



**TENNESSEE BOARD OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND EMBALMERS
500 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243
615-741-5062**

**Minutes of Board Meeting
January 13, 2026**

President Wendell Naylor called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was conducted in Conference Room 1-B, Davy Crockett Tower, Nashville, Tennessee.

ROLL CALL:

Lisa Bohannon called the roll, and it was established that a quorum was present.

BOARD MEMBERS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Wendell Naylor, President; Randy Nash, Vice President; Tracy Allen, Don Haynes, Chris Lea and Tim Wheeler

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Scottie Poarch

STAFF MEMBERS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Troy Bryant Associate General Counsel; Robert Gribble, Executive Director; and Lisa Bohannon, Regulatory Board Administrative Manager

President Wendell Naylor explained the process for public comment, stating that any member of the public could provide comments related to agenda items, and that opportunity would be available near the end of the board meeting.

The following business was transacted:

AGENDA:

Chris Lea made a motion to adopt the agenda as published. Randy Nash seconded the motion and adopted by Voice Vote

PUBLIC RULEMAKING HEARING:

The Board held a Public Rulemaking Hearing focused on a set of rules, with Troy Bryant, Associate General Counsel, providing legal support throughout the proceeding.

Troy Bryant, Associate General Counsel, read the proposed rules into the official record, ensuring they were formally presented as part of the rulemaking process.

He also read a letter submitted by the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association which addressed comments related specifically to new fee structure included in the proposed rules.

The hearing concluded with the Board completing all required steps for the proposed rules, adopting them, and moving the rulemaking forward for further action(s) in the process.

Note: Robert Gribble, Executive Director, departed the meeting at 10:43 a.m. following the conclusion of the Public Rulemaking Hearing to attend another off-site board event.

DECEMBER 9, 2025, MINUTES:

Minutes from December 9, 2025, will be presented at the next meeting.

LEGAL REPORT:
TROY BRYANT, ASSOCIATE GENERAL COUNSEL

1. Case No.: 2025065291 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on October 21, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

An employee of Respondent establishment permitted their embalmer license to expire on August 31, 2025, and did not meet the requirements to be reinstated until September 8, 2025. During the unlicensed period from September 1 through September 7, the employee was listed as the embalmer on two (2) death certificates. **Respondent stated that the matter has been addressed and they have implemented procedures to make sure all licensees are renewed on time.**

Recommendation:

- \$500.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing if necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Don Haynes and adopted by voice vote.

2. Case No.: 20250065301 – Embalmer

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on October 21, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

Respondent is the employee from the preceding complaint. An employee of Respondent establishment permitted their embalmer license to expire on August 31, 2025, and did not meet the requirements to be reinstated until September 8, 2025. During the unlicensed period from September 1 through September 7, the employee was listed as the embalmer on two (2) death certificates. **Respondent they had a lapse in time and thought they had fixed the reminder to be a month ahead. Respondent stated they did not do this with malicious intent.**

Recommendation:

- \$250.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing if necessary.

A motion was made by Chris Lea to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tracy Allen and adopted by voice vote.

3. Case No.: 2025067331 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 6, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

- a. Respondent's website listed direct cremation for \$1,395.00 while their General Price List had a direct cremation for \$1,095.00. **Respondent stated this was a clerical error where the website erroneously listed the wrong values and was corrected immediately.**

Recommendation:

- \$500.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing is necessary.

A motion was made by Don Haynes to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tim Wheeler and adopted by voice vote.

4. Case No.: 2025067361 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 6, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

An employee for Respondent establishment allowed their embalmer license to expire on September 30, 2025, and did not meet the requirements for reinstatement until October 14, 2025. During the unlicensed period, the employee served in the capacity of a licensed embalmer for one (1) decedent. **Respondent replied stating that listing the employee as the embalmer for the one (1) decedent was a clerical error and that the employee did not actually embalm the decedent but that the employee's information had only been erroneously included as the embalmer. Respondent stated that the employee had provided information of two other embalmers who could replace him while his license was expired. Respondent attached a text communication dated October 2, the date of the contract for the identified decedent, asking another embalmer whether they could embalm the decedent and the embalmer responding in the affirmative.**

Based on the above, the evidence supports that the employee with the expired embalmer license did not perform the embalming for the one (1) decedent. However, during the course of the inspection, Respondent establishment failed to provide the embalming license of the individual who did perform the embalming when it was requested. Respondent provided a copy of this license in their response. Likewise, Respondent admits they made a clerical error erroneously identifying the unlicensed individual as the embalmer.

