

The Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers convened for a full board meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at the Department of Health Professions, Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor, Board Room #4, Henrico, Virginia.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Jonathan Hines, FSL, Vice-President
K. Scott Hickey, MD, Secretary-Treasurer
Blair Nelsen, FSL
Tommy Owens, Citizen Member
Amanda Perry, FSL
John Piotrowski, FSL
R. Thomas Slusser, FSL
Eric Wray, II, FSL

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Jason Graves, FSL

DHP STAFF PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:

Erin Barrett, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Sarah Georgen, Board Administrator
Annette Kelley, MS, CSAC, Deputy Executive Director
Matt Novak, Agency Regulatory Coordinator
Arne Owens, Agency Director
Cecelia Robinson, Senior Licensing Program Coordinator
Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director
Joi Yancey, Administrative Support Specialist

BOARD COUNSEL:

Sara Blose, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Board Counsel

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:

Wendy Ashworth, Senior Inspector, DHP Enforcement Division
Shaun Anderson, Department of Health, Office of Vital Records
Angela Bezik, Virginia Funeral Directors Association
Shenae Cooper Drummond, Virginia Morticians' Association/Cooper & Humbles Funeral Company*
Denise Cox, Department of Health, Office of Vital Records
Twila Dickerson, Regulatory Support Services
Krystina Diman, Virginia Funeral Directors Association*
Greg Faulkners, Sr., Virginia Funeral Directors Association/Faulkner Funeral Homes*

Barbara Hodgdon, PhD, Deputy Director, DHP Healthcare Workforce Data Center
Mariah Merhige Fitzhugh, Keeny Group/Association of Independent Funeral Homes of Virginia
Barry Robinson, Virginia Morticians' Association
Yetty Shobo, PhD, Director, DHP Healthcare Workforce Data Center

**Participant indicates attendance to count toward continuing education requirements*

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hines called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and asked the Board Members, staff, and Board Counsel to introduce themselves.

With eight Board Members present at the meeting, a quorum was established.

Mr. Hines read the mission of the Board, which is also the mission of the Department of Health Professions (DHP).

Mr. Hines reminded the Board Members and audience about microphones, computer agenda materials, breaks, sign-in sheets, and attendance for continuing education requirements.

Ms. Tillman Wolf then read the emergency egress instructions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hines opened the floor to any edits or corrections regarding the draft minutes for the Board Meeting and Examination Committee Meeting held on April 15, 2025. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as presented.

ORDERING OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Hines opened the floor to any additional items to add to the agenda.

Ms. Tillman Wolf recommended an amendment to the agenda, noting that Wendy Ashworth, Senior Inspector, would deliver the Inspections Report. Additionally, Shaun Anderson and Denise Cox from the Department of Health, Office of Vital Records, would provide updates in place of Seth Austin, State Registrar.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Wray, properly seconded by Mr. Owens, the Board voted to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barry Robinson, representing the Virginia Morticians' Association (VMA), submitted written public comment (Attachment A). He commended Ms. Georgen and staff for their professionalism when contacting the Board. He announced an upcoming educational meeting scheduled for November 2025 and offered remarks regarding the periodic review of preneed regulations, expressing his willingness to participate in the process.

Shenae Cooper Drummond, President, VMA, thanked Mr. Robinson for expressing concerns on behalf of VMA.

BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION

Mr. Hines recognized past Board member, Lacyn Barton, for her service and dedication to the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers from 2021 to 2025. He announced that Ms. Barton's first term expired on June 30, 2025, and provided brief remarks on her tenure with the Board.

AGENCY REPORT

Mr. Owens welcomed the Board Members back to the Perimeter Center and welcomed Ms. Perry and Mr. Owens on their recent appointment to the Board.

Mr. Owens stated that DHP remains focused on internal operations and ongoing initiatives, with a continued emphasis on improving efficiency across all areas.

Mr. Owens stated that for the upcoming 2026 General Assembly session beginning in January, DHP has submitted legislative proposals to the Secretary's Office. He said that the proposals are still under review, and that updates will be provided as developments occur. Additionally, Mr. Owens stated that the General Assembly will be reviewing the next biennial budget, which is set to take effect on July 1, 2026.

With no questions, Mr. Owens concluded his report.

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director's Report – Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director

Welcome and Congratulations

Ms. Tillman Wolf introduced and welcomed Amanda Perry, FSL, and Tommy Owens, Citizen Member, who were recently appointed to the Board. She also introduced Sara Blose, Senior Assistant Attorney General, as new Board Counsel. Further, she introduced Cecelia Robinson, Senior Licensing Program Coordinator, and Joi Yancey, Administrative Support Specialist, as Board Staff.

Board Updates

Ms. Tillman Wolf reported that a Board News Brief was distributed to licensees in July, which included legislative updates, pending regulatory actions, facility information updates, application availability, a scam alert, and public resources. She noted that 2,323 emails were sent, achieving a 76% open rate—significantly higher than the healthcare industry average of 24%. The most frequently accessed links were related to pending regulatory actions, License Lookup, and Case Decisions.

She also announced that an additional communication from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is expected to be sent to licensees in the coming days.

Board Updates

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided updates to the Board regarding the implementation of recommendations related to the inspection process.

She reported collaboration with Ms. Ashworth from the Enforcement Division to revise and update inspection forms. She noted that a Facility Planning Assessment has been developed to collect additional data for tracking within the licensing database. She stated that the purpose of this initiative was to improve the timeliness and scheduling of inspections, ultimately enhancing service to licensees.

She announced that a renewal survey, coordinated by the Enforcement Division, will be distributed in the coming weeks to assist with planning efforts. She encouraged Board members and professional organizations to promote participation.

Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that updates had been made to Board applications and checklists concerning hardship waivers due to the elimination of monthly vital records reports. A recent audit was conducted of Board files regarding the non-renewal of previously granted hardship waivers and failure to name a permanent Manager of Record within the required timeframe.

International Conference Updates

Ms. Tillman Wolf announced that Ms. Perry attended the Board Member Training offered by the Conference in September 2025.

She also reported on staff participation on national committees, noting that Ms. Georgen is serving on the Model Application Advisory Committee, and Ms. Tillman Wolf serves on the Nominating Committee.

She noted that updated licensing regulations from the Conference were distributed to Board members for review.

Ms. Tillman Wolf announced that the Conference 2026 Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 24–26, 2026, in Louisville, Kentucky. She encouraged Board Member participation and asked those interested in attending to contact her directly.

Ms. Tillman Wolf reported on updates to the Virginia Laws, Rules, and Regulations (LRR) Exam. She announced that the updated examination forms went live on October 1, 2025. She reported that from September 2024 to September 2025, 97 applicants took the LRR exam with a 94% pass rate. She stated that she would report back to the Board with any data on the pass rate related to the updated forms.

2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Ms. Tillman Wolf announced the schedule for the 2026 Board meetings.

- January 13, 2026
- April 14, 2026
- July 14, 2026

- October 20, 2026

Notes and Reminders

Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that a Conflict of Interest Form was provided for Board members' review and signature, based on a new policy from the agency, ensuring that Board Members notify the Executive Director as soon as possible if there is a conflict of interest for disciplinary case review.

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided reminders to the Board regarding updates to contact information and Board-related travel. She thanked members for their service and dedication to the Board.

With no questions, Ms. Tillman Wolf concluded her report.

