

Georgia State Board of Funeral Service
October 28, 2008 Work Session
Minutes

The Georgia State Board of Funeral Service held a work session on October 28, 2008 at the office of the Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, GA. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

A quorum was established with the following board members present: David Roach, Chairman; Linda Ware, Vice-Chair; Nancy Kennedy; Draper Watson; Terry Daviston; and Thelon Hamby.

Staff members present were Steve Lindsey, Executive Director; and Reagan Dean, Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. Roach welcomed the participants to the work session. Participants in the work session were Kelley Bennett, Dia Johnson, and Randy Crenshaw, with RTI Donor Services; Patty Hutcheson, with Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service; Bruce Varnum, with the Georgia Eye Bank, Inc.; Kathleen Lilly and Tommy Churchill, with LifeLink of Georgia; James E. Shipp and David Hurt, with the Georgia Funeral Service Practitioners Association; Richard F. Ivey, with the Independent Funeral Directors of Georgia; Michael W. Nicodemus, Vice-President of the Cremation Association of North America; Brandon Malwitz, with Independent Funeral Directors of Georgia; and Alysia McDonald, with the Georgia Funeral Directors Association.

The participants had further discussions of items from the previous work session, which were:

- Self-directed cremations: Michael Nicodemus advised that any bill to authorize self-directed cremations must contain immunity for the funeral or crematory establishment. He stated that having a durable Power Of Attorney, naming a designated person lawfully recognized to administer the final disposition, is probably preferable to self-direction. Any bill presented should provide indemnity to the designated Power Of Attorney and to the funeral or crematory establishment.
- Unclaimed cremains: O.C.G.A. § 31-21-4 (b) was reviewed. The participants agreed that this citation should be referenced in O.C.G.A. § 43-18.
- Waiting period for cremations: Mr. Nicodemus stated that 48 hrs from time of death is common throughout the nation. The recommendation is 48 hrs from time of receipt by funeral home/crematory.
- Making unlawful the holding of cremated remains for payment: The participants agreed that O.C.G.A. § 43-18-5 (f) should be amended to include this language.
- Artificial implants: Mr. Nicodemus stated that disposition of artificial implants is handled differently throughout the nation. Mr. Hamby stated that Georgia law should set a minimum standard for disposition. Mr. Dean advised that O.C.G.A. § 43-18-8 requires identification of any artificial parts removed. The participants agreed that

authorization should be obtained to dispose of artificial implants. Mr. Hamby stated that this issue can possibly be handled through a rule amendment.

- Eye and tissue removal: Discussion centered on procurement in funeral establishments. RTI Donor Services presented their procedures to the participants. RTI is regulated by the FDA & American Association of Tissue Banks. In order to assure the public and practitioners that procurement organizations in Georgia are honorable and professional, representatives from RTI suggested that the law require procurement organizations to register with the Board to identify those organizations that are acceptable for procurement. This will ensure that procurement organizations are accredited by national accreditation organizations. RTI utilizes itemized consent forms required to be signed by family. Discussion involved compensation for use of the embalming room. RTI representatives stated that a maximum of \$1000 is offered to funeral homes, but the fee usually depends on what the establishment requires. RTI advises families that compensation is given to funeral establishments for use of the embalming rooms. RTI representatives suggested that outside procurement fees should be listed on the General Price List. LifeLink representatives advised that LifeLink does not perform procurements in funeral establishments. GA Eye Bank representative stated that GA Eye Bank does perform procurements in funeral establishments. The Board asked the procurement organizations to provide “Best Practices” for Board review. Funeral association representatives were asked to submit recommendations for review as well.
- Out-of-state transport of bodies: Transit permit is required, and is obtained through the registrar at the local Health Department. There is no law requiring embalming prior to transport.
- No further recommendations were made regarding the Funeral Director in Full & Continuous Charge.
- Alysia McDonald stated that the GFDA will support legislation to authorize disposition of a deceased person by majority vote of the heirs.

There being no further discussion, the work session adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the November 18, 2008 meeting.