

**Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee Meeting  
February 19, 2026 - 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 Thursday, February 19, 2026, 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

Jeff Bogue, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 2:16 pm)  
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  
Michelle Stone, Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Members Absent

None

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  
Bradley Arnold, County Administrator, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners  
Denise Lyn, County Attorney, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners  
Kristian Swenson, Assistant County Manager, Seminole County Board of County Commissioners  
Erin Dohren, Budget Director, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners  
Val Shealey, Senior Assistant County Attorney, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners  
Matthew Minter, County Attorney, Marion County Board of County Commissioners  
Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator, Marion County Board of County Commissioners  
James Banta, Fire Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue  
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 January 30, 2026, in the Hernando Sun Ad #7679-332837 and the Citrus County Chronicle Ad #50124941; and on February 1, 2026, in the Ocala Star Banner Ad #12003044, Orlando Sentinel Ad #7920345, Lake Sentinel Ad #7920361, and The Villages Daily Sun Ad #01288298.

*Motion:* Commissioner Lockhart made a motion to approve the proof of publications and Commissioner Campione seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

- 4. Review and Approval of June 19, 2025, Minutes** – The minutes from the August 13, 2025, Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee meeting were submitted for approval.

*Motion:* Commissioner Lockhart made a motion to approve the minutes with the ability to discuss some items that were not added in Old Business. Commissioner Stone seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

## **5. Old Business**

### 5.1 FY 24/25 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Report

Chief Kruger, Deputy Chief, Marion County Fire Rescue presented an overview of the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY 24/25 Budget Report covering July 1 through September 30, 2025. The year ended with a net gain of \$2,411,943, staying within the budget. Most of this amount is from the Capital Improvement Funding. There was discussion regarding the Coverdell Grant. Chief Kruger explained that the FIGG Grant was approved in FY25/26 for the DNA genealogy for unidentified human remains.

### 5.2 FY 25/26 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget Report

Chief Kruger presented an overview of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY 25/26 Budget Report covering October 1 through December 31, 2025. Commissioner Lockhart asked to get documentation of what part of the \$79,992 for the FIGG Grant is being reimbursed by FDLE. Cassandra Li, Administrative and Financial Services Manager, Marion County Fire Rescue, explained that after this committee's approval for the FIGG grant and the executed contract was received, a budget amendment was submitted to recognize the award to add to the budget before invoices can be paid and funds can be expended. The invoices were received, and Marion County has received reimbursement from the State for most of the money, minus one case pending that Lindsey Bayer, Director of Operations, Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office, will provide to FDLE. The money will be reflected in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Budget Report because it was just received. Commissioner Lockhart mentioned the previous minutes reflected this was a reimbursable grant and there was nothing expended. Commissioner Lockhart would like to know what was expended and what qualifies for a reimbursement. Cassandra Li advised that invoices were received from Othrem, Inc., which is the lab providing the genealogy sampling. Marion County made payment to the lab and sent copies of the paid invoices to FDLE for reimbursement. FDLE has since reimbursed Marion County.

### 5.3. FY 26/27 Medical Examiner Proposed Budget

Chief Kruger discussed the FY 26/27 Medical Examiner Proposed Budget. There was an additional column added for FY 24/25 Actuals. There was an increase of \$356,000 to the Medical Examiner's Contract amount. The Administration Fee of \$400,401 is 5% of the FY 26/27 Proposed Budget of the culmination of the Medical Examiner's Contract fee of \$7,614,923, plus the \$393,089 in Operating Expenses. Commissioner Stone asked about the increase in the High-Speed Internet Connection. Dr. Wolf advised that the increase of \$11,000 came from the Marion County Information Technology department, suggesting an upgrade for the current internet.

Chief Kruger noted that historically the proposed FY 26/27 budget is presented for review to this committee for a draft approval so it can be brought before the Marion County Board of County Commissioners at budget workshops scheduled July 2026.

Commissioner Lockhart asked how the Property Insurance Premium was previously paid. There is not an expenditure for this line item in FY 24/25. Commissioner Lockhart asked if this premium was paid in FY 24/25, since the box is blank. Cassandra Li advised that the Finance Department pays the insurance premiums. The FY 26/27 amount is a proposed amount as the Budget Department will update these numbers when they receive information from Risk Management.

