

**Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee Meeting
August 13, 2025 - DRAFT**

- 1. Call to Order** – The Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at the Sumter County Service Center, 7375 Powell Road, Room 102, Wildwood, FL.
- 2. Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum** – Roll call was taken and a quorum was met.

Members Present

Jerry Campbell, Hernando County Board of County Commissioners
Leslie Campione, Lake County Board of County Commissioners
Holly Davis, Chair, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Amy Lockhart, Seminole County Board of County Commissioners

Members Absent

Jeff Bogue, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners
Michelle Stone, Marion County Board of County Commissioners

In Attendance

Barbara Wolf, M.D., Medical Examiner, Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office
Lindsey Bayer, Director of Operations, Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office
Steve Howard, County Administrator, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Denise Lyn, County Attorney, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
Jennifer Barker, County Manager, Lake County Board of County Commissioners
Kristian Swenson, Assistant County Manager, Seminole County Board of County Commissioners
Matthew Minter, County Attorney, Marion County Board of County Commissioners
Amanda Tart, Assistant County Administrator, Marion County Board of County Commissioners
Robert Kruger, Deputy Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue
Cassandra Li, Administrative and Financial Services Manager, Marion County Fire Rescue
Beth Jones, Budget and Administrative Coordinator, Marion County Fire Rescue
Deann Broyles, Budget and Administrative Coordinator, Marion County Fire Rescue
Pam Doherty, Administrative Staff Assistant, Marion County Fire Rescue

- 3. Proof of Publications** – Legal advertisements were published on August 1, 2025, in the Hernando Sun Ad #C9E154AE0020 and the Citrus County Chronicle Ad #50115820; and August 3, 2025, in the Ocala Star Banner Ad #11499295, Orlando Sentinel Ad #7843943, Lake Sentinel Ad #7844022, and The Villages Daily Sun Ad #01260643.

Motion: Commissioner Campione made a motion to approve the proof of publications and Commissioner Lockhart seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

- 4. Review and Approval of June 19, 2025, Minutes** – The minutes from the June 19, 2025, Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee meeting were submitted for approval. Commissioner Davis requested the minutes changed to reflect that Steve Howard, Citrus County Administrator, arrived a short time after the meeting convened.

Motion: Commissioner Lockhart made a motion to approve the minutes with the above change and Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

5. Old Business

5.1 FY 24/25 3rd Quarter Budget Report

Robert Kruger, Deputy Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue, presented an overview of the 3rd Quarter FY 24/25 Budget Report covering April 1 through June 30, 2025. This quarter contained the following budget amendments: the \$12,334.70 Medical Examiner facility cost incurred was added to Reimbursements from other Counties, which was inadvertently coded as part of the cost share for Hernando County, increasing the 3rd quarter funds by \$12,334.70; moved \$7,940 from Machinery & Equipment to Repairs & Maintenance—Equipment for a warranty contract on the X-ray machine after the contract was executed; moved \$1,500 from Computer Software to Professional Services to pay for a title search on the Medical Examiner's property; and moved \$1,500 from Utility Services—Electric/Water to Communications to pay for increased phone services.

Commissioner Lockhart asked if the adjusted budget item of (\$2,964) listed under the Coverdell Grant was due to funds being received, or because the grant was awarded. Chief Kruger advised that it was due to the grant being awarded. The funds have been received and will be accounted for in the budget.

5.2. FY 25/26 Medical Examiner Proposed Budget with Updated County Shares

Chief Kruger discussed the proposed budget for FY 25/26 that was presented as an update to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). There was an increase of \$425,000 in Contractual Services—Medical Examiner Contract, which increased the Medical Examiner Administration Fee by \$23,078 based off the population cost share in the current Interlocal Agreement.

