

DOMES Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2023

Meeting Date: May 17, 2023
Facilitator: Dan Schebler, Director of Operations

Time: 2:00pm -4:00pm
Location: Okaloosa County Board of
County Commissioners Office
Suite 302

Attendees:

Dan Schebler (Chief Operating Officer (COO))
Brad Baker (Santa Rosa County)
Craig Coffey (Okaloosa County)
Melissa Thomason (Walton County)
Eric Gilmore (Escambia County)
Dr. Deanna A. Oleske
Lynn Hoshihara (Okaloosa)

Meeting called to order at 2:00pm

Public Forum Comments:

- No public comments

Approval of the Minutes

- Approval of April 19, 2023, minutes postponed to the June DOMES meeting for approval.

Agenda Items

Discussion on Item I (Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget)

Proposed Budget

Mr. Schebler stated the presented overview of the budget assumes a five percent caseload increase, which is low compared to what is seen around the country. Calendar year postmortem exams were completely flat, but the number of cases increased in 2022. Budget requests:

- New position requested in the budget is for a Fellow.
- Has been more than twenty years since a new Forensic Fellowship Program was established in Florida and the D1MEO plans to establish this position next year. This budget request includes funding for a person, the costs of books and fees required by the Florida State University (FSU). The program requires:
 - Fellowship Program duration is one-year
 - Fellowship Program requires a program director and a program coordinator be in place – these duties will be re-aligned across current staff
 - Agreements are in progress for affiliation and accreditation with FSU
 - Currently working with FDLE for lab requirements
 - Currently working with FSU for educational requirements
 - Working with toxicology labs on training and requirements
 - Position is paid at a lower rate than doctors
 - All work performed by a Fellow must be signed off on by a Medical Examiner
 - Fellowship Program does not decrease the need for Locums Tenens

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Additional budget requests includes cost of living increase:

- Cost of living / merit is proposed for a total of six percent. Dr. Oleske's contract is limited to five percent
- Estimated increase of eight percent for health insurance costs (won't know exact percentage until October/November timeframe)
- No capital requests are included in this budget outside of the building project.
- Funding is being pursued through grant opportunities for equipment and for vehicles from the sheriff's office .
- Grant and other revenue total estimates total \$165,000 thousand dollars
- Budget request does not include the \$750,000 thousand dollar request for the capital building project and additional ongoing annual funding would be provided via the fee the three respective boards have voted on at \$1,000 to \$1,500 thousand dollars.
- Salaries, employees' costs, and locums' money show there is an increase but that involves moving some monies around because we had a budget for five doctors which we currently do not have.
- The new doctor onboards in July. He is currently not board certified and will earn \$250,000 thousand dollars. Once he becomes board certified his salary will increase to \$275,000 thousand dollars via the contract D1MEO has with him.
- The remaining positions are funded at \$275,000 thousand dollars for a board-certified pathologist.
- The vacant Deputy Chief position is budgeted at \$325,000 thousand dollars.
- Reserve funding is approximately \$450,000 thousand dollars, which is about one month of operating expenses at the current expenditure rate.
- Due to budgeting for five doctors and currently only staffed with two doctors there will be funds remaining at the end of the year in the range of \$250,000-300,000 thousand dollars.
- Budget is due to County Administrators by June 1, 2023

Apportionment Methodology

Mr. Schebler suggested moving to fee for service for each respective county:

- Postmortem exams = \$3000 per case
- Paper records review = \$1000 dollars per case
- Non-ME cases reported but jurisdiction declined = \$150 per case
- Cremation permit approvals = \$15 dollars per case (county collects \$40 dollars)
- D1MEO would provide an invoice monthly to each respective county that provides details on the cases by county:
 - Number of residents that came into the care of D1MEO
 - Number of cremations permits approved
 - Number of records reviews provided per county
 - General overhead is included in the projected budget costs of \$3,000 thousand dollars
- Toxicology and body removal fee would be passed through as well.
- This method requires reserve funding be allowed to carry over on the books by DOMES to cover the October-November operating period.
- This fee schedule would fund the budget presented here today
- Administrative costs is built into the budget to include outsourcing of a bookkeeper

Agreements

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The appropriation methodology simplifies having one agreement between the medical examiner's office, DOMES (Board) and each of the four respective Counties, which would be approved individually by each respective BoCC :

- The agreement would be in place of the Interlocal Agreement.
- Propose one of the fees be a per body capital fee as well.
- Propose the current Interlocal Agreement be rescinded, and a separate agreement be created between DOMES and each individual county.
- Each respective BoCC has voting decision
- One attorney created the DOMES entity, as a corporate entity filed in the State of Florida, which now has the non-profit status with the IRS and the Florida Department of Revenue.
- A different attorney created the 163 entity, which I am not clear on the purposes, because all business is conducted under the DOMES non-profit FEIN
- Currently this body has been functioning as both a 163 entity and the DOMES non-profit Board of Directors.
- Cost per cases as previously stated

Mr. Schebler asked the DOMES Board to approve the budget apportionment at \$5.9 million dollars to include the \$750,000 thousand dollar request as a separate line item in the budget to

~Mr. Coffey will accept a motion and approval of the tentative budget dollar amount and the tentative budget provided. Ms. Thomason moved to approve, Mr. Baker seconded, motioned carried 3-1 with Mr. Gilmore voting against.

