



Douglas A. Ducey – Governor

**Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers**  
1740 West Adams Street, Suite 3006, Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Samuel Bueler, Chairman/Professional Member \* Amie Gazda, Secretary  
Harold Adair, Professional Member \* Joe Hornat, Public Member \* Robert Hockensmith Public Member  
\* Helene Bergeon, Public Member \* Lemuel Cannon, Public Member

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**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR SESSION**

**Board Meeting Held On:**  
**Tuesday, January 26, 2021 • 9:00 a.m. • 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room “A”**  
**1740 West Adams Street • Phoenix, AZ 85007**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Samuel Bueler called the Board Meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. The following members were present for the Board Meeting on January 26, 2021.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Samuel Bueler Harold Adair Lemuel Cannon	Chairman/Industry Member Industry Member Public Member
<b>Telephonically</b>	Joe Hornat Helene Bergeon Amie Gazda	Public Member Public Member Secretary/Industry Member
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Robert Hockensmith	Public Member
<b>Board Staff Present:</b>	Judith Stapley Evelyn Estrella	Executive Director Licensing Administrator
<b>Board Staff Telephonically:</b>	Brandon Eaden	Investigator

**2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Board Chairman Sam Bueler read the Board's Statement of Purpose.

**3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

**4. MINUTES**

Board member Harold Adair moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 Board meeting. Board member Amie Gazda seconded this motion. Motion passed unanimously 5-0 with Board member Joe Hornat abstaining, as he was not present for the meeting on December 15, 2020.

Board member Harold Adair moved to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 Board meeting. Board member Amie Gazda seconded this motion. Motion passed unanimously 5-0 with Board member Lemuel Cannon abstaining, as he was not appointed to the Board as of November 17, 2020.

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**5. LICENSING**

By motion and a second, and a motion carrying approval, the following actions occurred relative to applications for licensure subject to the conditions noted:

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TYPE OF LICENSE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>MOTION BY</b>	<b>SECOND BY</b>
Michael Kane	Funeral Director-Universal Recognition	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Wayne Johnson	Cremationist	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Donald Carton	Cremationist	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Donald Carton	Intern	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Eileen Carter	Salesperson	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Derrick Gunn	Funeral Director-Temporary 30 day license	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Joe Stout	Funeral Director-Temporary 30 day license	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Derrick Gunn	Embalmer-Temporary 30 day license	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda
Joe Stout	Embalmer-Temporary 30 day license	Approved 6-0	Hank Adair	Amie Gazda

**6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:**

**A. Michele Castaneda-Martinez, Program Manager Office of Vital Registration, Maricopa County**

Michele Castaneda-Martinez provided an update on the Maricopa County Indigent Decedent Services (CIDS) program. There are currently four contracted providers for this county contract. Since taking over the program on September 1, 2020, they have received 59 requests for indigent services in September 2020, 63 in October 2020, 72 in November 2020, 111 in December 2020, and 118 as of January 25, 2021. On average, the program has converted 35-40% of the referred cases each month, meaning they are able to identify and notify the decedent's next-of-kin so that the family member may be directly involved in their deceased's final rights and services.

**7. REVIEW, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING:**

The Board may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-431.03(A) (2) (to discuss confidential information) or A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A) (3) (to receive legal advice).

**A. Docket 2020-FDE-0009 Funeraria Azahares LLC**

Responsible Funeral Director Myra Turner and funeral establishment owner Azhar Dabdoub were present along with their legal counsel, Justin Castillo on behalf of Funeraria Azahares LLC. The complainant Monica Lopez was not present. Following discussion Board member Amie Gazda moved to dismiss the matter. This motion was seconded by Board member Joe Hornat and carried 5-1 with Board Chair Sam Bueler voting “nay”.

**B. Docket 2020-FDE-0056 David’s Desert Chapel Funeral Home**

Responsible Funeral Director (RFD) Kennie Davis was present with Office Manager Lisa River on behalf of David’s Desert Chapel Funeral Home. The complainant Debbie Crowser was not present. RFD Davis explained there was some temporary confusion with the processing of insurance paperwork that had been resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. No violations were identified. After review and consideration Board member Helene Bergeron moved to dismiss the matter. This motion was seconded by Board member Harold Adair and carried 6-0.

**8. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:**

The Board may vote to go into executive session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A) (2) (To discuss confidential information) or A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A) (3) (To receive legal advice).

**A. Community Partner Liaison Toni Miller and Quality Assurance Manager Bianca Soto from the Department of Health Service, Bureau of Vital Records (BVR) presented educational reminders for the Database Application of Vital Events “DAVE” system.**

1. 7-day timeframe for registration (A.R.S. 36-325 - death and 36-329 - fetal death)
2. Death Registration Worksheet. Must be completed using current version and ensure that the informant and funeral director has signed.
3. Human Remains Release Form (HRRF). Make sure your transport staff or contractors are collecting the completed signed form from the facilities, reporting any issues with any of the facilities in writing to the BVR Support Team via email. Then upload the HRRF as an attachment in the death record in DAVE, and enter the HRRF date in the death record in DAVE.

4. Add comments in the death record in DAVE. This is helpful for historical information regarding a particular issue or communication with other entities, especially when assistance is needed from BVR.

A discussion took place with Board members expressing hindrances correlated to the current increase in fatalities. Board Chair Sam Bueler expressed the difficulties being experienced by funeral establishments throughout the state in getting medical certification to occur in a timely manner that meets statutory requirements.

## **9. EXECUTIVE REPORT:**

The Board may vote to go into Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-431.03(A) (2) (to discuss confidential information) or A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A) (3) (to receive legal advice).

### **A. COVID update with funeral establishments**

Board Executive Director is working closely with both state and county emergency planners. Licensed funeral establishments should not be reaching out to FEMA asking for refrigeration. Many locations are adding additional storage. If you cannot store a decedent appropriately, you should not be taking the call. We are in the middle of a fatality surge that has not previously been experienced in recent times. Air quality in Maricopa and Pima County granted waivers for crematories to extend hours of cremation beyond their normal hours and yet in many cases this is not being utilized. Board staff is sending out surveys to funeral establishments in an effort to stay informed on the needs and difficulties being experienced.

### **B. International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Board (ICFSEB) 2020 statistics.**

Executive Director Stapley provided a statistical update from the ICFSEB regarding the statistical passing rate of the national conference exam, both arts and science sections that are required for licensure as a funeral director or embalmer. In 2020, first time testers of the arts section of the exam had a passing rate of 74 %. In 2020, first time testers of the science section had a passing rate of 64%.

### **C. Board member appointments**

The Board had a new public member, Lemuel Cannon, appointed in January to fill the appointment that was previously held by industry member James Ahearne. Mr. Cannon was present and briefly introduced himself to Board members and those present at the meeting.

**10. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Call to the public occurred prior to the Executive Report at this meeting.

John Hassett, owner of multiple funeral establishments and crematories in Mohave County asked to speak on the difficulties his establishments are having getting death certificates medically certified by various doctors.

**11. REVIEW OF SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS:**

Subject to appropriate notice, the Board reserves the right to change meeting dates.

**2021 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

FEBRUARY 16, 2021	MARCH 16, 2021	APRIL 20, 2021	MAY 18, 2021
JUNE 15, 2021	JULY 20, 2021	AUGUST 17, 2021	SEPTEMBER 21, 2021
OCTOBER 19, 2021	NOVEMBER 16, 2021	DECEMBER 21, 2021	

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Board member Harold Adair moved to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Board Chair Sam Bueler and carried 6-0. The Board adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

  
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Judith Stapley  
Executive Director