Commissioner Lockhart asked if overtime was being tracked by where it was happening. Lindsey Bayer, Director of Operations, Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office explained it was coming from investigations out in the field. Commissioner Lockhart also asked if the vehicle purchases are the vehicles allocated to Seminole County. Lindsey explained that the one Special Transport vehicle listed is a transport vehicle used for transporting to District 5. The three vehicles purchased by Seminole County are still the three vehicles being used in Seminole County. The Medical Examiner has not requested new vehicles due to their current low mileage. It is Chief Kruger's understanding that the budget is split between the six counties equally through the cost share of population. Commissioner Lockhart asked if the three vehicles previously purchased by Seminole County were included in the cost share. Lindsey explained that these vehicles were provided up front before the Medical Examiner took over Seminole County. These vehicles that are used by the Investigators, along with some equipment purchased, were necessary for the Medical Examiner to go live with Seminole County. The Special Transport van in this budget will be used to pick up the deceased in District 5. Seminole County has contract services to pick up the deceased. Chief Kruger advised that the investigator vehicles are used throughout all the counties, Seminole County vehicles are used in Seminole County, the vehicles being purchased will be used in District 5, and the van being purchased will be used for District 5. Commissioner Lockhart asked about the overtime because Seminole County is asking their Sheriff to look at overtime costs due to the increase in extended periods of time for the arrival of investigators, from the call for service.

Commissioner Davis had some concerns about the purchases of the vehicles with Seminole County, which was a buy-in prior to joining District 5. Dr. Wolf explained that Seminole County fronted some money prior to them joining District 5, which was for vehicles and some equipment,

used solely for Seminole County. Chief Kruger advised this can be looked at in the future. The agreement has the breakdown with all the counties listed as a whole and not broken down by line item. Commissioner Campbell asked if District 24 is solely paying for Contract Services or is District 5 also included in paying for these services. Commissioner Davis noted that if Seminole County is paying for Contract Services separately and paying cost share on District 5's vehicles, this concept seems unfair. Chief Kruger noted that the contract says the six counties share the administrative costs equally based on population. Commissioner Lockhart advised that she does not know what is allocated for the vehicle purchases without a breakdown of the \$425,000. She is happy to move forward with the budgeted amount but would like a follow-up conversation on distribution. Commissioner Davis broke it down further to look at the Contract Services for Transport versus the new vehicle purchases.

Commissioner Lockhart noted that what prompted this discussion was the comments from the Seminole County Sheriff's Office advising that they have been waiting longer for investigators to arrive on scene than they have in the past. She is wondering how this is happening if there are still the three dedicated vehicles in Seminole County. Lindsey advised the complaint regarding the longer response times was addressed with their Seminole County investigators. Lindsey explained that the investigators check to see if there is a detective responding to the scene. Usually, the investigators are told the detective is not en route yet. The investigator will ask for a call back when they are en route. The investigator cannot do anything until the detective is there, which is causing some of the delays. Lindsey noted that the investigator's response time is within the hour of the call, and her information looks like they are still within the time frame. Lindsey asked for specific cases so she could investigate this further. Commissioner Lockhart advised it would be helpful for Lindsey to get her the name of the person she spoke with. Commissioner Lockhart spoke with Sheriff Dennis Lemma, Sheriff of Seminole County, and another Sheriff. Seminole County is pulling data from the system that shows the number and types of calls and response times. Commissioner Davis added that using "ETA" is more accurate than "en route." Dr. Wolf said their investigators need to know when they are en route, so they can meet them at the location. Lindsey added that the investigators are all located within an hour of their response times. Lindsey sent data, ranging from 2023 to today, to Captain Carey Love showing what time the calls came in, what time the investigators are en route, the arrival time at scene and duration.

Commissioner Campione mentioned that when voting on the proposed budget, it would be with the understanding there may be an amendment on the share, based on the discussions today. Commissioner Lockhart asked for the possibility of adding a column to this proposed budget showing the actual FY 2024/2025 numbers.

Motion: Commissioner Lockhart made a motion to approve the FY 25/26 Medical Examiner Proposed Budget and Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

5.3 Medical Examiner Software Update

Chief Kruger discussed the issues that the Medical Examiner's office staff and administrative staff are experiencing with VertiQ, the current Medical Examiner's office software. The Medical Examiner's office has expressed an interest in moving to a new software, MDI Log, which is used in Medical Examiner's offices throughout the state. The startup cost for the software is \$25,000. This software will decrease the workload, allowing them to track decedents better, as well as helping Marion County Fire Rescue's staff with the cremation billing. Chief Kruger believes this new software will pay for itself rather quickly and reduce approximately 50% of manual labor for both offices. Research from other Medical Examiner offices shows that staff are extremely pleased with this software. Commissioner Lockhart asked what the annual charge for the

software will be. She expressed that the \$25,000 implementation is different from what the annual charge will be. Commissioner Lockhart mentioned that the Committee does not have the annual charge for the software to make that whole decision. Commissioner Davis asked for this Advisory Committee's permission to move forward with the concept, and then the contract can be approved later. The contract will not be signed until the total cost is determined. Chief Kruger explained that Marion County will need the support from this Advisory Committee to move forward. Commissioner Lockhart expressed she is not sure she will be comfortable voting to start implementation of a new contract without knowing the total cost of the software.

