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Georgia State Board of Funeral Service
237 Coliseum Drive
Macon, GA 31217

October 23, 2006
10:00 a.m.

WORK SESSION

MINUTES

The Georgia State Board of Funeral Service conducted a work session on October 23, 2006 at the office of the Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, GA.

Call to Order: The work session meeting was called to order to Vice-Chairman David Roach at 10:25 a.m., at which time he announced that the meeting was in Open Session.

A quorum was established with the following Board members present: David Roach, Thelon Hamby, Linda Ware, Nancy Kennedy, Terri Daviston, and Draper Watson, who joined the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Reagan Dean, Assistant Attorney General, and Steve Lindsey, Executive Director, were also present.

The purpose of the work session was to discuss issues related to possible legislative amendment and possible rule amendments.

Mr. Roach opened discussion by outlining three topics for discussion:

- 1) Rule 250-6-.06 (2) (g)
- 2) Definition of "selection room"
- 3) Discussion of previously proposed amendment to Rule 250-6-.06 that was not adopted at last meeting.
- 4) Reciprocity for Embalmers and Funeral Directors

After discussion of the issue, the Board members agreed that Rule 250-6-.06 (2) (g) should be left as it currently reads, and the Board members agreed to state their position that the law requires a funeral home to maintain a minimum of eight full-sized caskets in a display room. Representations may also be displayed, as long as the minimum number of required full-sized caskets is also maintained in the same display room.

The Board members agreed that a definition of “selection room” was not necessary to clarify the rule.

The Board discussed the previously proposed amendment to Rule 250-6-.06, focusing on the addition of subparagraph (r):

“(r) The funeral director or person in charge of the final disposition of a deceased body must provide identification of the deceased body prior to interment. The fine for violation of this requirement shall be \$250.00 per occurrence.”

The Board acknowledged that the current wording would not allow enforcement of the legal requirement of OCGA § 43-18-8 (a) (1) until just prior to burial of the body. The Board discussed amending the rule to require identification of the body prior to placing the body in the casket for viewing. The Board members agreed to seek the advice of the Attorney General’s Office on the issue.

The Board members discussed the issue of reciprocity for embalmers and funeral directors. OCGA § 43-18-42 lists the requirements for granting a license by reciprocity. After much discussion, the Board members agreed that a rule amendment to allow greater flexibility for the Board in granting reciprocity will not be possible without lowering the Board’s standards for licensure. The main issue with reciprocity is that most states do not require as many hours of apprenticeship or as many bodies embalmed as Georgia. The Board members agreed that legislative amendment is necessary to provide the Board with legal authority to grant licensure by endorsement, rather than by reciprocity. Licensure by endorsement will provide the Board the authority to grant licensure based upon an applicant’s experience as a licensed funeral director and/or embalmer, rather than comparing another state’s requirements for licensure with Georgia’s requirements.

The Board members briefly discussed companies that harvest bone and tissue from deceased human bodies, in light of recent news reports of illegal activity discovered in other states. The Board acknowledged that no such activity has been reported in Georgia; however, the Board members stated their desire to learn more about the process and to formulate a regulatory position to prevent such an occurrence in Georgia. Further discussions will take place on this issue.

The Board members also briefly discussed certification training for retort operators. Mr. Daviston agreed to bring more information to the Board regarding certification of the operators. The members agreed that developing standards of certification will help ensure citizens of Georgia that retort operators in the state are thoroughly trained and certified in the operation of retorts in the state.

The Board members expressed their desire to have the inspectors report on any funeral establishments which they have been unable to inspect in the past year. Mr. Lindsey will notify the inspectors and instruct them to review their inspections activities and report their findings to the Board at the next meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

These minutes were approved on November 14, 2006