

**WCMEA BOD MEETING MINUTES**  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2019  
Chula Vista Resort- Wisconsin Dells

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by President Angela Hinze at 5:03 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Members of the Board signed in attending include: Jen Schroeter (Kenosha County), Angela Hinze (Columbia County), Barry Irmen (Dane County), Marcie Rosas (Dunn/Eau Claire County), and Lynn Johnson (Dunn/Eau Claire County), Agnieszka Rogalska (Dane County), Cristina Figueroa-Soto (Waukesha).

Guest attendee: James Olsen – Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association

**MINUTES FROM JUNE 30, 2019 BOD MEETING:** Copies of the minutes distributed by Jen Schroeter online. The minutes had been previously reviewed online and approved.

**OUTSIDE AGENCY PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS:** James Olsen, Wisconsin Funeral Directors' Association, discussed introducing legislature to allow alkaline hydrolysis in Wisconsin. The process is a form of flameless cremation, in which human remains are mixed with chemicals to form an effluent predominantly composed of water, and bones. Bones can be pulverized and returned to families. The cost and time of the process is comparable to routine cremation, though there are more bones. The advantages include stability of metallic hardware (such as implanted electronic devices), and reduced emissions. Disadvantages include no possibility of DNA recovery from bones, and the need for a larger urn. There are no costs associated with this process to the ME/C community at this time; special biodegradable bags are used by the funeral home, as plastic impedes the process. 22 other states use this method of disposition, including neighboring MN and IL. A bill is being proposed by Patty Schachtner with the WFDA, but is currently at a standstill. Mr. Olsen left at 5:37 pm. The BOD staff discussed the need to present this process to the membership at the annual conference to provide compassionate education to families who might consider this option; families, per Mr. Olsen, do take loved ones out of state to facilitate this. The WCMEA has not written a white paper, position paper, or amicus brief, and in this case, should one be warranted, additional research into this process would be needed before any action is taken in that regard.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Angela Hinze reports that she met with attorney Joanna Alex regarding the Bylaws; this meeting was tied to the Ethics committee process, and Dr. Rogalska, Ms. Linda Mitchell May, and Mr. Irmen were also in attendance. Dr. Rogalska reported that the bylaws need a large revision, with all but the voting and election procedures requiring modernization to comply with current standards. Specific suggestions included defined membership requirements, electronic communication and meetings, timeliness of response, formation of special committees, codes of conduct, protocols/procedures for the Ethics committee, and other practical updates. The options to the BOD from the attorney included: a)

we write bylaws and she reviews b) we jointly craft bylaws, c) she drafts bylaws for BOD review and approval. The last option is recommended by the BOD, as Ms. Alex is considered the subject matter expert who can devote more time and resource to the project in a timely fashion.

AR made a motion that the BOD allow Ms. Alex up to \$5000 dollars (in addition to the \$5000 already allotted) to upgrade the bylaws and codes of conduct for review by the BOD within the next 6 weeks. Discussion ensued. Lynn Johnson inquired how Ms. Alex will define the parameters of the codes of conduct. Dr. Rogalska responded that she has worked with other organizations, and that she has general guidelines that align with current legal requirements and standards of business practice. She has also reviewed the bylaws and codes for other similar organizations such as the NAME, AAFS, IACME, etc. Barry Irmen suggested an amendment that Ms. Alex also define the legal pathway within the bylaws to introduce these changes outside of the summer annual meeting. Dr. Rogalska responded that Ms. Alex's recommendation at this time was to invoke the special meeting clause of the bylaws. For this reason, the BOD needs to act quickly to define and distribute the updated bylaws – at least 60 days (bylaws say 30, but more time will be better) before the January conference, to provide the membership the opportunity to review and discuss the changes. The suggested time frame is 6 weeks, so the changes are sent by November. Barry Irmen stated that the suggestion was to vote the special meeting into the January conference at tonight's meeting.

The motion by Dr. Rogalska was rephrased to the following: The BOD will approve up to \$5000 for the reformation of the Bylaws and Code of Conduct/Ethics, for the BOD to ultimately approve and modify within the next 60 days, and formulate steps to introduce the amendments to the membership at the January conference.

Discussion: Marcie Rosas asked about the number of people needed to vote on this, and whether the conference is expected to have this attendance. Barry Irmen responded that the current bylaws require 2/3 of the membership in good standing IN ATTENDANCE at the meeting, so the body present in January will have the right to vote. Dr. Figueroa-Soto suggested keeping the membership abreast via email and updates, and to help them understand the effort that went into it. Marcie Rosas added that it should be mentioned that is being done for the benefit of the membership. Dr. Rogalska responded that this was the intention, and the need for a rapid response and 60 day turn-around time. Barry Irmen suggested the changes also be mentioned in the newsletter. Jen Schroeter said she will get that out by the end of September. Dr. Rogalska said she would add it to the conference flyer to be sent shortly.

With discussion complete, the motion was voted on. In favor: 7; opposed: 0. The motion carried.

Barry Irmen made a motion that the BOD approve a Special Meeting to be held at the January conference to review and vote on Bylaw/Constitution updates. Jennifer Schroeter seconded the motion. There was no discussion. In favor: 7; opposed: 0. The motion carried.

Angela Hinze next addressed continued member absence, and wanted to discuss what defines an “excused” absence. Lynn Johnson reviewed bylaws to show that replacement on the BOD occurs after “any unexcused absence and three excused absences...”, so no unexcused absence is allowed and does not need a definition.

Angela continued to inform the BOD that 1<sup>st</sup> year trustee Patty Schachtner is stepping down from the BOD in order to focus on her legislative commitment to her constituents. She would like to participate in WCMEA matters, particularly on the Legislative Committee. Barry Irmen indicated that Angela would need to pick a replacement, per the bylaws. Angela Hinze asked for suggestions and several were offered by the group. Angela Hinze will reach out to these people to determine interest.

Angela Hinze discussed the hydrolysis bill which was brought to the WCMEA attention by Sen. Schachtner. Originally, the bill contained language re-defining cremation viewing criteria such that a cremation permit could be issued by any county, not necessarily the county where the death occurred. Angela stated that this was partly due to the diversity of cremation viewing policies and lack of consistency throughout the state. After discussing the matter with input from the WCMEA, this language was removed from the bill. However, it is a potential future agenda. Angela Hinze has been in contact with the office of Ron Johnson, who called regarding improved death certificate completion in drug overdose deaths. She will continue this relationship, and work with Sen Schachtner, to maintain an open dialogue with legislators regarding any proposed changes to the cremation bill, and potential opportunities to again discuss standardization and revision of 979.

Marcie Rosas inquired if the counties can pass regulations to supersede any state changes to the language. Barry Irmen explained that counties can not supersede state law, and that DHS proposed that C/ME should be following 979 where there is no allowance for things like a less than 24 hour reporting procedure. DHS maintained that C/ME could not set their own reporting policies. Barry Irmen explained that their effort to prohibit C/ME from making their own policies was contrary to DHS memos from years ago. At this point DHS has decided to delay trying to make these changes. Dr. Rogalska suggested involving/informing the Wisconsin Counties Association; understanding how such language will change their revenue may be a motivator to take action in these matters. Lynn Johnson suggested informing local DA’s and any Wisconsin DA associations. Angela Hinze stated that she regularly has a table at the WI WCA annual conference, but no one comes to talk to us. She would like to ask for a lecture position. She also mentioned the booklet that the WCA sent out, which seemed to have little effect to our plight. The BOD determined to continue outreach to various organizations, vigilance regarding proposed language changes, and continued education.

**Commented [IB1]:** I don't think she said DA I think she was referring to WI Counties Association (WCA) but I could be wrong.

**1<sup>ST</sup> VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT:** Dr. Rogalska introduced the new Education Committee, comprised of Lynn Johnson, Marcie Rosas, Dr. Figueroa-Soto, Jennifer Schroeter, and Mary Ricci. These individuals were selected in order to maintain continuity of the Education

Committee, with the past 1<sup>st</sup> VP leading the way for the current 1<sup>st</sup> VP, the continuity of the Trustees, and a Member at Large to introduce new ideas and people to the group. Dr. Rogalska suggested that these core membership positions (Past 1<sup>st</sup> VP; 2<sup>nd</sup> VP; Trustees; Member at Large) be a continuous part of the Education Committee, to ensure a smooth transition and continuity. Barry Irmen was concerned that this situation would be difficult if the 1<sup>st</sup> VP was totally new to the position; all the people in the group would not know how to prepare a conference. Dr. Rogalska stated that the PAST 1<sup>st</sup> VP and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Year trustees with more experience would always be on the Education Committee. Also, in preparing the conferences at least one year in advance, there would be substantial room for introduction into the process.

The Education Committee has been working on topics introduced at the June BOD meeting (student membership/attendance; whether to keep the 3<sup>rd</sup> conference day), and the upcoming conference.

Dr. Rogalska discussed the work of the Education Committee in the last two months to provide data on which to base the student fee, and also to determine if a 3 day conference is fiscally responsible. Using attendance sheets from 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018 and June 2019, Lynn Johnson, Marcie Rosas and Dr. Rogalska identified an attrition rate on Wednesday anywhere from 0 to 25%; the mode being 25%. Given the number of attendees, this is approximately 5 to 10 people. Review of local C/ME conferences reveal that MN offers 13-15 ABMDI credits ONCE a year, over two days, while the Milwaukee Teggatz Forensic Seminar offers 15- 17 ABMDI credits ONCE a year over two days. The WCMEA has prided itself of providing 15-17 credits TWICE per year, to allow multiple opportunities to attend.

Jennifer Schroeter provided costs of food, projector equipment, and conference room, which ranged between \$1300 and \$2600 per day, with the costs per day ranging from approximately \$79 on Monday and Tuesday, to \$62 per person on Wednesday. The full price of attendance (\$250) divided by 3 days equals \$83 per person per day, with a profit of \$4 and \$21 on Monday/Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively. But these numbers did not include incidentals of the meals/snack (charged for each can of soda left out, coffee, etc). Nor did it include the cost of hotel rooms for guest speakers. Thus, it is the recommendation of the Education Committee to cut the conference by one day, but still maintain the credits offered each year. The WCMEA could still accomplish this goal by cutting one day and extending each lecture day by one hour and using the lunch break for a lecture. There is no charge for the length of time we use the room or the computer equipment, so extending the time each day did not cost us more. This would be a gain of \$83 per person, and potential \$4000 profit each conference.

Barry Irmen was concerned that cutting the half day would result in lower attendance; people need the 1/2 day to drive back home. Marcie Rosas seconded that. Dr. Figueroa-Soto asked why we fund two conferences per year? Barry Irmen and Dr. Rogalska explained that this allows C/ME from the same offices to alternate, as coverage can be difficult, and that the Spring conference was often a “back to basics” for new incoming C/ME. Dr. Rogalska suggested cutting one of the meetings by a day, but leave the second as three days. Barry Irmen suggested that it was time to raise the price by \$25, as this has not been changed in a long time. Angela Hinze suggested a short presentation at the January conference about the cost the conferences, and poll the membership about increasing the rates or cancelling a day. Marcie Rosas suggested

that making the second day slightly shorter – say 4 pm, might help with the drive. Dr. Rogalska additionally mentioned that in future, we might have to join forces with a conference like the MCMEA to offer one WCMEA conference and one joint conference in a border town. But, this would be for the far future. Marcie Rosas expressed concern about losing the ability to network over lunch if it was a lecture. Dr. Rogalska explained the lecture usually starts about 20 minutes into the lunch, so some opportunity was maintained. No conclusion was reached, but Dr. Rogalska will incorporate the topic into the conference.

Dr. Figueroa-Soto explained student membership in comparable organizations, including the AAFS, NAME, IACME and the MN C/ME Association (MCMEA). In these organizations, student membership is defined by age (>18 year old), and membership sponsorship. The rates for student members vetted by a full association member are lower, as are their conference attendance fees. However, for non-members, the fee is substantially larger. Also, all organizations require a sponsorship by a full association member, as well as formal enrollment in a forensic course of study or employment in a law enforcement related field. The MCMEA calls all student applicants to identify if they are good candidates to attend and if their backgrounds/goals would be served by attendance at the conference. Barry Irmen asked about 18 year olds who are still in high school- how do we vet them and put that into bylaws? Dr. Figueroa-Soto responded that this is where the definitions beyond age – sponsorship and employment/study in forensic or LE field, identify anyone who would not be a good candidate to participate. Dr. Figueroa-Soto emphasized the need to bring in new people to the WCMEA, and offered her experience as a student as evidence of interest in attending conferences which are affordable to students. Barry Irmen suggested it was one of the tasks of the Bylaw reformation in a way to limit access without being discriminatory.

Dr. Figueroa-Soto introduced the BOD to “Evernote”, a proprietary application which would allow all of the members to view and change a document in real time. This would help us coordinate our work products when collaborating-for example when correcting the meeting minutes, and would likely prove very useful for reviewing/editing the Bylaws when that time comes. Barry Irmen identified an issue, which is that the author does not see the changes or the original – there is no “track changes” feature. Dr. Figueroa-Soto thought this WAS an ability of the program, but was not able to invoke it. It might require a monthly service fee. Dr. Figueroa-Soto said she would look into it.

Dr. Rogalska then updated the BOD on the progress of the conference. Approximately 1/2 of the time slots are filled. The coroner from Las Vegas is coming to present on Tuesday about the events of a mass shooting at the Mandalay Bay Hotel. In response to the membership, the lectures have been organized into 20, 30 and 40 minutes, with long case presentations (guest speakers and inter-agency presentations) broken up over a lunch break. Dr. Rogalska will send the Save the Date shortly, once she updates the guest speaker information.

Angela Hinze said that vendors have been reaching out to her asking for the opportunity to talk before the conference starts. Barry Irmen stated this was done in the past. Dr. Figueroa-Soto stated this is done at the WI Homicide Investigators Conference. This will be implemented into the conference moving forward.

Dr. Rogalska asked if there was any need to secure the emails being sent out to the membership? Angela reminded the group that this was not secured to allow for communication in a “chat”-like forum. Thus, no securities will be implemented.

**2<sup>nd</sup> VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT:** Not present; nothing to report

**SECRETARY’S REPORT:** Jennifer Schroeter; nothing to report

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Rory Groessl sent out the worksheet. We are still waiting for some membership fees to be paid. Overall, we lost approximately \$100 on the last conference. The cost of the attorney did not appear to be calculated in this report. Rory Groessl had requested via email that the BOD consider whether he can sell the computer and projector to a member at a reasonable price. Barry Irmen made a motion that Rory Groessl be allowed to sell the old WCMEA laptop and projector in whichever way he feels is most beneficial. Dr. Figueroa-Soto seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passes 7:0.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS REPORT:** Not present; nothing to report

**FIRST YEAR TRUSTEE:** Not present; nothing to report

**PAST PRESIDENT’S REPORT:** Barry Irmen had nothing to report.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:** Lynn Johnson reported that 4 applicants submitted for the \$250 scholarship. The Education Committee had met earlier, and reviewed the applications. There were no discrete criteria for awarding the scholarship. Jen Schroeter stated there had never been any strict criteria, the BOD just chose one person. Barry Irmen reviewed the scholarship announcements from many previous years, and the wording was the same. Given the phrasing of the announcement, one candidate was chosen. In future, the Education Committee will create more detailed criteria for selection. Dr. Rogalska will send letters to the applicants informing them of their status. Marcie Rosas had nothing to report outside the Education Committee items discussed above.

**MEMBER-AT-LARGE REPORT:** Dr. Figueroa-Soto had nothing to report outside of the Education Committee items discussed above

**OFFICER REPORTS:** Jennifer Schroeter made a motion to accept the officers reports. Barry Irmen seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried 7:0.

**WEBSITE COMMITTEE:** Barry Irmen reports the website engineers are working to permit purchase of merchandise using PayPal. Over the summer, the website had to be moved to another server because we had problems with registration. Dr. Rogalska asked when the website has a registration form up so she could link the Save the Date to it. Barry Irmen discouraged links from the Save the Date to the website, as this is what made it crash over the summer. Barry

Irmen said he can't post a registration until Dr. Rogalska updates it, and sent her the PDF by email. Dr. Rogalska will update the Save the Date with the proposed bylaw changes.

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:** Jen Schroeter plans to have the newsletter out by the end of September. She would like to do bios on Dr. Figueroa-Soto, Dr. Kovack and Dr. Goodman – new additions to the Wisconsin C/ME community. Dr. Rogalska asked to be informed before the letter goes out so that she can add the Bylaw and special information to it.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None in addition to what was discussed above.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Angela Hinze called for a motion to accept the Committee Reports. Dr. Rogalska made a motion. Barry Irmen seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried 7:0

**CLOSED SESSION:** Barry Irmen motioned the BOD go into closed session. Jennifer Schroeter seconded. The Board moved to closed session at 8:50 pm for further discussion.

**OPEN SESSION:** Dr. Rogalska motioned to move to open session. Jennifer Schroeter seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion carried 7:0 and the closed session adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

**ADJOURN:** There was no further business or discussion. Marcie Rosas motioned to adjourn. Lynn Johnson seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried 7:0. The Board of Directors adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Agnieszka Rogalska*  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President