Discussion on Item II (MEO Facility Project Update)

Project re-scoping

Mr. Schebler stated he put together a slide, presented today, based on the information he received from the architect on Monday regarding updated costs and sizing.

Updated schematic of facility project includes:

- Five plus one in autopsy tables
 - Five main tables and one decomp table
- Two separate storage coolers reduced in size
 - 60 body storage in the main cooler – size reduced by forty percent
 - 15 in the decomp cooler
- Reduced office sizes (public entry admin and all the office space)
- Reduced the sally port
- Eliminated some other item costs
- No visual schematic available as of to-date
- Total Square footage under roof comparing the twenty-year program, which no one was interested in funding is under 22,000 sq. ft. and 19,000 usable square footage
- Land costs were removed from budget since purchased by SRC
- Equipment from the SHH location will move to the new facility:
 - Autopsy carts
 - X-Ray machines
 - Hydraulic lifts
 - All furnishing from rental space will move to new location
 - Detailed email of item breakdown will be sent to the DOMES Board members

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- Legislative grant is \$1.5 million
 - Extension requested and granted by FDLE through the end of this calendar year
- Federal grant for \$125,000 thousand dollar grant has a two-year period of performance that will expire September 2024
- \$1,000 thousand dollars per body finances \$15 million for 20 years at six percent, with all counties participating based on 2022 numbers:
 - Recommend using design build model.
 - The DOMES Board would select the contractor.
 - Architectural firm currently contracted since March of 2021 for three years to see the project through. Need to revisit contract soon.
 - Recommend hiring a project manager.

Mr. Baker and Ms. Thomason agreed added after conversations with the SRC budget director and a few Commissioners, SRC would lean toward fee for service as an easier method to budget for yearly.

Ms. Thomason agreed.

Task Order

The task order has been issued for the permit, planning and design of the utilities

Next Steps

Mr. Schebler to schedule the architects to present at the June 7, 2023, meeting

Mr. Schebler will send the DOMES Board the following documents:

- 20- and 30-year program document
- Budget driven document
- Two cost estimates from Caldwell & Associates
- Get the conceptual drawing to the DOMES Board a week in advance

Mr. Schebler thanked the Board for their letters of support and stated he sent them to Tallahassee.

No Action Required/Taken

Discussion on Item III (CEO/COO Report)

Mid-year compensation adjustment

D1MEO follows the County model for flat fees for all the non-executive employees. D1MEO is requesting a \$1.00 an hour increase. This cost is in the budget and is approximately \$25,000 thousand dollars between now and the end of the fiscal year. This fee includes benefits and retirements at approximately \$50,000 thousand dollars a year.

- Doctors and the Director will not receive an increase.

Mr. Baker stated I'm not opposed to the requested increase, it is hard to say you gave an eight percent increase and five months later another six percent, that's a lot more than what we are doing for the county employees.

Ms. Thomason stated if D1MEO feels it is the fairest way to allocate the money, she is ok with it.

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Mr. Coffey stated if D1MEO had not given an eight percent last year, he would be more favorable. He stated he does not recommend a mid-year increase unless there is another strategy of two to four percent that might work.

No Action Taken

LFIR Update

Senator Broxson was able to get the D1MEO project up to \$1.5M. We are now awaiting signature by the Governor.

Monthly Financials (Feb/March/April)

- The financials are presented in a new format which is simpler. Any questions?
- With June meeting being so soon, May financials will not be ready for approval by the meeting
- Working on reconciling the budget difference, D1MEO expended \$47,000 thousand dollars to Caldwell & Associates on the Task Order for site analysis and it needs to be aligned with the budget expenditure “construction in progress” for the facility.

New Doctor

Currently waiting on the final approval for the H1B-Visa for the new doctor D1MEO is hiring. The Visa will be good for three years. Tracking number with UCIF will allow D1MEO to see when he is approved. As it stands, he is expected to start in July 2023.

No Action Required

Discussion on Item IV (Meeting Schedule)

Next DOMES meeting – June 7, 2:00pm
Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioner’s Office
6495 Caroline Street,
Milton, FL 32507

Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm