

Recommendations to the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee and the Executive Committee

Medical Examiner Ad Hoc Committee Report

Purpose and Composition of the Committee:

A Medical Examiner Ad Hoc Committee (referred to herein as Committee) was created by Ordinance 2010-03, at the April 30, 2010 County Board meeting. The ordinance passed on a 17-2 vote abolishing the County Coroner position and creating a County Medical Examiner to be effective January 3, 2011. The Committee appointed by Chairman Sebastiani was comprised of 5 members as follows: County Supervisor Terry James; Sheriff Darrell Renner; Coroner Terry Scheel; District Attorney Mark Thibodeau and Community member, Jeremy Normington. The purpose of the Committee was to examine and recommend to the County Board whether it is most advantageous for Adams County to contract Medical Examiner services from another county or to establish a position in Adams County.

Decision Making Process

In an effort to make the best possible recommendation to the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee and Executive Committee regarding the position of Medical Examiner for Adams County, there were several key elements in the decision making process.

1. Input from others. Jake Roseberry, Roseberry's Funeral Home and Nick Segina, Deputy Coroner, appeared at some of the committee meetings and committee considered their comments and concerns when analyzing all of the collected information.
2. Visit to Columbia County. The Committee did an on-site visit to Columbia County and met with Medical Examiner, Angela Hinze; Sheriff Dennis Richards, District Attorney, Jane Kohlwey; County Board Vice Chairman Andy Ross; and Funeral Director, Donald Picha. Columbia County representation presented as a group and also independently allowing the Committee to have a very open conversation regarding interactions between the individual departments. The following items were discussed with Columbia County:
 - Chain of custody of the bodies and the ability to meet the needs of the District Attorney for long-term investigations.
 - Process used for tissue and organ harvests
 - Working relationship and cooperation between agencies as it relates to investigations, evidence collection, autopsies and communication
 - Record keeping and software used by Columbia County
 - Stock of supplies kept on-site
 - Labeling, storing and disposal of drugs removed at the time of death
 - Cooperation with one of the Funeral Homes

Further, the Committee also toured the facilities used by the Columbia County Medical Examiner including the morgue/pathology lab, garage, shared central mail space with the Sheriff's department, storage areas and administrative office.

3. Potential Budget if Adams County established a Medical Examiner Office Terry Scheel, Coroner, estimated that an Adams County Medical Examiner Office would be \$8,000 more than the estimated budgets that have been presented with contract services from Columbia County and Medical Examiner deputies in Adams County.
4. Information from other Counties. Even though Adams County Board had adopted a resolution to move to a Medical Examiner, at the request of a citizen, the Committee reviewed budget documents from Juneau and Marquette County Coroner departments. The Committee had a conference call with Oconto County and Door County respectively to discuss their experiences in contracting Medical Examiner Services with Brown County.
5. Adams County department consideration. Along with the Ad Hoc Committee, Lieutenant Dave Carlson, attended all of the Committee meetings offering information from the perspective of the investigative operations of the Sheriff's department. Sheriff Renner; Coroner, Terry Scheel and District Attorney, Mark Thibodeau all provided information for the Committee to consider in the analysis of the Medical Examiner position.

Committee Summary and Recommendations

In conclusion, the Committee considered public input, on-site visit to Columbia County, budget estimates for an Adams County Medical Examiner Office, information from other counties and information from Adams County officers in the process of analyzing how best meet the needs of the citizens of Adams County when delivering Medical examiner Services. After consideration input from all sources, the Committee recommends that the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee and Executive Committee forward an Ordinance to the County Board that will enact an intergovernmental agreement with Columbia County providing services of Medical Examiner to Adams County. Further, the Committee recommends that the agreement be for 1(one) year and that a joint meeting of the Public Safety and Judiciary Committee and Executive Committee be held no later than August 1, 2011 to determine whether the County Board should extend the contract with Columbia County if mutually agreeable.

Respectfully Submitted,

Medical Examiner Ad Hoc Committee

