

**Steve Holton**

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**From:** Joan Farmer <farmerjoan14@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 11, 2019 10:40 AM  
**To:** Steve Holton  
**Subject:** November 18 Board minutes

**MONTANA CORONERS' ASSOCIATION**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 10, 2018**

The Montana Coroners' Association Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:20 P.M. by President Bob Rosipal at the Montana Club in Great Falls. Members present were President Bob Rosipal, Past President Greg Kirkwood, Vice President Wynn Meehan, Dick Brown, Steve Holton and Dan Whitted. Unable to attend were Secretary-Treasurer Terry Bullis, Trenton Harbough, Al Jenkins, and Sibley Jankovial. Present as guests were Dr. Rob Kurtzman and Scott Larsen.

The minutes of the last Board meeting on May 6, 2018 were read by Joan Farmer. A motion was made and seconded and the minutes were approved as read.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Since Terry was not present there was no Treasurer's report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Scholarships:**

Dick Brown agreed to continue handling the scholarships and in 2019 the scholarships will be offered to students in District 4.

**Web Site:**

Steve reported we needed to update the coroner list with the new coroners and he will work on this project. They have a new database to help the new coroners.

**Other Coroner Training Programs:**

Bob reported the State is presenting its Advanced Coroner Training in Great Falls on December 3, 4 and 5. The training will begin at 1:00 P.M. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and end at noon on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Perry has the speakers confirmed.

**Legislative Issues:**

Wynn stated POST made an administrative change and stated the 2 year recertification dates did not change, but credits are accepted from the December school, NBCIA, and MCA annual meeting training. If you go to training you have to keep all classroom information and if you are audited and do not have this documentation you will lose those classroom hours.

There was a discussion regarding inquests and so few independent coroners available. The Cascade County Attorney stated Dick Brown can do inquests in Cascade County since he's not acting as a Sheriff's Office representative, but as a coroner. The State statute is specific that a civilian coroner is the only one who can do an inquest.

Bob Rosipal stated Montana is one of ten states that is not involved in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). The Montana State Health and Human Services Department (HHS) was approached by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to participate with NVDRS. HHS submitted a grant proposal and the proposal was accepted. A part of the grant funding will be used to develop an on-line database for Montana death investigation. All Coroner and Medical Examiner information related to a death investigation case (photos, history, toxicology, autopsy report, etc) is to be entered by the coroner and medical examiner into the system. Dr. Kurtzman reported the company that handles this software program and data storage is Image Trend. The system is user friendly with fill in the blanks and also has open text capabilities. The system will be linked to Vital Statistics so death certificate information will automatically populate the death certificate in a timely (ten days) manner. The Image Trend software will make death certificate completion much easier. This software can be used to generate basic reports for law enforcement. Each jurisdiction will be able to access their cases and general information. The primary goal is to gather information in one location. Besides information related to violent deaths (homicides and suicides), other death information like drug overdoses, natural deaths and accidental death information will be gathered and available for immediate review and analysis. Since we do not currently have this type of information readily available, Montana loses millions of dollars in grants. Implementing this program will provide an opportunity to seek additional grants to benefit Montanans. Image Trend is already working with Montana Emergency Medical Services and health care providers in Montana.

American Board of Medico-Legal Death Investigation (ABMDI) update: Dr. Kurtzman reported individual coroners can become certified and that Cliff Mahoney, Yellowstone County Chief Deputy Coroner, has taken this training and successfully received his D-ABMDI certification. Steve reported one from his department has also been certified. Dr. Kurtzman explained the federal government would like all death investigators to be certified by 2020, but there is no formal mandate for certification. He looks at it as a gold standard since ABMDI certification is the best-known national certification for death investigators. Training for ABMDI certification is available in-state and out-of-state. Scott reported he is able to apply for grants that will cover the training and certification costs for approximately 5 people. Bob express his interest in this grant proposal and application. Dr. Kurtzman's goal is to have all death investigations consistent in Montana. He wants to make something that works for Montana. He explained that our state is a combined Coroner/Medical Examiner system. In his opinion, coroners perform the same work as a medical examiner investigator. In Montana the existing form of the Coroner system will be more cost effective and just as effective as a state-wide medical examiner system. Implementation of the new database will greatly facilitate the goal of uniform death investigation. Dr. Kurtzman stated that with the new system medical examiners will be able to perform daily review of the approximately 10 deaths/day that are reported by coroners.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **2019 Convention:**

The 2019 convention is scheduled for May 5, 6 and 7 at the GranTree in Bozeman We will have a Board meeting March 9, 2019 at the GranTree to make the final arrangements.

**Speakers:**

The Training Committee is Steve, Dan and Trent. Dan has contacted the New Mexico Medical Examiner who spoke to us several years ago. He was the one who discovered the hantavirus. The ME's office is to get back in touch with Dan.

Scott Larsen will work with Zack from Image Trend to have them speak to the membership about their program for as long as they need. Scott will get the bio from Zack and get it to Perry.

Steve recently went to a training program where the speaker wrote a book entitled "Killer Teens", and he had researched into the minds of what drove teens to kill and how to look for signs in hopes of preventing these acts. Steve will contact this speaker who can possibly do 8 hours. We can fill in the remaining time with local cases. Steve will handle the POST requirements with Perry.

**Raffle items:**

Terry will purchase what we choose.

**Items for membership:**

Wynn will work on this and get the information to Terry so he can order it.

**Other:**

Dr. Kurtzman reported we received approval for a fourth medical examiner. The new forensic pathologist will be located in Billings. We will be advertizing for this position soon. The new building in Billings will be completed in mid-December. We also received approval for the Missoula facility to be updated.

Greg is now on the Burial Preservation Board. This board wishes to have old remains that show up on the prairie or in the mountains be reported to them so they can send in archeologists to decide if they are native or white and let them do the removal instead of boxing them up and taking them to the ME. Greg asked on the reservation if they find an old burial site, which is probably native, how did they want it handled. They requested instead of boxing it up, they want the site guarded until the archeologist arrives. They don't want to pay law enforcement to guard the grave, but they haven't decided who should do this task. Greg would like 1-2 hrs to discuss this issue at the annual meeting. Bob reported a skull had been found on Smith River and they made a box to sift the dirt and finally found a spearhead which indicated it was native so they backed off and reported the site to the State Burial Preservation Board who sent trained personnel from the University to do the extraction. Bob said his department kept the skull with instructions that it be treated with respect. Bob wants to incorporate the training of old burial sites in the curriculum of the basic training school. There is a State statute that coroners must adhere to, that addresses this subject.

Scott stated they are going through accreditation now at the State Crime Lab. He also tried for a grant on OD deaths, but we didn't get it. If we had, the coroners would have been reimbursed for the OD deaths.

Mileage was taken as follows: Greg 400, Wynn 250, Steve 428, Dan 180 and Dick 220.

Wynn made a motion to pay the bills. The motion was seconded by Greg and unanimously approved. Dick made a motion the meeting be adjourned. Wynn seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 P.M.