Recommendation:

- Letter of Warning

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tracy Allen and adopted by voice vote.

5. Case No.: 2025067381 – Embalmer

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 6, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

Respondent is the employee from the preceding complaint. An employee for Respondent establishment allowed their embalmer license to expire on September 30, 2025, and did not meet the requirements for reinstatement until October 14, 2025. During the unlicensed period, the employee served in the capacity of a licensed embalmer for one (1) decedent. **Respondent reiterated their response from the previous complaint.**

Recommendation:

- Closure

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Chris Lea and adopted by voice vote.

6. Case No.: 2025070731 – Apprentice Funeral Director

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 25, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

Respondent, an apprentice funeral director, had signed on five (5) Authorization for Cremation Forms signing as the witness as a licensed funeral director. **Respondent replied stating that the forms with his signature are accurate and that they were informed by their managers that they were allowed to sign the authorization forms since they were the ones who met with the families and "that the paperwork was just for the funeral home and crematory records."**

Recommendation:

- \$500.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing is necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash for a Letter of Instruction. The motion was seconded by Chris Lea and adopted by voice vote.

Board member(s) voting contrary to the board's determination: Tim Wheeler

7. Case No.: 2025069511 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 20, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

An application for change of ownership was not submitted to the Board within the time required by law. Based on the lease agreement dated January 1, 2023, and December 19, 2023, Respondent establishment changed ownership at some point during this time. Respondent submitted the change of ownership on November 12, 2025. **Respondent replied stating that they can only assume that the previous managing funeral director did not complete the ownership change in CORE they are leasing and have not bought the business, building, or property yet.**

Recommendation:

- \$500.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing is necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Chris Lea and adopted by voice vote.

8. Case No.: 2025068111 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on November 13, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

- a. Respondent establishment underwent a change of ownership in August 2023, however, Respondent establishment did not submit a change of ownership application as required by statute. At this time, Respondent still has not submitted a change of ownership application. **Respondent replied stating only that they had not made any ownership changes in 2023 and reached out for clarification.**
- b. Likewise, Respondent had not updated the individual in charge as corporate contact/representative as required by applicable rules.

Legal contacted Respondent's attorney to inform them of what occurred. For context, Respondent establishment was previously owned by, as an example, ABC, Inc. prior to 2023. In 2023, Respondent establishment switched ownership to a different but similarly named corporation, becoming XYZ, Inc. While the same individuals may have been in control of ABC, Inc. and XYZ, Inc., since the corporate entity/personhood changed legally this still functions as a change of ownership. Therefore, a change of ownership application is still due and remains outstanding.

Recommendation:

- \$1,000.00 civil penalty, require the establishment to submit an application, supporting documents, and payment of fees to the Board Office within thirty (30) days. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing is necessary.

A motion was made by Chris Lea to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tracy Allen and adopted by voice vote.

9. Case No.: 2025064951 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on October 20, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

On October 2, 2025, the Board received a letter from Respondent establishment's manager informing them that he was resigning his position as manager of the establishment. On October 9, 2025, the change of manager application was completed naming a new individual as manager. However, a phone conversation with the previous manager indicated that he had not been at Respondent establishment or worked there in any capacity since the end of August 2025. During the inspection, the inspector examined twenty-five (25) funeral files for September and October 2025 and found no evidence that the previous manager had worked in the capacity of a licensed funeral director or embalmer, but that the individual who had been named as the new manager was listed as the funeral director of record. **Respondent replied stating that they never received written nor verbal notice that the old manager had resigned at any time in August or September. Respondent stated their first notification came second hand on October 2, 2025, when an associate contacted them after receiving a call from the Board office, Respondent stated this was the first time they had been informed that the previous manager was no longer employed with Respondent establishment. Respondent stated they did not receive direct confirmation from the former manager until October 3, 2025, when he emailed a copy of the letter he had previously sent to the Board, again, Respondent indicated they had no knowledge that he had resigned. Respondent further provided that the previous manager's final compensation was issued on August 30, 2025, and that he never indicated that this represented his final day or that he would be leaving the establishment. Respondent stated as soon as they were made aware of his resignation on October 3rd, the change of manager application was submitted on October 9, 2025.**

Recommendation:

- \$750.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing is necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash to assess a \$1,000.00 civil penalty, authorize for hearing, if necessary, and send a letter of instruction indicating that if Respondent returns before the board with the same or similar issues within one calendar year, the board will discuss on record suspension of the establishment license. The motion was seconded by Tim Wheeler and adopted by voice vote.

