

Arkansas State Board of Embalmers, Funeral Directors, Cemeteries, and Burial Services

Special Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

1 Commerce Way
Rebel Room, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR
1:02 – 1:28 PM

Chairman Bill Booker called the meeting to order. Member(s) present: Billy Curl, Professional Member, Chuck Dearman, Professional Member, Rausch Hodges, Professional Member, Stephanie Nepling, Consumer Member, Josephine Perry, Senior Citizens Member, James Bruce Smithson, Professional Member, and Steve Whitwell, Professional Member and Vice-Chair. Member(s) absent: Commissioner, Alan McClain, Professional Member

Staff present, Robert Akers, Director, Funeral Services Division, Darriel Ezell, Inspector/Investigator, Amy Goode, Executive Secretary, Amelia Vestal, Senior Securities Examiner, Amanda Gibson, Arkansas Insurance Department, Associate Counsel, and Jim Brader, General Counsel.

- 1) **Call to Order** – Introduction of Board members and staff.
- 2) **Complaints - To consider the complaint(s) on-file with the State Board**
[[A.C.A. §23-61-1111 Duties of the State Insurance Department](#)]
 - a) To determine whether the actions of Timeless Funeral Home are sufficient to warrant a temporary suspension of the establishment license and that of the manager.

Ms. Gibson stated that, the Board's Inspector, Darriel Ezell, had investigated into this matter. We have reason to believe that this funeral home had forged at least three (3) or four (4) death certificates. They forged signatures of at least one (1) coroner and (1) certifying physician. Mr. Ezell can give a few more details, but we are recommending the board take necessary action to temporarily suspend the license of the funeral home and the funeral director and embalmer licenses of the manager. Under the statute, the board may temporarily suspend a license without a hearing if the board determines that the public health, safety, or welfare requires immediate action. The hearing would have to be held within ten (10) days and would be added to the May 19th hearings.

Mr. Ezell, further stated, it was brought to his attention a discrepancy in some death certificates by a local crematory. Upon investigation, he found that one was allegedly signed by Gerone Hobbs, Pulaski County Coroner, there were discrepancies in that signature and after talking to Coroner Hobbs, he verified over the phone and in writing that it was not his signature. Another death certificate had a doctor's signature on it, and it was not his signature and he did not sign it. There was also another death certificate that had a doctor's signature on it, but again the doctor

verified that it was not his signature. There was one more death certificate that was completely counterfeit. They had taken a death certificate from someone that passed away previously, changed the name and social security number and presented it as another individual. They also had stated she died in Dewitt Hospital, but she had died in a Texarkana, TX hospital. All of these death certificates were forged for the benefit of getting cremations performed. Since then, there has been a deadline put on this funeral home to submit correct paperwork with legitimate signatures.

After discussion, the board did decide to temporarily suspend the establishment licenses of Timeless Funeral Service, LLC and the embalmers and funeral directors license of Michael McKinzie. The board did agree to allow them to finish up any at-need services currently in progress as of today, but no new cases could be accepted.

Motion made by Whitwell to temporarily suspend Timeless Funeral Service, LLC., license and their manager Michael McKinzie's licenses, seconded by Hodges, all in favor. Motion carried.

3) **Adjournment**

Motion made by Smithson to adjourn the special meeting at 1:28 PM, seconded by Curl, all in favor. Motion carried.