Discipline Report – Annette Kelley, MS, CSAC, Deputy Executive Director

As of August 31, 2025, Ms. Kelley reported the following disciplinary statistics:

- 10 Patient Care Cases
 - 0 at Informal
 - 0 at Formal
 - 2 at Enforcement
 - 6 at Probable Cause
 - 2 at APD
- 90 Non-Patient Care Cases
 - 1 at Informal
 - 0 at Formal
 - 26 at Enforcement
 - 61 at Probable Cause
 - 2 at APD
- 9 at Compliance

Ms. Kelley reported the following Total Cases Received and Closed:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| • Q4 2022 – 28/21 | • Q3 2024 – 19/28 |
| • Q1 2023 – 5/23 | • Q4 2024 – 21/37 |
| • Q2 2023 – 10/21 | • Q1 2025 – 17/17 |
| • Q3 2023 – 11/13 | • Q2 2025 – 22/4 |
| • Q4 2023 – 27/11 | • Q3 2025 – 24/25 |
| • Q1 2024 – 24/22 | • Q4 2025 – 15/11 |
| • Q2 2024 – 23/32 | |

With no questions, Ms. Kelley concluded her report.

Licensure Report – Sarah Georgen, Board Administrator

Licensure Statistics – All Licenses

Ms. Georgen presented licensure statistics and trends in license count.

License	December 31, 2024 (Q2 2025)	June 30, 2025 (Q4 2025)	Difference (+/-)
Funeral Service Licensees	1,609	1,566	-43
Funeral Director	64	68	+4
Embalmer Only	4	4	0
Supervisors	304	348	+44
Funeral Service Interns	191	167	-24
Funeral Directing Interns	40	40	0
Embalmer Interns	5	4	-1
Funeral Establishments	425	428	+3
Branch Establishments	91	89	-2
Crematories	139	140	+1
CE Providers	11	12	+1
Courtesy Card Holders	145	134	-9
Surface Transport & Removal Svc.	53	50	-3
Total (*not incl. supervisors)	2,777	2,702	-75

Ms. Georgen reviewed the trends of licensure counts since Q4–2020.

Laws, Rules, and Regulations (LRR) Exam Scores

Ms. Georgen presented the LRR examination data from September 2024 through September 2025. A total of 97 exam attempts were recorded. Of those, 91 candidates passed with an average score of 86%, while the six unsuccessful attempts had an average score of 71%.

2025 CE Provider Renewal Notifications

Ms. Georgen reported that the 2025 CE Provider licensure renewal notifications have been completed and distributed.

Mr. Wray requested clarification regarding the examination scores and the number of licensed funeral directors.

With no further questions, Ms. Georgen concluded her report.

Inspections Report – Wendy Ashworth, Senior Inspector, Enforcement Division

Ms. Ashworth presented the Inspections Report to the Board, highlighting the work of the Enforcement Division’s inspections team, inspection data, regional coverage, and future planning efforts.

She reported that four full-time Senior Inspectors are assigned to the Central, Northern Virginia, Tidewater, and Southwest regions, with one part-time Inspector supporting all regions. Ms. Ashworth reviewed past inspection data, including investigations by region and total inspections completed in prior years. She noted challenges in the completion of routine inspections, such as staff turnover and temporary lapses in coverage, as well as adequate time for training of new inspectors. She further attributed delays over the past year to the prioritization of EMS inspections conducted for the Board of Pharmacy, as well as new facility applications for all impacted boards.

Looking ahead, Ms. Ashworth outlined a plan to prioritize inspections for the Boards of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine. The plan included setting a consistent number of monthly inspections, reducing investigative assignments for Inspectors, coordinating inspections for efficiency, incorporating virtual inspections, and utilizing an upcoming survey to support planning.

Ms. Ashworth responded to questions from Dr. Hickey regarding repeat inspections and Board processes. Mr. A. Owens provided clarification on inspection funding and financial challenges across the boards. Mr. T. Owens requested clarification on procedures for intermittent inspections related to violations.

With no further questions, Ms. Ashworth concluded her report.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT – Sara Blose, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Ms. Blose had no matters to report to the Board.

BREAK

The Board took a break at 10:45 a.m. and reconvened at 10:56 a.m.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Examination Committee Report – R. Thomas Slusser, FSL

Mr. Slusser provided a brief report on the activities of the Board’s Examination Committee.

With no questions, he concluded his report.

