

**THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF FUNERAL SERVICE EXAMINING BOARDS, INC.**

**General Session
The Brown Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky
Saturday--Sunday, April 8-9, 2006**

Minutes

I. Call to Order by President John Runsvold

The meeting was called to order by President John Runsvold at 12.30 p.m.

Patrick Obarzanek led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

President Runsvold introduced Credentials Committee members Dolores Kenney, Joseph Richer, and Chet Robbins, and Audit Committee members Bob Barnes, Billie Watson Hughes, and Lisa Whitney.

II. Roll Call by Secretary-Treasurer Chet Robbins

Mr. Robbins called the roll.

The 30 states and provinces with representatives present were: Arkansas, California, Canada (Ontario), District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The 29 mortuary schools represented were: Amarillo College, American Academy McAllister Institute, Arkansas State University at Mountain Home, Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, Commonwealth Institute, Community College of Baltimore County Catonsville Campus, Cypress College, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service, Jefferson State Community College, John A. Gupton College, John Tyler Community College, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Mercer County Community College, Mesa Community College, Mid-America College of Funeral Service, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Mount Ida College-New England Institute, Nassau Community College, Norfolk State University, Ogeechee Technical College, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, San Antonio College, State University of New York College of Technology at Canton, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, University of District of Columbia, University of Minnesota and Wayne State University.

III. Introductions

Vice President Jerry Griffin introduced the District Directors; Robert Barnes, District 1, Billie Watson Hughes, District 2, Dolores Kenney, District 3, Joeseph Richer, District 4, President John Runsvold, District 6, Secretary-Treasurer Chet Robbins, District 7, Past President John Michelotti, District 8, Lisa Whitney, District 9, James Augustine, American Board of Funeral Service Representative, and himself, District 5. He also introduced the administrative staff of The Conference: Dalene Paull, Executive Director, Bee Crandall and Jolene Diven, Registrars, Peter Drumm, legal counsel, and five attending past presidents: Mack Smith, Deborah Orecki, Edward O'Sullivan, Edgar Robertson, and David Benke to the general assembly.

IV. Prayer of Remembrance

Mr. James Shoemake offered a prayer remembering those who had passed away since last year's meeting.

V. Greetings from Special Guests

Brief greetings to the general assembly were brought by Mr. Bob Biggins from the National Funeral Directors, Mr. Ernest Adams from the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association, and Dr. Michael Smith, new executive director of the American Board of Funeral Service Education

VI. President's Address

Immediate Past President John Michelotti introduced President John Runsvold who addressed the general assembly, recapping the significant events of his year in office. Mr. Michelotti moved to adopt the president's report into the official record. Ms. Billie Watson Hughes seconded the motion. Motion carried. **Notes from President Runsvold's remarks are appended to these minutes.**

VII. Special Presentation – Meredyth Partridge

President Runsvold introduced Ms. Meredyth Partridge, president of Regulatory Support Services, who presented a report, "Disaster Results Not Rules." A copy of her presentation is appended to these minutes.

VIII. District Meetings

President Runsvold announced the locations of the District Meetings and the delegates adjourned to their separate meetings. District meetings were to conclude at 5:30 p.m., and the general assembly would reconvene at the following morning Sunday, April 9, 2006) at 8:00 a.m.

IX. Special Presentation – Sheryl Hanes

President Runsvold called the meeting to order and introduced Sheryl Hanes, president of Vintage IT Services. Ms. Hanes presented a report and answered questions on the proposed disciplinary database. A copy of her report is appended to these minutes.

X. Special Presentation – Terry Edwards

President Runsvold introduced Terry Edwards, deputy commander of DMORT Region VI, who gave a presentation on Pandemic Disaster Planning. A copy of his report is appended to these minutes.

XI. Panel Discussion

David Benke and Tim Koch of the Minnesota Department of Health, Diana Evans of the Florida Division of Funeral, Cemetery and Consumers Services, and O.C. “Chet” Robbins, executive director of the Texas Funeral Service Commission, provided a panel discussion titled “Sharing Best Practices for Disaster Planning.”

Mr. Koch stated that Minnesota’s Pandemic Plan was presented to the public on May 3, 2006. A 284 page document, comprised of 10 sections the Minnesota Pandemic Plan, combines the All Hazard Plan (1999) written by the Commissioner of Health, the Flu Plan, and the Demorg Plan. After the Minnesota Pandemic plan is published, a statewide discussion will take place regarding the plan. The Minnesota Board is also working to respond to the following issues: non-institutional deaths, approval of cremation(s), and stockpiling of supplies in the event of a pandemic.

Ms. Evans said that Florida had learned a lot from Hurricane Katrina, particularly the need to be self-sufficient, not relying on the federal government for assistance. A committee has been formed to study disaster readiness for the future, addressing both natural disaster and pandemic readiness. States should find ways to encourage funeral professionals to work together, share equipment, etc. in times of emergency. She also advocated devising alternate forms of communication for when normal phone and internet services are not functioning. She stressed that response to any emergency situation should be “whatever it takes” to get the job done, especially regarding risks to licensees.

Mr. Robbins reiterated the fact that in a disaster local communities and state agencies must be prepared to deal with all aspects of the situation independently. A plan should deal with all contingencies. He pointed out that a pandemic would differ from a natural disaster in that everyone would/could be affected, not just one geographical area. Local communities should prepare by updating their business continuity plan and by stockpiling supplies. Stockpiling must go through local fiscal officials, but funds are available. Mr. Robbins stated that, in a pandemic, next to the virus, apathy would be the biggest killer. Apathy can be conquered by education, preplanning and getting back to basics. The local community is the key.

Discussion followed with questions regarding whether current curriculum covers mass fatality planning. Various methods of providing on-site refrigeration for bodies were discussed.

XII. Special Presentation – Joseph Richer

Mr. Richer led a discussion from the convention floor regarding the need for state regulatory boards to understand their role(s) in disasters such as pandemics and/or natural disasters. In writing plans to deal with disasters, boards should work to reduce duplication and look for innovative ways to help licensees run their funeral homes more effectively, possibly providing resource lists to those trying to become prepared. State boards should disseminate all information to the individual funeral director that would enable them to become better prepared. Mr. Richer posed the question to the convention floor “What Are You Doing to Help?”

Mr. Richer posed the question to the convention floor “What Can the Conference do to help?”

- David Benke, Minnesota – Recommended that The Conference appoint a liaison to NFDA
- Chet Robbins, Texas – Recommended that The Conference act as a spokesman to the NFDA, NFD&MA with the needs of the regulators and clergy
- Joe Richer, Ontario – Recommended that The Conference make recommendations to the licensees as to whether requests are reasonable or not; The Conference could write brochures with recommendations for licensees on behalf of regulators - two groups could collaborate.

The discussion turned to accreditation of Funeral Director only program by the ABFSE. Elizabeth Young, Virginia, inquired as to the feasibility of The Conference and ABFSE conducting a study to establish manpower shortage and need for FD only program. Could The Conference offer a grant for such a study? Mr. Richer stated that educators should also get involved in such a study, considering the number of embalmings per jurisdiction in determining the need for FD only license.

Mr. Richer stated that state regulatory boards should seek to provide leadership to licensees through associations, regulators, and partnership with The Conference. Key factors for success or failure are free flow of information between all involved, free assistance to the licensees, and training of staff and families to do the simple things, such as washing their hands regularly. Making best practices standard behavior and starting at the microscopic behavioral level will make all the difference in situations such as a pandemic.

XIII. Committee and Financial Reports

Lisa Whitney reported on the work of the Professional Policy Committee. Patrick Obarzanek and O.C. “Chet” Robbins gave the Examination Committee report. O.C. “Chet” Robbins gave the Treasurer’s report. Copies of the reports are appended to these minutes.

XIV. District Reports – District Representatives

Representatives from each district reported on their meetings. Copies of their reports are appended to these minutes.

XV. Association of Executives of Funeral Service Boards Report – Paul Harris

Mr. Harris reported that 17 jurisdictions were represented as follows: California, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Ontario (Canada), Pennsylvania, Texas, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and Washington, DC.

Cheryl Smith’s retirement from her duties in Montana led to her resignation as Association President; Sherri Douglass’ resignation from the West Virginia Board also resulted in her resignation a Association Vice President.

The following presentations led to discussion and exchange of ideas by those present”
“Getting the Message to Consumers and Funeral Directors” – Deborah Orecki, New York
“Effective Enforcement Strategies” – Ann Cunningham, Ohio
“Effective Complaint Investigation” – Mack Smith, Kansas
Copies of these presentation are appended to these minutes.

General discussion topics were: Continuing Education, Pre-Need Regulation, Web site development as presentation for next year’s meeting.

General business included Strategic Plan Update and Election of Officers:
Secretary – Lyn Armstrong-Patterson, Washington, DC
Vice President – Elizabeth Young, Virginia
President – Paul Harris, North Carolina

XVI. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

President Runsvold (Griffin?) announced that the next convention will be held in San Antonio, Texas. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

President

Accepted and approved this _____ day of _____ 2006.