10. Case No.: 2025064971 – Funeral Establishment

This case was administratively opened following a routine inspection conducted on October 22, 2025. During the course of this routine inspection, the inspector observed the following:

- a. The funeral director and embalmer licenses of Respondent establishment's manager expired on September 30, 2025, and did not meet the requirements to reinstate until October 2, 2025. During the unlicensed period, the unlicensed manager continued to act in the capacity of manager of Respondent establishment. **Respondent stated the manager's licenses have been reinstated and that they have reinforced internal calendaring and monitoring procedures to prevent this from recurring.**
- b. Multiple caskets in the selection room had prices displayed at a different selling price than what was shown on the casket price list.
- c. Multiple caskets were displayed and priced in the selection room that were not listed on the casket price list. **Respondent stated they have thoroughly reviewed and updated their pricing cards to ensure they are fully aligned with their General Price List and Casket Price List and all caskets displayed are now accurately included on the Casket Price List.**
- d. At the time of the inspection, the inspector found the ventilation/exhaust fan in the preparation room to not be in proper working condition. **Respondent stated the ventilation/exhaust fan has been fully repaired and is now in working order. Respondent stated at the time of the inspection, it was already in the process of being serviced and that this was communicated to the inspector.**

Recommendation:

- \$1,250.00 civil penalty. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing if necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Chris Lea and adopted by voice vote.

11. Case No.: 2025066361 – Funeral Establishment

Complainant, wife of the decedent, alleged unprofessional conduct on behalf of Respondent establishment. Complainant specifically identifies one individual employed by Respondent that she primarily worked with throughout the arrangement process. First, Complainant stated that she gave a copy of the marriage certificate to the employee and that all she needed to do was to copy the information from the marriage certificate onto the death certificate, however, much of the information included on the death certificate was incorrect and that at the time of the complaint, she still had not received a corrected death certificate. Likewise, Complainant stated that the visitation book and cards were not prepared by the time the visitation began and that some people were not able to sign the book or receive a card. Finally, Complainant stated that the employee presented themselves to be a funeral director when they were at the establishment on August 13, 2025, and that she learned later the employee was only an apprentice.

Respondent provided a lengthy response and stated primarily:

1. The decedent's demographic information for the death certificate was discussed with Complainant, reviewed by multiple people and reviewed by Complainant before leaving that day. At this time, Complainant did not identify any errors at that time.
2. The employee stated they were not scheduled to work the memorial service but that the funeral attendants were scheduled instead. However, because they knew Complainant was upset for a litany of other reasons, the employee came in to try and help with anything they could. The employee stated Complainant was very rude and stated, "she did not want me there" and continued to speak ill of her stating she was "incompetent" and "it was unbelievable the mistakes [she] had made." The employee stated they brought all the register book packages and memorial folder options they had at 9:00 a.m., the morning of the visitation occurring at 10:00 a.m. The employee stated Complainant picked out a book but was not happy with the memorial folder choices. The employee stated Complainant continued to berate her about the mistakes made involving the death certificate and for various things unrelated to the services provided. Following this interaction, the employee remained in their office so as to not further upset Complainant and filled out the amendment form at this time to have the corrections made

to the death certificate and it was mailed off the same day. The employee stated they received the corrected death certificate on November 10, 2025, and that it was mailed to Complainant.

3. The employee stated that they never introduced themselves as a licensed funeral director and provided that they are an apprentice funeral director registered with the state in March of 2025. However, when describing the services provided, the employee stated the following, "I stated simply that I would be helping with arrangements. I never at any point stated that I was a funeral director, nor gave any title for my employment. My co-worker was in the office approximately twenty (20) feet down the hall from the arrangement room for the entirety of our meeting. After introductions, we discussed and reviewed [decedent's] demographic information for the death certificate, the information for the obituary, and discussed planning a memorial service. . . all four (4) of us reviewed the death certificate information sheet, the written obituary I prepared for [Complainant], and the contract before she left for the day." On August 15, 2025, "During our two-hour meeting, we contacted the insurance company together. We waited for the insurance company to facsimile the necessary forms, and [Complainant] signed them." On August 20, 2025, "I met with [Complainant] to review the urn she selected, details for the service, and to collect payment for the service."

