

**BOARD OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS & EMBALMERS
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON FUNERAL INTERNS
MEETING MINUTES**

The Virginia Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers Ad Hoc Committee on Funeral Interns met on Thursday, July 13, 2017 at the Department of Health Professions, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor, Hearing Room #3, Henrico, Virginia.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Blair H. Nelsen, FSL, Board Member, Committee Chair
R. Thomas Slusser, Jr., FSL, Board Member
Junius H. Williams, Jr., Board Member

DHP STAFF PRESENT:

Corie E. Tillman Wolf, Executive Director
Lynne Helmick, Deputy Executive Director, Discipline
Elaine Yeatts, Senior Policy Analyst
Asia Pham, Intern

CALL TO ORDER:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Funeral Interns meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m.

Blair Nelsen, Committee Chair, provided Committee members with the background for this issue, which was discussed at the annual meeting of the International Conference earlier this year, and which prompted a look at Virginia's forms, statutes and regulations.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments were made.

DISCUSSION:

Committee members discussed the existing statute and regulations related to internships. Ms. Tillman Wolf provided Committee members with examples of confusion created by the current language, as well as the difficulties staff members encounter in processing applications.

Committee members discussed the language in Code Section 54.1-2817 related to the time period for completion of internships. The multiple time periods referenced in the statute and regulations create confusion regarding the length of the internship and when credit for hours is lost. Committee members further discussed extensions of internships and the current procedure.

Recommendation - Committee members agreed that a recommendation be made to the full Board that the statute be changed to clarify these issues:

“Credit shall not be allowed for any period of internship that has been completed more than ~~three~~ five years prior to application for licensure ~~or more than five years~~”

~~prior to examination for licensure.~~ If all requirements for licensure are not completed within five years of initial application for internship, the Board may deny an *extension to an existing internship or an additional internship.*”

Committee members discussed whether there should be any proposed changes to the regulations related to the time period for internships. Committee members also discussed the current guidance document related to extensions.

Recommendation - Committee members agreed that a recommendation be made to the full Board that the language in 18VAC65-40-140 be amended to include language that an internship should be completed in no less than 18 months and no more than 60 months, and that “for extenuating circumstances, the Board may grant up to two one-year extensions for completion of the internship requirements.”

Committee members discussed issues related to applications for intern supervisors. Ms. Tillman Wolf explained difficulties encountered by staff under the current regulations. Once a supervisor is registered, currently there is no end date. Committee members discussed a per application fee versus a yearly renewal fee.

Recommendation - Committee members agreed that a recommendation be made to the full Board that intern supervisors be subject to the yearly renewal cycle, with a yearly renewal fee of \$25.

Committee members discussed that current prohibitions exist for interns related to preneed contracts in the regulations. Committee members discussed that a reminder about this issue would be appropriate for a Board newsletter.

Committee members discussed identification of interns on name tags, communications to avoid confusion for members of the public regarding whom they may be working with at an establishment.

Recommendation - Committee members agreed that a recommendation be made to the full Board that 18VAC65-40-130 be amended to include language regarding identification of interns on name tags, business cards, communications, and correspondence. Committee members further agreed that a recommendation to the Board be made to incorporate the intern identification issue in a guidance document pending regulatory action and to mention the issue in an upcoming newsletter.

Committee members discussed the issue of whether intern applicants should be required to undergo a criminal background check based upon the statutory language that prohibits internships for those convicted of embezzlement or a violation of 18.2-126(B). Board counsel may provide additional guidance on this issue.

Committee members discussed whether there should be recommendations for changes to the current internship report forms required for each 1,000 hours of internship. The current forms’ request for a breakdown in how weekly hours are spent can be hard for interns to quantify over a 6 month/1,000 hour period. Committee members discussed whether there should be more of a focus on areas of training during the reporting period versus estimation of weekly hours in certain categories. Committee members discussed whether there should be additional areas for knowledge included.

Committee members further discussed what information on proficiency is needed by the Board for the application process.

Committee members also discussed the inclusion of attestations that the reported hours (1,000 each report) have been completed in the specified training areas. Committee members discussed the inclusion of language regarding the completion of 3,000 hours “in competency areas to be determined by the Board” in 18VAC65-40-130.

The Chair called for a break at 10:59 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:06 a.m.

Recommendation - Committee members agreed that a recommendation be made to the Board that the forms be revised/updated to include additional training content areas and related attestations, rather than weekly hour estimates and proficiency scores. The revisions should include additions to the specific areas of knowledge, including Virginia Laws *and Regulations*, Cremation, Anatomical Donation, and Organ/Tissue Donation. The attestations should include an attestation from the intern supervisor that the intern’s practice/conduct during his/her internship complied with Virginia laws and regulations related to the practice of funeral services.


Recommendation - Committee members further agreed that Board member input and suggestions for the forms should be requested and that the Internship Committee be reconvened to craft the forms for approval by the Board.

Committee members further discussed a recommendation for inclusion of the issue of organ/tissue donation on an upcoming agenda.


The recommendations will be presented to the full Board on July 18, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.



Blair H. Nelsen, FSL, Chair



Corie Tillman Wolf, J.D., Executive Director

7/18/17

Date

7/18/17

Date