



District Meeting Minutes (Districts 1, 2, 7)

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.
Houston, TX

Present:

Kenneth Dupree, PA Board of Funeral Directors
Robb Smith, ABFSE
Dale Atkinson, Atkinson & Atkinson
Donna Austin, UDC
Mark Bailey, MD Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors
Lacyn Barton, VA Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers
Glenn Bower, TX Funeral Service Commission
Ernest Boykin, DC Board of Funeral Directors
Wayne Cavender, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
Christopher Farmer, NFDA
Stephanie Gilman, ICFSEB Exam Committee
Caressa Hughes, ICCFA
John Kirksey, UDC
Michele Kutta, MD Board of Morticians & Funeral Directors
Cody Lopasky, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
Rodney McFarland, LA State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors
John Douglas McMillan III, ICFSEB Exam Committee
Jose Moreno, San Antonio College
Brian Mullins, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
Blair Nelsen, ICFSEB President/VA Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers
Kelley Palmatier, VA Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers
Andrew Parsell, DE Board of Funeral Service
John Rice, ICFSEB Exam Committee
Chet Robbins, ICFSEB Past President
Catherine Smithpeter, San Antonio College
Corie Tillman Wolf, VA Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers
Asanti Williams, DC Board of Funeral Directors
Erin Wilson, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Conference President and District 2 Director, Blair Nelsen, called the meeting to order at 1:24 p.m. CST. Mr. Nelsen welcomed those in attendance and the meeting began with introductions.

II. COVID and beyond

District attendees discussed obstacles and innovations related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. State regulators shared that the continued restrictions, along with technology issues for older generations were the biggest hindrances. Additionally, educators communicated continued issues with virtual

learning and the repercussions of not being able to conduct labs in-person. Improved sanitation, increased reciprocity among licensing boards, virtual board meetings, and expedited licensure processes were seen as positive outcomes of the pandemic.

III. Current Regulatory Issues

Attendees discussed the varying needs for dual versus split licensure. One attendee provided an example of their state needing a path for a funeral directing-only license for those whose religion precludes them from embalming. Other attendees stressed the importance of knowing the full scope of the practice, arguing that both funeral directing and embalming is often intertwined in the workplace. Also discussed were concerns regarding the reorganization of licensing boards, in particular when the decision is dependent on the discretion of the governor.

Current educational trends that were shared included the lack of use of textbooks by schools and students. Some educators shared that students may buy the required books, but they often do not read them. One educator directed concerns at The Conference over the creation of the textbook list that is used for referencing items on the NBE. It was explained that, while The Conference assisted the ABFSE in helping conduct the survey, the final decisions were determined in partnership with the ABFSE Executive Director and fellow educators.

Representatives from Texas shared they are pursuing the creation of their own exam, which would be offered as an alternative to the NBE. When asked what steps are being taken to ensure the test is a valid and legally defensible exam, one of the educators involved stated they hadn't yet gotten that far in the process. Other educational topics that were shared included the possibility of an associate's degree for funeral directing-only, students having difficulty with online learning, educators wanting NBE scores to be released, and the confusion over the purpose of the NBE.

IV. Open Discussion

There were no items discussed in the open forum.

V. District 7 Election to Board of Directors

Rodney McFarland, from the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, was elected as the District 7 Director.

VI. Adjournment

The meetings of district 1, 2, and 7 adjourned at 3:05 p.m. CST.



District Meeting Minutes (Districts 3, 4, 5)

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.

Houston, TX

Present:

Randy Anderson, NFDA

Fred Berry, TN Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers

Kortez Boyd, ICFSEB Exam Committee Member

Brad Coman, GA Board of Funeral Service

Stephen Davis, NC Board of Funeral Service

Mark Evely, Wayne State University

Patty Faenger, MO Board of Embalmers & Funeral Directors

Amy Goode, AR Board of Embalmers & Funeral Directors

Robert Gribble, ICFSEB District 5 Director/TN Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers

Cheryl Grossman, OH Board of Embalmers & Funeral Directors

Thomas Hilderbrand, NC Board of Funeral Service

Amy Holleman, SC Board of Funeral Service

Dr. Steven Lyons, NC Board of Funeral Service

Kathleen Matuszak, IN Board of Funeral & Cemetery Service

Leili McMurrough, Worsham College of Mortuary Science

Ben Parker, MI Board of Examiners in Mortuary Science

Madison Partida Nischan, ICFSEB Exam Committee Member

Charles Perine, ICFSEB District 3 Director/AL Board of Funeral Service

Jon Rettig, Sr., ICFSEB District 4 Director/OH Board of Embalmers & Funeral Directors

Ellen Simon, FL Division of Funeral, Cemetery, & Consumer Services

Steve Spann, John Gupton College

Melissa Traino, Mid-America College of Funeral Service

William Wappner, OH Board of Embalmers & Funeral Directors

Christian Watson, NC Board of Funeral Service

Rickey Williams, Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Conference District 4 Director, Jon Rettig, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. CST. The meeting began with introductions of The Conference Directors from Districts 3, 4, and 5, as well as introductions of all attendees.

II. COVID and beyond

Many attendees shared the challenges they experienced as they had to fight for funeral licensees to be considered front-line, critical care workers early on when the pandemic began. Many representatives shared their collaborative efforts with other state and local agencies including mass fatality task forces with ongoing COVID-19 challenges and changes. The transition to online board meetings is now considered a great opportunity for some, as participation has now increased, and the public has another avenue to stay informed of board business.

III. Current Regulatory Issues

A discussion regarding split licensure models in relation to employment shortages was discussed by participants and the ease or appeal of a funeral director only pathway. Some participants felt the funeral

director only path has helped with the global labor shortage, while others were unsure. A few attendees from single licensure states, shared the lack of interest or direction in splitting the licenses in their jurisdiction. A recent uptick in apprenticeships since COVID was shared as well as the interest from many second and third career individuals.

Educational trends were discussed and the differences in textbooks/subjects with some areas being more subjective. It was noted that newer textbooks are now in existence, but some educators are still relying on older versions. The ABFSE curriculum and the expansion of some broader areas within the curriculum were addressed by the educators. Attendees also participated in a lengthy discussion regarding online vs. in-person education and the benefits/obstacles of each.

IV. Open Discussion

V. District 3 and 5 Election to Board of Directors

Both Charles Perine, from the Alabama Board of Funeral Service, and Robert Gribble, from the Tennessee Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers, were re-elected as the District 3 and District 5 Director, respectively.

VI. Adjournment

The meetings of district 3, 4, and 5 adjourned at 3:30 p.m. CST.



District Meeting Minutes (Districts 6, 8, 9)

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.
Houston, TX

Present:

Kent Absec, ID Board of Morticians

August Barnett, Barnett Family Funeral Home

Guy Beaudoin, WY State Funeral Service Practitioners Board

Randy Brennick, SD Board of Funeral Service

Brevin Clifford, ICFSEB Exam Committee

Pete Cameron, WA State Funeral & Cemetery Board

Karen Carruthers, ICFSEB District 8 Director/AB Funeral Services Regulation Board

Raymond Giddens Jr, NV Funeral & Cemetery Board

Steve Gordon, ICFSEB Exam Committee/ID Board of Morticians

Jolena Grande, Cypress College

Kim Kandaras, NV Funeral & Cemetery Services Board

Jennifer Kandt, ICFSEB District 9 Director/NV Funeral & Cemetery Services Board

Connie LeSourd, WA Funeral & Cemetery Board

Rick Little, WA Funeral & Cemetery Board

Michael LuBrant, University of Minnesota

Martin Rieken, ICFSEB District 6 Director/IA Board of Mortuary Science

Steve Schacht, ICCFA

Joseph Schinkten, WI Funeral Directors Examining Board

Jeff Zeally, UT Board of Funeral Service, Salt Lake City Community College

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Conference District 6 Director, Martin Rieken, called the meeting to order at 1:25 p.m. CST. The meeting began with introductions of The Conference Directors from Districts 6, 8, and 9, as well as introductions of all attendees.

II. COVID and beyond

Attendees discussed obstacles caused by COVID-19 noting storage and capacity issues were major problems. Attendees also shared that safety, social distancing, cancellations, limited supplies and resources, and delays were all challenges they experienced. Some challenges created opportunities. Attendees talked about how funeral service has changed as a result of COVID. Technology originally began as a challenge, but quickly turned into an innovation with virtual board meetings and electronic document signing. Technology allowed members from distant parts of a state to participate and build relationships.

III. Current Regulatory Issues

The group talked about split licensure with a majority of states present having this model. The discussion turned to licensing requirements for removals with some states requiring a license while others do not. Attendees then discussed educational trends. Schools in attendance have seen their enrollment increase during the pandemic as the programs all transitioned to online learning. The schools in attendance all stated that they utilize The Conference textbook reference list. Jolena Grande

mentioned that California will be moving to OAR at some point, and Michael LuBrant also mentioned that he utilizes other online resources and videos.

IV. Open Discussion

Martin Rieken led the open discussion by polling the group on the possibility of moving the Annual Meeting to the fall. The majority of attendees would not like to move the meetings, stating that there is too much conflict in the fall with many other meetings already taking place. The group discussed Go Fund Me for the remainder of the open discussion. Attendees shared their positive and negative experiences with “Go Fund Me funerals” including a discussion on what the funds are meant for, and how they are used.

V. District 9 Election to Board of Directors

Jennifer Kandt was re-elected as the District 9 Director.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting of districts 6, 8, and 9 adjourned at 3:18 p.m. CST.