Report from Board Member Training – International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards – Amanda Perry, FSL

Ms. Perry provided a report on the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards’ Board Member Training, which she attended in September 2025. The training, titled “Regulatory Board Service 101,” focused on the roles and responsibilities of board members. She shared a copy of the Model Practice Act provided during the conference and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend.

Ms. Perry noted that the training included 22 participants representing 16 jurisdictions, including Canada. She also highlighted potential future opportunities for engagement with the Conference.

With no questions from the Board, Ms. Perry concluded her report.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REPORT

Legislative Report; Review of Potential Agency Legislative Requests – Erin Barrett, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

Ms. Barrett reviewed a draft legislative proposal included in the agenda materials, which seeks to amend the Callahan Act. The proposed amendments would allow fee actions to be implemented through exempt regulatory action, permit the Department to request general fund appropriations for discrete costs, and authorize the recovery of costs associated with investigations and disciplinary proceedings.

Ms. Barrett noted that this proposal was developed jointly with the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), which the Callahan Act also governs. It was emphasized that this is a draft proposal only, and any legislative initiative must be approved by the Agency Director and the Governor’s Office before proceeding. Upon approval, the agency may begin identifying patrons for the proposed legislation. She stated that no action was required from the Board at this time and that the item was presented for informational purposes only.

Ms. Barrett and Mr. Owens answered questions from the Board regarding the proposed legislation.

With no other questions, Ms. Barrett concluded her report.

Report on Status of Regulatory Actions - Matt Novak, Agency Regulatory Coordinator

Mr. Novak provided an overview related to pending regulatory actions.

BOARD ACTION

Review and Approve Guidance Document 65-___, Disposition of Disciplinary Cases for Failure to Designate Manager of Record or to Obtain or Renew Hardship Waiver for Manager of Record

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided information to the Board regarding a new proposed guidance document on the disposition of disciplinary cases for failing to designate a Manager of Record or to obtain or renew a hardship waiver for a Manager of Record.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Slusser, properly seconded by Mr. Wray, the Board voted to approve the Guidance Document for “Disposition of Disciplinary Cases for Failure to Designate Manager of Record or to Obtain or Renew Hardship Waiver for Manager of Record” as presented. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Board Guidance on Funeral Interns Observing Provision of Preneed Funeral Services

Ms. Tillman Wolf addressed recent confusion among practitioners regarding the role of funeral interns in observing preneed funeral services. She clarified that the observation of preneed arrangements has always been a required component of the internship process and is supported by existing regulations.

She explained that prior regulatory changes were intended to address concerns about unlicensed individuals or interns directly engaging in preneed planning and sales, not to prohibit observation.

Review and Approve Guidance Document 65-3, Funeral Interns Observing Provision of Preneed Funeral Services

Ms. Tillman Wolf presented a draft Guidance Document that would clarify the Board’s regulations regarding funeral interns and preneed planning and sales.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Owens, properly seconded by Mr. Nelsen, the Board voted to approve the Guidance Document 65-3 on “Funeral Interns Observing Provision of Preneed Funeral Services” as presented. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Motion - Clarification of the Board's Regulations Regarding Funeral Interns and Preneed Planning and Sales

Until the Guidance Document is effective, Ms. Tillman Wolf stated the Board may wish to consider a motion to clarify the role of funeral interns in observing preneed planning and sales.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Piotrowski, properly seconded by Mr. Wray, the Board voted to interpret the Board’s existing regulations to permit funeral interns to observe preneed funeral planning and sales. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

PRESENTATION

Updates from Office of Vital Records - Shaun Anderson, Field Service Representative, and Denise Cox, Senior Field Service Representative, Virginia Department of Health, Office of Vital Records

The Board received a presentation from Mr. Anderson and Ms. Cox from the Office of Vital Records, who provided an overview of recent legislative changes and procedural updates affecting the funeral service

profession. The presentation included clarification on reporting requirements, updates to the amendment process for vital records, and guidance on how funeral service providers can navigate administrative and judicial procedures when corrections are needed.