Amanda Tart, Assistant County Administrator, Marion County, explained that this is a request for a consensus from this Advisory Committee to have Marion County's Information Technology and Procurement departments spend their time researching this software. Marion County would present an agenda item with the costs to the Advisory Committee to vote on. Commissioner Campbell would like to get an estimated amount of the costs. He asked would a reasonable assumption be that start up fees would be \$25,000 and annual fees would be approximately \$25,000 maximum.

Three of the four members of the Medical Examiner Advisory Committee gave consensus to move forward with researching the software. Commissioner Lockhart stated for the record, Seminole County is abstaining from being part of the consensus at this time.

5.4. Medical Examiner Autopsy Table Update

Chief Kruger provided an update to the Advisory Committee advising that the new autopsy tables were delivered in July 2025, replacing the old tables that could not be repaired. Marion County is in the process of setting up a five-year expenditure program to foresee some of these issues beforehand and get them on a replacement plan.

5.5. Medical Examiner FY 24 Coverdell Update

The Medical Examiner was awarded \$2,963.99 in the 2024 Paul Coverdell Grant to purchase a power slide scanner, a bariatric morgue cot and a large storage hard drive. The funds have been received.

6. New Business

6.1 MOTION: Medical Examiner Privacy Screens

The Medical Examiner's office has submitted a request to purchase privacy screens for the autopsy room. The current quote is approximately \$5,400 for two units and the Medical Examiner's office is seeking four screens for \$10,800. This request is for the approval to purchase these screens. Dr. Wolf advised these screens allow photographs to be taken without anything in the background and will shield bodies from contractors or outside personnel. Lindsey explained that based on the size of the morgue, four screens would fit properly appropriately in the room. The screens are retractable.

Motion: Commissioner Campione made a motion to approve the purchase of four privacy screens and Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

6.2 MOTION: Medical Examiner FIGG Grant

Chief Kruger discussed the FIGG grant and advised that the Medical Examiner staff applied for, and was awarded \$79,992 for the FY 25 Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) Grant Program through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Commissioner Lockhart

noted that it looks like the grant was already awarded and the Medical Examiner is in the reimbursement phase. Lindsey mentioned that the eight cases were submitted prior to the deadline. The grant works on a reimbursement, similar to the Coverdell grant. Although the grant states the final payment request shall be submitted to the department no later than July 31, 2025, Lindsey advised that she spoke with Leigh Clark, Deputy Director, FDLE. He told her since the cases were submitted and approved, there would be time to work out the reimbursement with Marion County. Guy Minter, County Attorney, Marion County, noted that it does state that failure to comply with the provisions shall result in forfeiture of reimbursement and/or a refund of any advanced funding. He suggested the Medical Examiner may want to get something in writing regarding the deadline. Commissioner Campbell asked about the approval process of grants and questioned if they would need to be approved by this Committee. Speaking for Hernando County, Commissioner Campbell added he would have been more comfortable knowing ahead of time that the Medical Examiner was applying for this grant and what it included.

Motion: Commissioner Campione made a motion to approve the Medical Examiner FIGG Grant to be presented to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners on a future agenda for signature, and Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Mr. Minter advised he did not put together a draft separation agreement for today's meeting due to other job responsibilities. He asked if Lake and Seminole Counties will be going to the Florida Medical Examiners Commission meeting in November 2025. Commissioner Lockhart does not have an answer to this. Seminole County is moving forward, and the ball is in Lake County's court to determine their next steps. Mr. Minter spoke with Melanie Marsh, County Attorney, Lake County. She is working on getting an updated appraisal of the Medical Examiner's building. Marion County would be willing to share in the expense of an updated appraisal of the current building. Under Option 2, Lake County was going to move out with District 24, and the remaining District 5 counties would stay in the building. There would be an apportionment of the value of the building. Lake County conveyed the building to Marion County for zero dollars a couple years ago, but they did not get the building for free. The Property Appraiser records indicate that around the year 2000, the price of the building for Lake County was around \$1.5 million. It is not known if any counties contributed to this building. The deed goes to Lake County, not the Medical Examiner. Mr. Minter is working on finding out how this building went from Lake County's building to the Medical Examiner's building. Mr. Minter expects to be able to have a draft agreement put together in the next month. If the State Commission approves the plan for Lake County to join Seminole County, then the results will have to be worked out. If the State Commission does not approve the plan, there will be some complexity with the real estate transaction.

