

TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2016

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2016-12 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole June 28, 2016, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Government Services Building, Mantorville, MN, at 4:30 p.m. CDT. Chair Steven Gray opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

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|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Members present: | John Allen | District #1 |
| | Tim Tjosaas | District #2 |
| | Rodney Peterson | District #3 |
| | David Erickson | District #4 |
| | Steven Gray | District #5 |

Members absent: None

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| Also present: | Paul Kiltinen | County Attorney |
| | Lisa Kramer | Finance Director |
| | Becky Lubahn | Deputy Clerk |

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Ross Reichard provided the Board with an Annual Medical Examiner report.

Annual Medical
Examiner Report

Monica Kendall, Supervisor, Death Investigators was available to comment.

The following information was shared with the Board:

The Southern Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner's Office investigates sudden, violent, unexpected, and suspicious deaths that occur in Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties in southeastern Minnesota. The Office of the Medical Examiner certifies death after investigation and postmortem examination and issues the death certificate as required by law. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

The main duties of the Office of Medical Examiner are to determine the cause and manner of death, and certify deaths that are reported to the medical examiner. The cause of death is the disease process or injury that resulted in death. There are thousands of diseases and injuries that may result in death. The manner of death is a classification in which a determination is made regarding whether the death resulted from natural causes, homicide, suicide, or an accident. On occasion, the manner of death is classified as indeterminate.

Information collected during the investigation helps clarify the circumstances, such as the sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during a death investigation and/or postmortem examination may help lead to the arrest or successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case. Because deaths occur around the clock, medical examiner staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

With the skill and experience of the Medical Examiner Investigators and board-certified Forensic Pathologists, Mr. Reichard believes the quality of death investigations in Dodge County are among the best in the state. The death scene investigation reports filed by the Investigators are very thorough and supply comprehensive information to the Medical Examiners.

Annual Medical
Examiner Report -
Continued

Mayo Clinic Medical Examiner Investigators also extend their duties to the living by answering questions and addressing concerns regarding deaths within the county. Medical Examiners and Death Investigators frequently make personal contact with family members of a deceased and assist them by providing appropriate answers regarding the circumstance of the death. Medical Examiner Investigators are supplied with a pamphlet for distribution to families. The information provides answers to common questions and facts about autopsies and also provides resource information pertaining to grief counseling.

The Office of the Medical Examiner utilizes the Medicolegal Death Investigation Log, or MDI Log. MDI Log is a comprehensive investigative report/database system that enables the Medical Examiners and Death Investigators to submit and review death scene investigation information, as well as communicate, in an efficient manner through a secure internet site any time of the day.

Dr. Reichard shared the following 2015 Dodge County statistics with the Board:

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|--|---------|
| Population (2015) | 20, 364 |
| Cases Reported to the Medical Examiner | 90 |
| A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination | 9 |
| 1. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Complete Autopsy | 8 |
| 2. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with External Examination | 0 |
| 3. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Limited Examination | 1 |
| B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination | 14 |
| C. Number of deaths not certified by Medical Examiner's Office after investigation | 67 |

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know how many counties the Medical Examiner's Office service in southeast Minnesota.

Dr. Reichard reported his office services eight counties; he also noted there isn't a lot of variation in population numbers within the counties they service.

Commissioner Peterson reminded the Board the figures listed in Dr. Reichard's reports may be slightly skewed due to the fact that there may be county residents which are transported to Rochester and pass away in Rochester, their deaths would then be listed in Olmsted County statistics.

Dr. Reichard indicated they have the ability to go back and look at these types of results and adjust the reports if needed to report more accurate statistics for each of the counties.

Commissioner Erickson wanted to know if the Medical Examiner's Office compares Dodge County statistics to other areas.

Dr. Reichard stated they don't personally do any comparisons of the counties statistics but the state may.

Annual Medical
Examiner Report -
Continued

Monica Kendall reported this type of comparison information would be available on the Minnesota Department of Health website.

Commissioner Gray asked Dr. Reichard to discuss new trends and things happening in his office.

Dr. Reichard informed the Board they are now doing full body CT scans and are then able to print 3D models which will show the condition of the bodies they are working on. Through this new technology the Medical Examiner staff is able to work with exact replicas of what they are looking at.

Commissioner Erickson noted cremations are becoming more prevalent. Mr. Erickson then asked Dr. Reichard to explain the reasoning behind performing an autopsy.

Dr. Reichard stated the reason for an autopsy is they have to get the cause of death. The Medical Examiner's Office also has to make sure it's ok to cremate a body; they don't want to destroy evidence. Dr. Reichard informed the Board that no cremation is performed without his office signing off on a cremation certificate. Dr. Reichard stated they have seen an increase in the number of cremations performed, which may be attributed to the fact that it's less expensive.

The Board thanked Dr. Reichard and Ms. Kendall for the update.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

**STEVEN GRAY
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD**

**BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK**

DATED: