

The Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers convened for a full board meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 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, President
K. Scott Hickey, MD, Vice-President
Blair Nelsen, FSL, Secretary-Treasurer
Jason Graves, FSL
Tommy Owens, Citizen Member
Amanda Perry, FSL
John Piotrowski, FSL
R. Thomas Slusser, FSL

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Eric Wray, II, FSL

DHP STAFF PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:

Hope Adams, Senior Inspector, Enforcement Division
Emily Tatum, Adjudication Specialist, Administrative Proceedings Division
David E. Brown, Agency Director
Sarah Georgen, Board Administrator
Annette Kelley, MS, CSAC, Deputy Executive Director
Melody Morton, Deputy Director, Enforcement Division
Cecelia Robinson, Senior Licensing Program Coordinator
Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director
Florence Venable, Discipline and Operations Manager
Joi Yancey, Administrative Support Specialist

BOARD COUNSEL:

Sara Blose, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Board Counsel

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT:

Gregg Faulkner, Sr., Virginia Funeral Directors Association/Faulkner Funeral Homes
Paul Harris, Regulatory Support Services
Barry Robinson, Virginia Morticians' Association

**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 held on October 7, 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.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barry Robinson, representing the Virginia Morticians' Association (VMA), provided verbal public comment. He extended an invitation to attend the VMA annual convention from June 17-20, 2026, noting that Ms. Tillman Wolf was scheduled to provide a presentation on Virginia Laws and Regulations. He also highlighted that there will be a free day of exhibits during the event. Mr. Robinson thanked the Board and staff for their ongoing work and assistance, and he welcomed Dr. Brown back to the Department of Health Professions.

AGENCY REPORT

Mr. Hines announced that Dr. Brown was recently appointed to serve as Agency Director and previously served in that role from 2014 to 2022.

Dr. Brown provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of Board members, emphasizing that, while changes in administration and political leadership occur, the Board's role remains the same: to protect the public. He explained that Board members are part of the executive branch and that the Governor's position on legislation represents the Board's position.

Drawing on his prior experience as a member of the Board of Medicine, Dr. Brown acknowledged the significant effort required to serve on the Board and stressed that the value of the experience depends on the commitment invested. He reminded members that their primary goal is public protection and cautioned against conflicts of interest when serving in leadership roles within professional associations. He reiterated that individual Board members cannot speak on behalf of the Board and should avoid providing unofficial guidance on practice matters. Dr. Brown encouraged members to rely on Board staff for support, noting that active engagement in board organizations is beneficial for networking and knowledge sharing. He concluded by expressing appreciation for the Board's executive staff and their efforts to make the Board member experience productive and positive.

With no questions, Dr. Brown concluded his report.

STAFF REPORTS

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

Board Updates

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided an overview of the Board's activities for 2025, upcoming initiatives for 2026, and recent process changes. She reported that in 2025, the Board updated the Laws, Rules, and Regulations (LRR) Examination, completed an audit of Board records for establishments and crematories, and implemented updated processes for Managers of Record and hardship waivers. The Board issued three new and one updated Guidance Document and adopted revised Bylaws. Board News Briefs and email blasts were distributed in July, October, and December, and staff conducted training sessions for provider associations. She also noted that the Board welcomed new staff, counsel, and Board members. Additional accomplishments included the implementation of recommendations to streamline the inspection process, with a survey link sent to licensees in December and during renewals.

Ms. Tillman Wolf also outlined recent changes to processes, noting that, effective April 1, 2026, any Board-related training on laws and regulations or preneed requirements will be provided by Board staff. The online training request form remains available.

Looking ahead to 2026, she stated that Board staff anticipates expanded online applications, including for changes of Manager of Record, as well as continued updates to applications, Board records, and the Board's website. Regulatory activity will continue, including a periodic review of the regulations. She further stated that an increase in inspections is expected. She noted that preparations will continue for the transition to an updated licensing database system in the next few years.

International Conference Updates

Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that the 2026 Annual Meeting was held February 24–26, 2026, in Louisville, Kentucky, with Mr. Hines, Mr. Nelsen, and Ms. Georgen in attendance.

Ms. Tillman Wolf announced that the upcoming 2027 Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 23–25, 2027, in Hilton Head, South Carolina. She asked anyone interested in attending the meeting to notify her.

Recent Information from CANA

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided updates from the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) regarding emerging disposition methods and related certifications. She further stated that the Crematory Operations Certification has been expanded to include training on the operation of both flame-based and alkaline hydrolysis equipment.

She reported that CANA recently launched its Natural Organic Reduction (NOR) Operators Certification. Ms. Tillman Wolf further stated that CANA currently projects that approximately 0.3% of national dispositions occur through either alkaline hydrolysis or natural organic reduction.

Expenditure and Revenue Summary as of June 30, 2025

Ms. Tillman Wolf presented the Expenditure and Revenue Summary as of June 30, 2025.

Cash Balance as of June 30, 2025	\$869,540
YTD FY 2025 Revenue	\$766,975
<u>YTD FY 2025 Direct & Allocated Expenditures + Cash Transfers</u>	<u>(\$666,305)</u>
Cash Balance as of June 30, 2025	\$970,210

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided an overview of the Board’s financial position and year-end cash balance. She explained that the Board’s cash balance at the end of each fiscal year serves as the primary funding source for Board operations during the months between renewal periods, when the Board typically receives its largest revenue inflows. She noted that overall expenses in FY25 were lower than those in FY24, which totaled \$739,064. This decrease was largely due to a reduction in inspection activity during FY25, spanning mid-2024 through mid-2025. Historically, enforcement-related costs, primarily inspection expenses, have accounted for approximately 25 percent of the Board’s total expenditures. In both FY24 and FY25, however, these costs dropped to between 16 and 20 percent.

Ms. Tillman Wolf further stated that, with the current increase in inspections and the ongoing effort to eliminate overdue inspections, the Board should anticipate higher enforcement expenditures in the coming fiscal year.

Ms. Tillman Wolf reported positive news regarding the Board’s financial stability and stated that the Board currently has adequate funds to cover its expenses until renewal revenue replenishes the balance.

2026 Board Meeting Schedule

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

- July 14, 2026
- October 20, 2026

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

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

As of February 28, 2026, Ms. Kelley reported the following disciplinary statistics:

- 25 Patient Care Cases
 - 0 at Informal
 - 0 at Formal
 - 5 at Enforcement
 - 17 at Probable Cause
 - 3 at APD

- 101 Non-Patient Care Cases
 - 0 at Informal
 - 1 at Formal
 - 20 at Enforcement
 - 72 at Probable Cause
 - 8 at APD

- 11 at Compliance

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

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| • 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 | • Q1 2026 – 29/5 |
| • Q3 2024 – 19/28 | • Q2 2026 – 28/28 |

Ms. Kelley announced the implementation of password protection for probable cause review cases to enhance the security of file transmissions.

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, 2025 (Q2 2026)	March 31, 2026 (Q3 2026)	Difference (+/-)
Branch Establishment	91	95	+4
Continuing Education Provider	13	13	0
Courtesy Card	143	147	+4

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Crematories	141	142	+1
Embalmer	5	7	+2
Embalming Internship	5	6	+1
Funeral Director	74	85	+11
Funeral Directing Internship	47	49	+2
Funeral Establishment	433	433	0
Funeral Service Internship	189	190	+1
Funeral Service Licensee	1,608	1,626	+18
Surface Transportation and Removal Services	54	57	+3
Funeral Supervisor	408	437	+29
Total (*not incl. supervisors)	2,803	2,850	+47

Ms. Georgen reviewed the trends of licensure counts since Q1–2021.

2026 Licensure Renewal Notifications

Ms. Georgen provided information regarding the completed 2026 licensure renewal notifications.

Licensure Renewals – All Licenses as of April 14, 2026

Ms. Georgen presented renewal statistics for 2026.