Dr. Wolf advised that the State Commission is looking for an unopposed agreement among all six counties. The stakeholders and Commissioners have the options of presenting what their counties are saying and then it will be voted on by the State Commission members. Mr. Minter asked if there is a situation where the application is brought to the State Commission meeting, and if there is not complete agreement among those that oppose and those that do not, how will the decision be made. Dr. Wolf advised that it would be a vote among the Commissioners, and she would recuse to vote. Commissioner Lockhart asked Dr. Wolf why she would recuse to vote. Dr. Wolf added that she was asked to recuse the last time, and Mr. Minter asked her as well, because these were her Districts. Commissioner Lockhart expressed that Dr. Wolf would have the most knowledge. Mr. Minter explained there were conversations regarding this issue, with the concern of a voting conflict. There may be a conflict due to the financial aspect with Dr. Wolf having 2 separate contracts with District 5 and District 24. Commissioner Lockhart mentioned there is not an automatic given that Dr. Wolf's company will be given the contract. District 24 would go through the RFP process which they will probably be required to do by law. Mr. Minter

advised it was reported at the time of the discussions that Dr. Wolf's office would have the capability of serving the combined two counties in District 24 and continuing with the remaining four counties in District 5. Dr. Wolf advised that her company would not be applying to get the contract, as it is more work for their company. Dr. Wolf added that her office does not plan on putting in a proposal or bid, but will if Seminole County requests them to do so. Under the 3143 voting conflicts statute, there are provisions that Dr. Wolf may not be able to vote, but she can discuss input on various issues with the benefit of her expertise to the State Commission.

Dr. Wolf explained the process for Seminole County to go with a Medical Examiner will include a search committee. Per state statutes, the State Attorney will spearhead this process. The process will be presented to the State Medical Examiners Commission and then be presented to the Governor.

The next State Commission meeting is October 28, 2025, in Orlando, FL. Commissioner Campbell's understanding, based on previous conversations with this Advisory Committee, is that each County is going to give their own opinion letter and position letter. Commissioner Campione thought the Advisory Committee was moving towards working on an agreement, and that is what would be submitted to the State Commission.

Commissioner Campbell asked Commissioner Lockhart if anything has changed on reimbursement to Marion County. Commissioner Lockhart advised that it has not.

Dr. Wolf received the following costs on the Medical Examiner software as discussed in 5.3 Medical Examiner Software Update: the purchase price of the software is \$25,000; the set up and migration of the software is \$7,500; and the cost for the first year and each year thereafter is \$10,100.

Commissioner Lockhart requested to be consistent with the direction that the Advisory Committee was given at the last meeting, the county attorneys need to work together to draft an agreement. Commissioner Campbell asked if this Committee would meet again before the October meeting if there was an agreement. Commissioner Lockhart is not sure the Advisory Committee has to approve the proposed agreement. She believes it may be the individual counties that would need to agree to the proposed agreement. Then after ratification from individual counties, the agreement would be brought back to this Committee. Commissioner Lockhart does not think there would need to be an Advisory Committee meeting before going to the October State Commission meeting, if there is an approved draft agreement between the individual counties that make up District 24 and District 5.

Mr. Minter believes the basic components needed in the agreement to take to the State Commission is an indication of cooperation on the parts of all the members of this Committee's BCC's and a determination of the value of the Medical Examiner's building and how this will be allocated amongst the parties that have made an investment in that building. Mr. Minter's expectation, based on prior communications, is that the agreement will focus on the Option 2 proposal. Option 2 includes Lake County leaving and joining Seminole County as District 24. The other four counties will stay in the building as District 5. This will also allow for Lake and Seminole Counties to stay in the building until the end of the current agreement or earlier if they have an alternate facility, before the (18) eighteen months' written notice. Commissioner Davis acknowledged that the preference of the other four counties, as well as the stakeholders, is that Lake County stay with District 5, but it depends on the decision of the Lake County BCC.

Commissioner Campione added, the hope is that this Committee reaches an agreement that each County agrees to, and that is what we take forward. If this does not happen, then the Committee will have to regroup.

