief Services: $202,600

Total Savings for FY23 if funded:
$478,000
$338K for Toxicology

Adjusted FY23 Projected Net
PENDING FUNDING:
($71,335)

Dr. Jarrell noted to Dr. Richards that the next slide is the FY24 legislative request (action item). Dr. Richards recommended that Dr. Jarrell present the information to the board. When it’s time for board action, the board will have to decide if they want to act or table the agenda item.
Dr. Jarrell opened the agenda item with a slide listing FY24 Legislative Requests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Funding Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th Forensic Pathologist (to fall under examination quantity limits set by NAME)</td>
<td>$398,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Central Office Investigators (to meet the recommendations of investigators needed per 1 million people), Scientific Working Group for Medicolegal Death Investigation</td>
<td>$267,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Investigators for FDMI section, located at the OMI</td>
<td>$133,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstatement of Non-Recurring FY23 Approp.</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Cost Increase</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDMI Salary Adjustment</td>
<td>$616,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Investigator Assistant (LNOK searchers)* (Grant funded)</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,065,400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr. Jarrell wrapped up the FY24 legislative request and presented a FY23 Capital Outlay Request.

FY23 Capital Outlay Request:
1. Autopsy tables x 16 ($408,480)
2. Vehicles x 2 ($70,000)
3. -80 Freezers x 2 ($81,400)
4. Washers and Dryers ($32,000)

A slide was presented illustrating data on OMI cremation permits. The OMI would need an additional $1M funding to decrease cremation permits revenue by 25%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Revenue from Cremation Permits</th>
<th>Cremation Permit Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY20</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>$2,970,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY21</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>$3,703,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY22</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>$4,094,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY23</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>$4,381,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. **TABLE BUDGET ACTION ITEM**
   Acting Chairman Richards reminded the board that the FY24 Legislative Request and Plan is listed on the agenda as an action item. In the absence of the chair and vice chair, Dr. Richards asked the board to consider a table action on this item. There is a pending board meeting that is scheduled before this will be advanced to the University as the board’s recommendation for legislative priorities. Chief Johnson and Sec. Trujillo expressed their concerns and support to table the action to next board meeting.

   Acting Chairman Richards called for a motion to table the action item. Chief Johnson **MOVED**; Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   Shannon Horst stated that she had an uncle who passed away in mid-January and is still waiting on a final death certificate. Ms. Horst recognized how busy the office is, however, she cannot gain access to funding so that she can take legal steps needed to care for her aunt. Although a pending death certificate was issued, no one will accept it. Ms. Horst expressed that on five separate occasions she has called the OMI and has received different information each time. She
has worked with two investigators that cannot give accurate information. Ms. Horst recommended an ombuds person who can deal with members of the public to help track a case from death, investigation, autopsy, and final release of the body.

Dr. Jarrell asked Ms. Horst to give her contact information to board administrator, Anthony Cervantes so that OMI can follow-up.

9. **VOTE TO CLOSE THE MEETING AND PROCEED IN CLOSED SESSION**
   Acting Chairman **MOVED** to proceed in executive session. Chief Johnson **SECONDED**. Sec. Trujillo **MOVED**. The general meeting was closed by rollcall of all present members. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**. The meeting moved to executive session at 1:58 PM.

   For the purpose of closed session, board administrator, Anthony Cervantes confirmed attendees with Acting Chairman Richards and Counsel Sauder:
   - Heather Jarrell, MD
   - Nancy Joste, MD
   - Scot Sauder
   - Michael Richards, MD
   - Tim Johnson
   - Lynn Trujillo

10. **OPEN GENERAL MEETING**
    The general meeting was re-opened at 2:13 PM. Acting Chairman Richards certified that only the matters described in the executive session agenda were discussed during closed session. Dr. Richards stated that the closed session was informational only.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**
    Dr. Richard called for a vote to adjourn. Chief Johnson **MOVED**. Sec. Trujillo **SECONDED**. All were in favor. Motion **CARRIED**.

    The meeting **ADJOURNED** at 2:14 PM