

Medical Examiner Ad Hoc Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Conference Room A231

Friendship, WI

1. Call to order. Meeting called to order at 12:30 by Terry James.
2. Was the meeting properly announced? Yes
3. Roll Call. Present: Terry James; Terry Scheel, Coroner; Sheriff Darrell Renner; Lt. Dave Carlson; Jeremy Normington, Moundview Memorial Hospital.
Absent: Mark Thibodeau, District Attorney
4. Approve the Agenda. Agenda approved.
5. Committee Nominations: Barb Petkovsek accepted a nomination for Terry James for Chair. No other nominations.
Motion by Jeremy/Sheriff, MC/UN. Terry James accepted nominations for Vice Chair. Sheriff Renner nominated Terry Scheel. No other nominations. **Motion by Jeremy/Sheriff, MC/UN.** Recording secretary, Sandra Green, Sheriff's Department.

Terry James asked the question: "Do we go with another County for Medical Examiner services, or do we provide a Medical Examiner within our own County?" This has to be decided the end of June 2010. The position of Adams County Coroner has now been abolished and it was decided at the County Board meeting with a 17-2 vote that a Medical Examiner will officially be in order January 3, 2011.

Introductions: Terry James asked the visitors in the conference room to introduce themselves. Visitors included Jack Albert with Corporation Counsel in Adams County, Nick Segina, Deputy County Coroner and Jake Roseberry with Roseberry's Funeral Home.

Jack Albert provided some legal parameters and historical perspective of going to a Medical Examiner position. This has been ongoing for about one year. We will be discussing the form and the function of this office. The office will begin with an inter-government agreement to work with another county and their Medical Examiner. This will begin on an initial one year term. Jack Albert continued to discuss the form and function of the office of Medical Examiner. Jack will be available as we continue our meeting to provide any information we may need.

Terry James has seen Angela Hinze's presentation a couple of times over the past few months. She's been very willing with her time and provides a lot of good information. Mr. James asked for comments regarding merging w/Columbia County. Comments were provided by visitors at the meeting and a long discussion was held. See comments below.

Nick Segina would like to see a Medical Examiner in our own County. He suggested possibly appointing Terry Scheel the Medical Examiner and having Angela Hinze a consulting Medical Examiner to Terry. Find out the operational costs for Medical Examiner's and their assistance.

The Sheriff provided a hand out in different directions to look at this. This handout provided a Medical Examiner position description and a listing of all equipment needed for this position. It shows the policy that Columbia County has as well as a map that shows the Counties within the State that have Coroner and Medical Examiner positions.

Jeremy Normington asked some questions regarding this handout about the equipment listing. Terry Scheel has most of this equipment listed. There are a few things on the list they go to other Departments for.

Terry James noted that in the position description, paragraph two talks about the essential duties and responsibilities and all other requirements for this position. His concerns regarding the Chain of Evidence were brought up. The Medical Examiner has the facility to hold all Chain of Evidence in Columbia County. If we hired Columbia County Medical Examiner, from our discussions with Angela Hinze, she would take over a crime scene herself if there was any questionable crime in Adams County. He would eventually like to see us having a Medical Examiner position right in Adams County. However, we have been working on this for several months and have come a long way on working to get the Columbia County Medical Examiner working in Adams County. He said starting off with a one year contract is a good idea. We could learn so much from Angela and thinks we should take this opportunity

see what we can do with it. Terry passed around pictures of the Columbia County Coroner's office. Her facilities are excellent and we would be hard pressed to compare that in Adams County.

Nick Segina agreed having a one year contract with Angela provided there is a provision we later want our own Medical Examiner position in Adams County.

Jake Roseberry said whatever we do, we should keep an eye on the "dollars" for our families out there. It should be kept as reasonable fees and not turned into a revenue source for the county. He provided different ways that training can be provided. He suggested obtaining feedback from Juneau and Marquette Counties. There are other sources out there that will not raise the budget so much. Jake also wondered why only Columbia County and Juneau County were contacted or knew about the County going to a Medical Examiner position? Why weren't other counties included? The committee could not answer his question.

Terry Scheel commented in regards to the procedures that are in place when conducting a criminal investigation; "As long as you can show this is what we did, why we did it, and how we did it, you're vested. It's all in how well we investigate the cause and manner of death." Required hours of training was then discussed by everyone and Terry Scheel said ABMBI requires 640 hours of training.

Nick Segina commented that in the past four years, the PS&J committee would not fund the Coroner to go to any kind of training. His question is how is training going to be provided? Terry James answered his question.

Jeremy Normington said the intent here is in the long run there will be an initial investment and later some increased costs as we'll need to upgrade. Jeremy commented regarding Columbia County's one year contract and then the County switching to their own Medical Examiner. Is Columbia County open to this type of relationship knowing they'll be setting us up to have our own Medical Examiner? Is going with Columbia County worth the money?

Terry James primary concern is are we being prudent with the money we might spend? Will spending the money decrease our liability? I think we have an opportunity to move to a new plateau.

Terry Scheel said just by the county board taking the initiative to go from Coroner to Medical Examiner shows they have made the commitment to make the Medical Examiner's office the best it can be, given the parameters and affordability of the county.

The Sheriff commented, "It's a question of do we "want the best of everything, can we afford it, and is it really necessary"?"

Nick Segina requests Coroner Terry Scheel at least receive a Certificate of Appreciation from the County Board because Terry has done an excellent job in bringing the Coroner's office into a respectful state and a professional operation.

Jeremy Normington said, "What is our take-away from this meeting? What do we need to do for the next time we meet?"

Terry James replied we're at the form and function phase going into an Medical Examiner system of business. Terry brought out a letter which Angela Hinze from the Columbia County Coroner's office invited the committee for a "Meet and Greet Tour" on Monday, May 24, 2010 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm if we are interested in attending. Terry James needs to let Barb Petkovsek know after our meeting today so she can notify Angela Hinze if we are interested in meeting their staff and touring their facility.

Nick Segina stated a Chief Deputy will be needed in Adams County and he is suggesting mandating the County Board appoint Terry Scheel Chief Deputy. After some discussion it was noted that the Medical Examiner will choose his or her own Chief Deputy. Terry Scheel admits the Coroner's office has come a long way since he began in office, but still has much to learn and feels he could learn what he needs from Columbia County.

The Sheriff asked if it is our job as the ADHOC committee to find out how much money our own Medical Examiner would cost us? Or what is our responsibility as a member of the ADHOC committee? Is there another side we should be exploring? We need to have these questions answered.

Jeremy Normington would like the contact information of some of the parties involved so he can make some telephone calls and be more in the loop of things. Terry Scheel will get this information to him. He also suggested to Terry Scheel he should design and provide a basic budget for a Medical Examiner in Adams County. He will work with Jeremy on this project.

They will meet at 10:15 on Monday to attend the tour of the Columbia County Medical Examiner's Office in Portage. They will meet at the Sheriff's Entrance.

6. Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, 2010 at 12:30 pm.

7. Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm. **Motion by Jeremy/Sheriff, MC/UN.**

Submitted by: Recording Secretary, Sandra Green, Fiscal and Support Services Manager, Sheriff's Department.

These minutes are not yet approved by this Ad Hoc Committee.

Cc: Sebastiani / James / Renner / Carlson/ July / Scheel/ County Clerk Dept / Green / Normington / Thibodeau / McGhee/Petkovsek