Mr. Minter explained that a general commercial appraisal, that is not in an imminent domain situation, should be under \$10,000. If you are in an imminent domain situation, the same appraisal is about \$60,000. Commissioner Davis asked Mr. Minter if he will need the appraisal to put together the agreement with the other attorneys. Mr. Minter advised that hopefully we get the appraisal, and then contemplate an apportionment based on the appraisal. The Committee will not know the percentage split, without the appraisal. Mr. Minter believed it would most likely be the District 5 counties that would benefit from the appraisal, but Seminole County attorneys can address this issue, if they want to be included in the apportionment. Commissioner Campione advised currently Lake County is paying for the appraisal. Mr. Minter advised that he told Melanie Marsh, County Attorney, Lake County BCC, that Marion County would be willing to contribute to the cost of the appraisal. Denise Lyn, County Attorney, Citrus County BCC, does not believe the Committee will get an agreement and an appraisal in two months. Dr. Wolf advised that the next State Commission meeting will probably be in February 2026. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, Lake County, advised that the appraisal has been ordered and agreed that she does not believe this Committee will have an agreement between six counties by October, as well as an agreement and an appraisal. Commissioner Campione added that the Committee can continue to keep working in that direction, understanding that the next chance to present this may be February 2026. Commissioner Campbell requested that each Medical Examiner Advisory Committee member and their respective County Administration be notified if this issue becomes an agenda item on the Florida Medical Examiners Commission meeting agenda for any meeting in the future. He requested for someone to be responsible for this notification. Dr. Wolf advised they will not put an item on the agenda until they are told to do so. Commissioner Campbell asked Dr. Wolf if she would be willing to give the Advisory Committee a two-week notice before putting this item on the agenda. Dr. Wolf agreed this is fine and advised nothing will be put on the agenda until she receives direction from this Committee. Commissioner Davis requested a three-week notice in case a BCC vote is necessary. Lindsey advised that she will forward the future dates of the next State Commission meetings to this Committee, once they are received at the October 2025 meeting. Commissioner Davis requested to make sure that Citrus County Administration and Legal are copied.

Commissioner Lockhart wanted to confirm that the attorneys are going to reinitiate their attempt to draft together an agreement, to be prepared for the October 28, 2025, for the Florida Medical Examiners Commission meeting. If that does not happen, then the Advisory Committee will need to regroup. Commissioner Campbell advised he wanted ample time so that he could get an opinion/position letter to the State Commission.

Commissioner Lockhart read the following insert from the Interlocal Agreement for Cost Share of Medical Examiner Services and Related Matters. "Seminole County is solely responsible for its own transport services. Seminole shall contract with a commercial provider and all such billing will be handled directly between Seminole and its provider. Seminole is responsible to handle its own unclaimed bodies; indigent care and cremations, including the costs related to them." Commissioner Lockhart would like to go back and make sure the cost allocation has been done accurately, if this has not been taken into consideration at this point. Vehicles are not in the budget. Commissioner Lockhart advised that under Contractual Services with the Medical Examiner, there are vehicle purchases, because this is included in the notes. These vehicles are given to the Medical Examiner as part of her contract. Commissioner Lockhart advised if we are dividing up by population, including all of the Medical Examiner's contract, then these vehicles should be removed from that portion of the contract, and then Seminole's portion should be from

that. Commissioner Lockhart would like to go back and look under cost allocations to make sure these items were not included in those fees historically. She believes Seminole County may be owed some money. Commissioner Campbell is open to exploring this topic to be fair and reasonable. Based on what he heard being read, Seminole County will be responsible for their half, but it does not say they will not be responsible for shares of all operational expenses on the other side. A discussion can take place about what should be done about the past and should adjustments be made and this be changed, moving forward.

Commissioner Davis suggested this topic be presented at the next Advisory Committee meeting for any adjustments to be made. Commissioner Lockhart is not suggesting to make any adjustments. She is only suggesting to review this, true it up, and go back historically to look at where it should be. Commissioner Campbell asked for the budget numbers to be forwarded to the whole Advisory Committee.

Dr. Wolf advised that she forwarded the email on the costs of the Medical Examiner software to Commissioner Davis previously during this meeting. The communication was read into the record to the Advisory Committee by Commissioner Davis and is included in these minutes.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sumter County Service Center, Room 102, 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL.

8. Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Holly Davis, Chair

Date