Chief Kruger believes it may have been a scrivener's error where the number did not populate in the budget. Commissioner Lockhart requested an update on this at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lockhart asked about there being nothing in the Office Supplies line item. Chief Kruger advised that Office Supplies have been moved to Operating Supplies under 552108. Commissioner Lockhart questioned why an additional \$5,199 is added for Office Supplies in the Operating Supplies line item if the Medical Examiner is asking for \$39,000 for Office Supplies in their budget. Cassandra Li explained that money was previously recognized for the Coverdell award in Office Supplies based on what the Medical Examiner's staff requested for the grant. The money was included assuming that the Medical Examiner would request the same items for the Coverdell grant. It has not been spent, as staff was now ordering items that are considered Operating Supplies. The Operating line items only show items they planned to purchase for this year. Historically, office supplies are not typically purchased for the Medical Examiner's office. Commissioner Campbell asked what is included in the increase in Operating Supplies. Cassandra Li explained there are more items included out of the Operating Supplies line item, which include the packing station tables, wire racks, autopsy saws, and air helmets. Commissioner Lockhart wants to make sure Office Supplies are not included in the budget twice. Commissioner Stone asked staff to look at what the Medical Examiner provides in their budget and make sure it was not a duplication. Cassandra Li works with Lindsey Bayer and her staff to see what is needed to add to the budget.

Commissioner Lockhart asked if it was possible to delay acting on this item until the next meeting so she can go through it and understand what is included in the Medical Examiner's contract. Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator, Marion County Board of County Commissioners, does not see a problem waiting to approve the budget. He will make sure staff is available to answer any questions regarding the Medical Examiner contract and the Operating Supplies budget. Mr. Bouyounes noted that the Medical Examiner contract needs to be clarified and suggested that this matter be discussed with the Medical Examiner at a later date.

For follow up, Commissioner Lockhart asked for a copy of the Medical Examiner contract prior to the next meeting.

*Motion:* Commissioner Lockhart made a motion to move the FY 26/27 Medical Examiner Proposed Budget discussion to the next meeting's agenda and Commissioner Stone seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Following up from the last meeting, Commissioner Lockhart asked about the vehicle true-up discussions. She mentioned that there was going to be information brought back to this meeting about Seminole County's allocation for the vehicles. Commissioner Lockhart reiterated that Seminole County would like this true-up information before voting on the next budget. Mr. Bouyounes explained that the budget proposal is received from the Medical Examiner. Marion County does not know where the vehicles are being used in the system. This input would come from the Medical Examiner so Marion County can adjust and allocate the budget appropriately. Mr. Bouyounes explained that the budget requested by the Medical Examiner is to serve all six counties. Dr. Wolf, Medical Examiner, Districts 5 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office, added that Seminole County's transport is contracted out and the budget includes Seminole County's fee. Commissioner Lockhart inquired whether Marion County is relying on the Medical Examiner to provide the necessary details to ensure that the cost allocation is accurate. Commissioner Lockhart further inquired whether the Medical Examiner could provide this information to Marion County so that the committee may review the details together. Lindsey Bayer advised that Seminole County has the same three vehicles that were purchased from the beginning for the investigators. The vehicles are budgeted for gas, repairs and similar items. The only other

expense in the cost allocation is for Seminole County's transport. The transport staff for District 5 are Medical Examiner employees. Seminole County is contracted out and provides a per fee service for each body that is transported.

Commissioner Lockhart asked whether Seminole County purchased vehicles to remain in Seminole County and, given that Seminole County is contracting out services, whether Seminole County is paying the contracted service provider directly. Lindsey Bayer advised that these fees are being paid to the Medical Examiner. Commissioner Lockhart mentioned that this is not what is listed in the contract and it did not align with current operations. Commissioner Lockhart stated she was under the assumption that all were abiding by the contract. She asked if someone could clarify why the Medical Examiner is not abiding by the contract. Lindsey Bayer advised that she could not clarify why we are not abiding by the contract because they were not involved in the contract between the two districts. Lindsey Bayer was asked by Cassandra Li's predecessor if the amount can be rolled into the budget, rather than the Medical Examiner send a bill to Seminole County. Lindsey Bayer advised that she just recently realized the contract did not reflect this.

Commissioner Lockhart brought up the item from Old Business regarding the County Attorneys meeting to update the contract. Chief Kruger advised the contract was updated at the end of 2024. The contract stated that Seminole County would take care of their indigent care, cremations and transport. Mr. Bouyounes asked if the committee would agree to look at the contract to make sure it reflects the present operation and determine the most efficient way to do it with the Medical Examiner. Chief Kruger asked if the recommendation will be to look at it now, since the Medical Examiner's contract is up for renewal in 2028. Commissioner Campione suggested the possibility of doing an addendum or red line with modifications to line up with how it is done. Chief Kruger believes we can start that process now.

Commissioner Davis advised that all should make sure that Seminole County was not paying for transport services as written in the Medical Examiner contract, as well as Marion County. Commissioner Bogue asked if it would be easier just to follow the contract the way it is written, starting from this point forward. Lindsey Bayer added as far as body removal for Seminole County, the thought process was the Medical Examiner would review all the transports and make sure payment is only for Medical Examiner office transports. Commissioner Lockhart suggested for staff to find out the actual practices, align these with the contract, and then make a red line on the items not in line with the contract. Matthew Minter, County Attorney, Marion County Board of County Commissioners, read sections 6.B. and 6.C. from the Medical Examiners contract. He asked Dr. Wolf if anything has changed since 2018 with handling the cremations. Dr. Wolf advised that Marion County has always handled the cremations. With cremations and transports being part of the per capita, Commissioner Davis suggested changing the invoicing portion to be paid per capita amounts. Chief Banta added that if this was stricken from the contract, we do not have to worry about true-ups. Commissioner Lockhart stated if what is in the contract is not happening, then that negates the need for a true-up. Mr. Minter advised that it would be helpful to see the agreement that Seminole County has with First Call. Lindsey Bayer advised that the Medical Examiner has the contract with First Call. Commissioner Lockhart asked for the contract to be sent to her to compare it with Seminole County's contract. Commissioner Campbell asked if the contract has always mentioned that Seminole County will handle their own cremations. Chief Kruger advised that the last Interlocal Agreement had similar language stating that Seminole County would handle their own cremations. Chief Kruger advised that Marion County has always done the cremations for all the counties. Chief Kruger will follow up with confirmation on this. Mr. Minter offered to do an addendum to the agreement to modify what the agreement actually says referring to cremations.

Commissioner Lockhart requested to follow up on the discussion about Seminole County's process for contracting with the Medical Examiner for their own facility when Seminole County is on its own. This process that Dr. Wolf outlined according to state statute is accurate for a county that is not a charter county, but because Seminole county is a charter county, that process did not qualify for them. Because of this, Seminole County will be going out for a request for proposal (RFP). Commissioner Lockhart is clarifying this for future reference.

## **6. New Business**

### 6.1 Notation for Record: Effective December 9, 2025, Commissioner Amy Lockhart will serve as the appointed Commissioner representing the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners to the Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee

The Medical Examiner Advisory Committee received a one-page letter from Andria Herr, Chairman, Seminole County Board of County Commissioners, appointing Commissioner Lockhart to serve on the Medical Examiner Advisory Committee for the next year. Commissioner Lockhart asked if this notification was needed each year. Seminole County sends a letter out to every advisory board upon which a Commissioner was appointed, notifying if there is a change or if the member remained on the committee. Marion County and Citrus County only send letters when there is a change in representation.

### 6.2 Request Update on Potential Separation

Mr. Minter explained that before developing an agreement for the separation of Lake and Seminole Counties leaving District 5, the counties would first need to agree on the general concept of the framework. On October 16, 2025, Mr. Minter sent a two-page letter to the Lake and Seminole County Attorneys with a proposed plan for moving forward. Since that time, Mr. Minter did not believe anything in writing has been received back from either Lake County or Seminole County regarding the letter. With respect to communications from the other three counties, Mr. Minter reported the following: Citrus County agreed with the proposed letter, Hernando County indicated they are generally in agreement but have some particular issues and Sumter County was not in agreement with the letter as written.

Commissioner Campbell advised that Hernando County's issue was the language agreeing to support Lake County leaving. Hernando County is not in support of Lake County leaving.

Commissioner Campione brought up the language of "Notwithstanding" in the letter and asked if the counteroffer is something that the Marion County Board of County Commissioners is not willing to entertain. Commissioner Davis added that this was a board vote. Commissioner Campbell stated it was his understanding that this Committee supported notifying the State Medical Examiners Commission of its support for Lake County leaving.

Mr. Bouyounes believes Marion County would be in favor of Lake County leaving, if all six counties could work together to secure the funding for the remaining counties in District 5. He added that even with that condition, Hernando County may not be willing to give enough support to separate. Commissioner Campbell advised that is Hernando County's position. Commissioner Bogue responded that they do not want to keep anyone in a position they do not want to be in. He added that we should let them go if they so desire, but only after funding is secured. Bradley Arnold, County Administrator, Sumter County Board of County Commissioners, mentioned Sumter County is trying to find a pathway to support Lake County and Seminole County exiting the current agreement, but it all goes back to the specific facility for use. The new facility is still an unresolved issue.

Commissioner Lockhart reiterated that Seminole County is leaving and they are procuring their own building and their own RFP for Medical Examiner services. They will exit whether Lake County stays or goes. Seminole County will abide by the terms of the contract and will terminate in accordance with the contract.