License	Renewed	Not Renewed	Renewed %
Branch Establishment	87	2	97.75%
Courtesy Card	125	15	89.29%
Crematories	138	3	97.87%
Embalmer	4	0	100%
Embalming Internship	3	3	50.00%
Funeral Director	65	6	91.55%
Funeral Directing Internship	25	16	60.98%
Funeral Establishment	407	24	94.43%

Funeral Service Internship	119	35	77.27%
Funeral Service Licensee	1,501	95	94.05%
Surface Transportation and Removal Services	44	11	80.00%

Customer Satisfaction

Ms. Georgen provided information on the 2025 fiscal year customer satisfaction survey results.

Call Trends

Ms. Georgen provided information on the call trends since 2019.

On the Horizon

Ms. Georgen provided information regarding the upcoming 2026 licensure renewal notifications for CE Providers, application updates pending, and the creation of online Manager of Record change requests and payments.

Updates for Expense Reimbursement Vouchers

Ms. Georgen provided information on the 2026 updates to the IRS standard mileage rate. She also provided a reminder regarding the Virginia Department of Accounts remittance electronic data interchange.

DHP's Travel Policy

Ms. Georgen provided reminders and information regarding DHP's travel policy.

With no questions, Ms. Georgen concluded her report.

Inspections Report – Melody Morton, Deputy Director, Enforcement Division

Ms. Morton expressed her appreciation to Wendy Ashworth, Senior Inspector in the Enforcement Division, for her assistance in preparing the inspection report presentation.

She announced that the Inspection team was now fully staffed and introduced Ms. Adams as a new part-time Inspector. She noted that all Inspectors have completed their training and are actively conducting inspections.

Ms. Morton reviewed historical inspection data, including investigations by region and the total number of inspections completed in previous years. She then presented the total number of inspections completed between October 2025 and March 2026, along with a regional breakdown for the Central, Northern Virginia, Tidewater, and Southwest areas. Additionally, she provided the number of investigations assigned to the Inspectors from January 2025 through March 2026.

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

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT – Sara Blose, Senior Assistant Attorney General

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

COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Ms. Georgen presented a report on behalf of herself, Mr. Hines, and Mr. Nelsen on the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards' Annual Meeting, which occurred in February 2026.

With no questions from the Board, Mr. Hines, Mr. Nelsen, and Ms. Georgen concluded their reports.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REPORT

Legislative Report – 2026 General Assembly Session – Corie Tillman Wolf

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided a report on bills of interest from the 2026 General Assembly session.

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

Report on Status of Regulatory Actions – Corie Tillman Wolf

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided an overview related to pending regulatory actions.

BOARD ACTION

Adoption of the Electronic Meeting Policy (Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.3)

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided information on the electronic participation policy for meetings, which is required by the Code to be adopted annually.

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Slusser, and properly seconded by Dr. Hickey, the Board voted to readopt the electronic participation policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

NEW BUSINESS

Clarification Regarding Applicability of Declinable Preneed Funeral Guarantee Fee Pending Finalization of Emergency Regulations

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided clarification concerning the status of the emergency regulations required by the legislation for the declinable preneed funeral guarantee fee that became effective on July 1, 2024 (and that was amended in 2025).

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She explained that although the 2024 legislation directed the Board to promulgate emergency regulations to implement the legislation, those regulatory changes could not take effect until the full regulatory process was completed and approved by the Governor. She stated that the Board initiated this process in July 2024; however, due to delays during the review process, the emergency regulations implementing the provisions of the act are not yet in effect.

Ms. Tillman Wolf noted that the Board has received questions from licensees regarding the applicability of the declinable preneed funeral guarantee fee. She clarified that, at this time, because the necessary emergency regulations are not yet in place, the fee is not available to licensees. She stated that this update was being presented to the Board to address the current uncertainty and ensure a consistent understanding of the issue. She further stated that she had previously provided this information to the provider associations.

Mr. Nelsen asked whether an electronic notification could be sent to licensees, noting that some appear to believe the statutory change permits immediate implementation and have begun charging the fee in good faith. He expressed concern that this misunderstanding may unintentionally expose licensees to regulatory violations and emphasized the importance of providing clear guidance.

Ms. Tillman Wolf agreed and recommended using an excerpt from the meeting minutes to communicate this clarification to licensees.

