 DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
Office of Cemetery Oversight

1100 N. Eutaw Street, 5th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21201

**OFFICE OF CEMETERY OVERSIGHT**

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CEMETERY OPERATIONS**

**MINUTES**

DATE: July 22, 2021

TIME: 10:10 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.

PLACE**:** ***Meeting ID:***[https:// [meet.google.com/ ean-zoxr-zgt](https://meet.google.com/mbo-akux-kxf?hs=122&authuser=0)](https://meet.google.com/ean-zoxr-zgt)

 *Phone Numbers*

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PIN:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Frank Porter, Chair

Michael Bennett

Yvonne Fisher

Craig Huff

Erich March

Ronald Pearcey

David Zinner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Rebecca Edmiston

Bruce Hultquist

Walter Tegeler

**STAFF PRESENT**

Gregory Morgan – Commissioner of Occupational & Professional Licensing

Deborah Rappazzo - Director, Office of Cemetery Oversight

John Hart - Assistant Attorney General, Office of Cemetery Oversight

Leila Whitley - Administrative Aide, Office of Cemetery Oversight

Dreama Anderson - Investigator, Office of Cemetery Oversight

**STAFF ABSENT** N/A

Jay Wilson - Financial Compliance Administrator, Office of Cemetery Oversight

**VISITORS**

Esther Bateman – Trust Department at SCI

Roger Waters-

**CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

**MINUTES**

The minutes from April 22, 2021 and May 20, 2021 were read and approved.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Starting in September, 2021, all commission and council meetings will be held both in-person and via Google Meet.

The October 21, 2021 Advisory Council meeting will be held at Mount Olivet in Frederick, Maryland.

The department is continuing to work a hybrid work schedule, which depending on your role determines how many days a week you are required to be in the office. Each day a staff member will be in the office to process mail and perform other duties.

Consumers that are interested in coming into the building have to go online to schedule an appointment. Consumers can go to: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/cem/> and select the “Schedule An Appointment” button which is found in the middle of the home page. Appointments are scheduled every thirty (30) minutes. All visitors are required to have their ID and are required to enter the building through the 500 N. Calvert Street entrance.

There are two Consumer Member (2) vacancies on the Advisory Council. There have been no applications submitted as of yet. The four (4) reappointments have submitted their applications and are under review. Council Members that have expiring terms can continue to serve on the council until you receive notification otherwise.

Our newsletter entitled the “OCO Report-April 2021,” can be found on our website: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/cem/cemnews.shtml#newsletter>.

FEMA’s “Burial COVID-19 Funeral Assistance” program can assist families with possible reimbursement of funeral costs for loved ones that have died due to COVID-19. For additional information, please go to <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>.

Commissioner Morgan, has sent several emails to licensees/registrants regarding their expiring licenses within the Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing. In each of these communications, he directed licenses/registrants to renewal online and/or to contact their licensing unit directly.

Any legislative suggestions the Council had given to the Director last year will be submitted to the Secretary again this year.

A perpetual care questionnaire was sent out to one hundred (100 cemeteries), and the office has received ninety-five (95) of them back. Director Rappazzo should have the findings from the questionnaire review for FY 2021 for the Council to look at by October. The Office of Cemetery Oversight (OCO) passed the audit from earlier this year.

**INVESTIGATOR’S REPORT**

Reporting period June 2021 to July 2021

Number of new complaints (19)

They are as follows:

\_\_Memorial complaints

\_\_Religious cemetery/funeral home memorial vendor-referred to Board of Morticians

\_\_COVID-19 relief request to cancel contract due to loss of employment

\_\_General maintenance

\_\_Exchange plan purchased from previous cemetery owner/both out of business

\_\_Contract performance on a floral contract

\_\_Burial location contested-request vs. completion

\_\_Insurance assignment regarding non-disclosure of 3rd party fee

Since the office has opened back up, there have been about six (6) to eight (8) inspections done.

**FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE**

**N/A**

**LICENSING SPECIALIST**

Renewals are being emailed to licensees and being processed from our licensing renewal list. There are only a few being mailed.

There are 866 current licenses, but as licenses are processed and days go by, that number can change anywhere from hourly (licenses being processed) to daily (licenses expiring). OCO has only 4 crematories licensed. Most of the crematories are licensed with the Board of Morticians.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Any legislative suggestions the Council gave to the Director last year were submitted to the Secretary again this year.

A bill to extend the OCO’s expiration date of 07/01/2023 until 07/01/2033, will be submitted during this legislative session.

The question arose, are the legislative suggestions to the Secretary’s bill, prioritized? The answer, yes, they are.

A draft form was submitted to the Director in preparation of the recently passed legislation HB5/SB192 that goes into effect October 1, 2021. The form is to be used by cemeteries seeking to switch to a Total Return distribution method from their perpetual care trusts as permitted under the new law. The draft form will be submitted to the Council members who may send any suggested changes and/or additions to the Director. The Director will present the final version of the form at the next business meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A language change in the regulations needs to be made to reflect the new law.

**COUNCIL CONCERNS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2021 and it will be an in-person/hybrid meeting at the Maryland Department of Labor.

There was a motion to adjourn.