Mr. Bouyounes asked Commissioner Lockhart if Seminole County can give us a timeline for the new facility. Commissioner Lockhart advised they have hired an architect and a consulting company to make sure the building is designed appropriately. Seminole County has contractual agreements to move ahead. It will happen before the expiration of the contract, and they will give ample notice to this Committee if it happens sooner. Chief Kruger noted that the Interlocal Agreement expires in FY 29 and Dr. Wolf's contract expires in FY 28.

Commissioner Davis spoke with all five Sheriffs in District 5, noting each Sheriff expressed that they would like the five counties to stay together. Commissioner Davis took a recommendation to her BCC to follow Marion County's lead, and it was a 5-0 vote to follow their lead.

Mr. Minter asked Commissioner Campione whether Lake County has had any deliberations on these issues, in reference to the feedback he has provided to Melanie Marsh. Commissioner Campione replied there was recently an agenda item with a presentation and a discussion on these issues. There was not a vote or decision. More information is needed by Lake County regarding these issues. With the conditions, the majority of Commissioner Campione's group are supporting an exit, although she cannot say that is the direction they will take. Lake County may have more answers in May but needs more detail regarding Seminole County's plans. Commissioner Davis would like Lake County to stay but does not want to keep a county that doesn't want to stay. Commissioner Stone added that Marion County will not oppose but will not write a letter of support to the State Medical Examiners Board.

Mr. Minter suggested that if four counties are staying with District 5, it would be helpful to have a meeting with just the four counties staying in District 5. Commissioner Bogue asked whether Lake County needs State approval to withdraw, and do we know if the State has an appetite for this. Dr. Wolf replied that approval comes from the Medical Examiners Commission, and it is a matter of the five counties coming to an agreement. Dr. Wolf advised the Medical Examiners Commission will approve what is agreed upon. It will need to be a harmonious agreement with all five counties, or all six counties if Lake County leaves District 5 and joins Seminole County. Commissioner Lockhart noted that her review of statutes or administrative procedures does not contemplate a realignment of part of the district leaving and there is no process, rule or law saying what this procedure should be. Mr. Minter agreed with this. She added that Lake County in District 5 could have an Interlocal Agreement with District 24 to provide services without separating from District 5. Commissioner Lockhart noted it was her understanding that this is something to realize in the practicality of how services are rendered. Commissioner Davis stated that what is the most cost effective for the counties, would be the most beneficial.

Mr. Minter advised that when he was at the Medical Examiners Commission meeting in 2025, the Commission denied the request without prejudice because all stakeholders had not been engaged to state their position on the request. Marion County was under the impression that the Medical Examiners Commission was looking for a buy in from all respective Counties. The stakeholders that Commissioner Davis spoke with were hopeful that District 5 would stay intact. Commissioner Campbell asked if we could notice a meeting with just District 5, that would include Lake County. Commissioner Campione would appreciate the opportunity, but it would need to be

after direction is received from the rest of her BCC. She will let us know if this happens before our regularly scheduled Medical Examiner's Advisory Board meeting in May.

Denise Lyn, County Attorney, Citrus County Board of County Commissioners, advised that her understanding is that the statutes describe the makeup of the Medical Examiner districts. Until the law is changed, Lake County is included in District 5. She understands the Medical Examiners Commission makes a recommendation on whether the law should be changed to allow them to leave. Dr. Wolf explained that Administrative Code 11.G defines the districts, and this is easier to change than the Florida Statutes.

Commissioner Campbell stated he agreed with Commissioner Lockhart that it is a possibility that someone in District 5 can have an Interlocal Agreement with another district to operate. Mr. Minter mentioned that if Lake County stays in District 5, they can contract with District 24.

Commissioner Stone noted she would like to take this opportunity to reset and work with her fellow Commissioners as peers to reach decisions on this item that benefit everyone. She stated she looked forward to good future working relationships with all counties. Commissioner Campione noted that Lake County also appreciates the working relationships and partnerships with the adjoining counties.

### 6.3 MOTION: Elect Chair and Vice Chair for a One Year Term

*Motion:* Commissioner Campione made a motion for Commissioner Davis to remain Chairman of the Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee, and Commissioner Stone seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

*Motion:* Commissioner Bogue made a motion to elect Commissioner Campbell as Vice-Chair of the Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee, and Commissioner Campione seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

## **7. Next Meeting Date**

The next Districts 5 and 24 Medical Examiner Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sumter County Service Center, Room 102, 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL.

*Update:* the above meeting has been changed to Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sumter County Service Center, 7375 Powell Road, Room 102, Wildwood, FL

## **8. Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

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Holly Davis, Chair

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Date