



North Carolina Crematory Authority

Meeting Report December 22, 2020

The NC Crematory Authority met via WebEx technology on December 22, 2020, to consider the following agenda items:

- Election of Officers for 2021
- Update on the Cremation Report Portal on the Board Website
- Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Cremation Rates in NC
- Cremation Trends in NC and the Board's Response

Executive Director Stephen Davis opened the meeting and welcomed members in attendance: Steven Hundley, Shuler Funeral Home; Chris Headley, Neptune Society Cremation Services; Craig Tomczak, PinesFunerals; Robert Dodson, Cremation Services of the Triad; Steve Herndon; Padgett & King Mortuary; and Mark Blake, Brown-Wynne Funeral Home. Mr. Davis noted that the Authority last met in December 2019 and would need to elect officers for 2021. In response to self-nominations, the following officers were elected:

- Chris Headley, Chair
- Craig Tomczak, Vice Chair
- Steven Hundley, Secretary

Mr. Davis announced that the Board was launching a Cremation Report Portal on its website to enable the digital submission of monthly cremation reports and fees as a way to facilitate the preparation and timely filing of these reports. He noted that this new portal was developed in response to the digital initiative that the 2019 Board authorized. He said that the portal will be available beginning with the February 2021 cremation reports.

Members then discussed the impacts and challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and how this public health crisis has affected cremation rates, procedures and services in North Carolina. Members noted that recent trends show an elevated number of cremations in the state as a result of the pandemic, and expressed concern that the rise in mortality rates have begun to create concerns about storage of decedents pending their disposition.

Members continued their discussion by considering and discussing cremation trends in North Carolina particularly with respect to an increase in disciplinary actions based on either the improper completion of the Cremation Authorization Form or a lack of understanding about statutory requirements for disposition rights among next-of-kin.

In closing the meeting, members briefly discussed a desire to meet twice in 2021 in the Spring and Fall with a joint meeting with the Board in the spring meeting. Without further business before the Authority and upon proper motion, the Authority adjourned the meeting.