

**DISTRICTS 1 & 2
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF FUNERAL SERVICE EXAMINING BOARDS, INC.**

**Meeting of Districts
The Brown Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky
Saturday, April 8, 2006, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

Minutes

I. Attendance

Attending the meeting were: Wanda Bacon, District of Columbia; Bob Barnes, Maine; Jacquie Taylor, Massachusetts and American Board of Funeral Service Education; Robb Smith, designated representative for New Jersey; Debbie Orecki, New York; Michelle Smey, Pennsylvania; Mike Ustaff, Pennsylvania; Gene Ogrodnick, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science; Barry Walch, State University of New York; John Coffin, Vermont; and Billie Watson Hughes, Virginia;

II. Reports on Visits to Individual State Boards

A. District 1

District 1 Director Bob Barnes reported on his visits to the Vermont and Maine Regulatory Boards to familiarize them with the work and purpose of The Conference.

John Coffin of the Vermont Board reported that his group felt the presentation was a good thing, providing a good exchange of questions and information that was especially beneficial to citizen board members.

Barnes reported that in Maine he spoke to five professional and three public board members, with the most positive feedback again coming from the public members.

A meeting with New Hampshire is being planned, a New York meeting is set up for June, a presentation to the Connecticut board is scheduled for May 2, and Rhode Island is set for May 17.

The New York board will continue to develop its own exam.

B. District 2

Director Billie Watson Hughes reported that she has made presentations on The Conference to the Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia boards. New Jersey and DC are scheduled for May, and Pennsylvania and West Virginia are still in the planning stage.

Hughes reported that her presentations were well received, with questions from the public members about the exams being given. Two states have contacted Dalene about working with The Conference to develop their State Board Exams. Virginia continues to produce and administer its own state board exam.

III. Strategic Planning Update

The Conference Board of Directors has met twice to work on a Strategic Plan for 2006 through 2010. As a result of those discussions, focused on how The Conference can enhance its services, the Board has approved a reorganization of the staff with two new people to be added. Anticipating a need for more office space, the Board has also purchased the vacant lot adjacent to the present headquarters building. As the need arises, additional space can be added.

IV. Financial Report

The Conference is in the black. They have committed to providing ten (10) scholarships of \$2500 each for the American Board Scholarship Committee to award. There is a need to upgrade current systems, but with prudent investments, they are well positioned as a 501 C6 organization.

With such a substantial surplus of funds, the question was raised by Debbie Orecki about the possibility of lowering the fee for the NBE. Currently the Executive Director is negotiating new contracts with potential exam testing service providers. A decision will probably be announced by the end of 2006.

V. Discussion of NBE Issues

Some members reported problems getting NBE results mailed to them in a timely manner. An explanation followed outlining how The Conference receives results twice a month and still cannot release scores until the schools have certified.

The question was raised about creating a downloadable PDF file to serve as a receipt for the exam. This would be a problem, since some schools prepay their students' exam registration fees.

Another question, regarding what happens when a school prepays and then the student does not graduate, will be taken back to The Conference for resolution.

VI. Disciplinary Database

Questions and discussion were deferred to tomorrow when a presentation will be made to the general assembly.

VII. New Curriculum – Funeral Director Only Licensure

There is much discussion at the schools on this topic. The American Board Curriculum Committee is still working on their proposal for the curriculum for such licensure. There is little consistency among the states as to the definition of “funeral director only.” Currently some institutions offer, and states recognize, a “Funeral Service Arts” degree, which covers five content areas now tested on the Arts portion of the National Board Exam.

The possibility of a universal license was raised.

VIII. Election of District 1 Director

Bob Barnes, who has served the unexpired term of Jack Kazlauskas, was elected to serve a full three-year term. He was nominated by John Coffin and elected by unanimous vote.

IX. Miscellaneous

1. When purchased by an individual, the Practice NBE payment/registration carries a 30-day expiration. It cannot be banked for later use. However, schools can buy a block of PNBEs for a slightly higher fee and use at any time. There is only one version for each section of the NBE (one Arts, one Sciences).
2. Student pictures are taken when they take the exam. They cannot view these photos.
3. Security issues at H&R Block testing sites are questionable.
4. Students are coming to schools with tattoos and body piercings.
5. An orientation/introduction session for new attendees is needed.
6. "Reciprocation" and "endorsement" are different terms.
7. The role of funeral homes in tissue bank and organ donation scandals.
8. The need for The Conference to address emerging issues.

Submitted and approved this 4th day of April, 2006.

by District 1 Director, Bob Barnes

and

by District 2 Director, Billie Watson Hughes

(signatures on original document)