The presenters also discussed enhancements to the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS), aimed at improving efficiency and communication between funeral directors, medical certifiers, and state agencies. These improvements are expected to streamline the amendment process and reduce delays in record completion. Additionally, the Board was informed of ongoing efforts to address challenges related to compliance and coordination among stakeholders.

Future considerations were also shared, including potential policy changes and system updates that may impact how specific requests are submitted and processed. The presenters responded to questions from Board members and offered support for continued collaboration to ensure accurate and timely vital records management.

2025 Report – Virginia’s Funeral Service Provider Workforce – Yetty Shobo, PhD, Director, and Barbara Hodgdon, PhD, Deputy Director, Healthcare Workforce Data Center

Dr. Hodgdon provided a summary of the findings of the 2025 Workforce Report for Funeral Service Providers.

Upon a **MOTION** by Ms. Perry, properly seconded by Mr. Piotrowski, the Board voted to accept the 2025 Workforce Report for Funeral Service Providers as presented. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

ELECTIONS

Mr. Hines stated that in accordance with the Bylaws, during the first meeting of the organizational year, the Board shall elect from its members a President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

Mr. Hines provided remarks regarding the process for making additional floor nominations.

Mr. Hines opened the floor for nominations for President of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers.

Mr. Slusser nominated Mr. Hines for the position of President. There were no other nominations. The nominations were closed.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Owens, properly seconded by Mr. Wray, the Board voted to elect Mr. Hines as President of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Mr. Hines opened the floor for nominations for Vice-President of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers.

Dr. Hickey was nominated for the position of Vice-President. There were no other nominations. The nominations were closed.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Owens, properly seconded by Mr. Piotrowski, the Board voted to elect Dr. Hickey as Vice-President of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Mr. Hines opened the floor for nominations for Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers.

Mr. Nelsen was nominated for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. There were no other nominations. The nominations were closed.

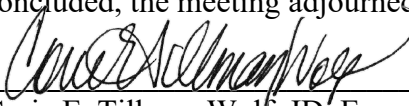
Upon a **MOTION** by Dr. Hickey, properly seconded by Mr. Slusser, the Board voted to elect Mr. Nelsen as Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date is January 13, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hines called for any objections to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections and with all business concluded, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.



Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director

April 14, 2026

Date



Public Comments : Clarification of Interns Participation in Pre Need Arrangements

From mrbarryde@aol.com <mrbarryde@aol.com>

Date Fri 10/3/2025 11:09 AM

To Tillman Wolf, Corie (DHP) <corie.wolf@dhp.virginia.gov>

Cc Donita Greene <dgreeneccbc@gmail.com>; Connie Steele <serenity_24016@yahoo.com>; C. CARTERS <christophercarter_822@msn.com>; Michael Hamlar <mhamlar@gmail.com>

To the Executive Director, President, and Members of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers

On behalf the Virginia Morticians Association, Inc., we would like to get clarification on 18VAC65-30-50: Solicitation: part B: ***Funeral interns shall not engage in preneed planning or sales.***

18VAC65-40-130 states that the interns should: Receive training in all areas of funeral service to include assisting with 25 funerals, 25 arrangement conferences, and 25 embalmings. We feel engaging in the planning or sales of preneed under supervision is a part of funeral services.

Preneed may be the only phrase of internship that interns can not participate in but, it is on the state examination. In addition, on the Intern report forms, there is a line item that asks the question concerning receiving training in funeral arranging (At Need and Preneed Yes /No)

We feel this is an issue that needs to be reviewed. If an intern can assist with embalming and funeral directing with supervision, they should be allowed to participate in a preneed arrangement conference with supervision.

Our goal is to ensure our newly licensed funeral directors are fully prepared and knowledgeable to continue to serve at the funeral home. Hopefully, this will prevent discrepancies in the preneed section of future inspections.

Thank you for the time and attention on this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barry D. Robinson
Legislative Chairman
The Virginia Morticians' Association, Inc