Guidance Regarding Addition or Repair of Retort at Existing Crematory

Ms. Tillman Wolf reported that the inspectors have recently encountered instances during inspections of existing crematories where a new retort or retorts may have been installed, repaired, or replaced at an existing crematory without notifying the Board. She requested guidance from the Board to ensure consistent responses to the inquiries from inspectors on the appropriate response.

To facilitate discussion, Ms. Tillman Wolf posed specific questions to the Board.

Question 1: Would the addition of new/additional retorts at the same site/address trigger a request to the Board for reinspection due to a remodel/structural change? (See 18VAC65-20-70. Fees.)

Answer: Yes. In this circumstance, new retorts would necessitate a review by inspectors of the DEQ permits for the new retorts, as well as a review of any structural changes and/or overall facility safety due to added machines.

Question 2: Should a test burn authorization be required for new retorts prior to use? (See 18VAC65-20-435(F))

Answer: Yes. The manufacturers require a test burn of a new retort as well. This test burn can be done in conjunction with a request to the Board to conduct a test burn for the new machines prior to their use/prior to approval of the remodel.

Question 3: Would the replacement or repair of an existing retort at the same site/address trigger a request to the Board for reinspection due to a remodel/structural change? (See 18VAC65-20-70. Fees.)

Answer: It depends. If there was any structural change necessitated by the replacement or repair (e.g. fire damage resulting in rebuild), or if a new permit is required from the DEQ, then a request for reinspection should be sent to the Board.

Question 4: Should a test burn authorization be required for a repaired or replacement retort prior to use? (See 18VAC65-20-435(F))

Answer: It depends. If there was solely a repair to or replacement of an existing retort, with no structural change or new permitting required, a test burn would not be required. (Note: if a replacement retort, the manufacturer will likely require a test burn, however, that test burn can be performed independently of the Board.)

Upon a **MOTION** by Mr. Nelsen, and properly seconded by Mr. Owens, the Board voted to adopt the guidance as discussed. The motion carried unanimously (8-0).

BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Training and Development Topics for 2026

Ms. Tillman Wolf led a discussion on board member development and the incorporation of training topics into quarterly board meetings. She invited input regarding areas where additional information or training would be beneficial.

Board members suggested several topics, including an overview of the discipline process and financial expenditures.

Discussion of Best Practices for Meetings and Hearings

Ms. Blose provided a brief overview of best practices for board members for meetings and hearings.

BREAK

The Board took a break at 11:14 a.m. and reconvened at 11:26 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE SUMMARY SUSPENSION

Ms. Tillman Wolf provided a brief overview of the procedural requirements associated with consideration of a possible summary suspension.

Mr. Hines convened the possible summary suspension presentation at 11:29 a.m. for the Board to consider the possible summary suspension of the Funeral Establishment license of Premier Funeral Services, Inc. (license no. 0501000832) and to determine whether the establishment's ability to practice constitutes a substantial danger to public health and safety. With eight Board Members present, a quorum was established.

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Emily Tatum, Adjudication Specialist, from the Administrative Proceedings Division provided details of the case to the Board for consideration.

Closed Session

Upon a **MOTION** by Dr. Hickey, and properly seconded by Mr. Nelsen, the Board voted to convene a closed meeting, pursuant to § 2.2-3711(A)(27) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of deliberation to reach a decision in the matter of Premier Funeral Services, Inc.

Additionally, Dr. Hickey moved that Ms. Tillman Wolf, Ms. Venable, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Blose attend the closed meeting because their presence in the closed meeting was deemed necessary and would aid the Board in its deliberations.

Open Session

Having unanimously certified that the matters discussed in the preceding closed session met the requirements of § 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, the Board reconvened in open session.

Upon a **MOTION** by Dr. Hickey, and properly seconded by Mr. Nelsen, the Board determined that the continued practice of Premier Funeral Services, Inc., constitutes a substantial danger to public health and safety and voted to summarily suspend Premier Funeral Service's right to renew its license to practice as a funeral establishment and to schedule a formal hearing pursuant to § 54.1-2408.1 of the Code of Virginia. The vote was unanimous (8-0).

The Board concluded the possible summary suspension presentation at 12:14 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date is July 14, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hines called for any objections to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections and with all business concluded, the meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director

Date