Based on the above, it appears that a mistake was made on the death certificate, Complainant did not bring the error to Respondent's attention at the initial meeting, but when it was brought to their attention an amendment form was sent to Vital Records soon after. Based on the information provided, it does not appear there was a delay in putting out the book and memorial cards. While it does seem Respondent waited until the morning of for Complainant to make the selections, it stands to reason those items would not be available prior to visitation starting when they had not yet been selected by Complainant. However, based on the information provided, it does appear that the employee, who admits to not being a licensed funeral director and being only an apprentice has committed unlicensed activity. From the information provided, it appears that the non-licensed employee handled most matters with Complainant including the arrangement conference, collected information for the death certificate, filling out the death certificate, getting financial information from the insurance company, and reviewing selected services Complainant selected. The employee offers the explanation that a licensed co-worker "was in the office approximately twenty (20) feet down the hall from the arrangement room" which further suggests that a licensed individual was not

physically present during the arrangement process. While it appears other licensees were involved at various parts during this matter and were available for help as needed, the apprentice employee appears to have been the primary individual handling the arrangements and routinely conducted licensed activity throughout with, at times, minimal oversight from licensees.

Recommendation:

- \$750.00 civil penalty against Respondent establishment and a letter sent to the apprentice and supervisor referenced by the apprentice regarding unlicensed activity. Authorize via Consent Order and formal hearing if necessary.

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Tim Wheeler and adopted by voice vote.

12. Case No.: 2025069401 – Funeral Establishment

Complainant, mother of the decedent alleged unprofessional conduct against Respondent establishment. Specifically, Complainant stated that their son was found on December 1, 2024, "surrounded by blood" with a ruptured eye and a "C branded into the side of his scalp." Complainant claimed that a Florida funeral establishment violated Florida statutes by pronouncing the decedent as having died from a fentanyl overdose. Complainant claimed that a toxicology report noted no fentanyl. Complainant alleged that Respondent establishment assisted the Florida establishment in "continu[ing] to cover up a murder." However, Complainant does not provide any information as to how this purportedly occurred or how Respondent was involved.

Respondent replied confirming that the decedent died in Florida on December 1, 2024 and provided that when the decedent died the family contacted them wanting the decedent to be buried in Tennessee next to other relatives. Respondent explained that when the medical examiner initially released the body, they contacted the funeral home in Florida to embalm and prepare the body and were going to drive down and pick up the decedent. However, before they picked up the decedent, Complainant requested another autopsy be done and after the second autopsy was completed Respondent picked up the decedent. Respondent stated the decedent's eye was not ruptured and that a C had not been branded into his scalp. Complainant and other family members came to Tennessee, made funeral arrangements, and had a graveside service. Respondent stated a few weeks go by and Complainant does not pay the outstanding funeral bill and ultimately files bankruptcy and begins sending several emails claiming the decedent had been

murdered and how they should contact the sheriff's office to investigate. Respondent theorized that Complainant is having difficulty accepting the death of their child and suggested that if any foul play were suspected any individuals in Florida who had investigated it would have come forward and that after two autopsies neither suggested foul play. Respondent denied any collusion with the Florida establishment in any way shape or form.

Based on the above Complainant does not provide proof to show Respondent violated any applicable laws or rules.

Recommendation:

- Closure

A motion was made by Randy Nash to accept Counsel's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Chris Lea and adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:
ROBERT GRIBBLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Note: In the absence of the Executive Director for this part of the meeting, the Executive Director's Report was presented by Lisa Bohannon, Administrative Manager, for the board.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Our office has not received any official communication from the Tennessee State Funeral Directors & Morticians Association or the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association regarding plans to pursue new legislation affecting the Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers during this session.

We proactively invite both associations—and any other interested stakeholders—to meet with our staff and legal counsel prior to introducing any bill that may impact the Board.

This collaborative approach will help ensure clarity and alignment before legislative action is taken.

LICENSEE REPORT:

**REPORT OF LICENSES ADMINISTRATIVELY APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR PURSUANT TO BOARD AUTHORITY FOR THE PERIOD OF
DECEMBER 6, 2025 – JANUARY 9, 2026**

| <u>Establishment(s)</u> | <u>Type of Change(s)</u> |
|---|--|
| Cisneros Funeral Home Church Hill, TN | Initial |
| Chattanooga Memorial Funeral Home Chattanooga, TN | Ownership |
| Cole & Garrett Funeral Home and Cremation Services Goodlettsville, TN | Ownership |
| CremateSimply Old Hickory, TN | Ownership |
| Nashville Cremation Center Nashville, TN | Ownership |
| Nashville Funeral and Cremation Nashville, TN | Ownership |
| West Harpeth Funeral Home & Crematory Nashville, TN | Ownership |
| <u>Individual(s)</u> | <u>Type of License(s)</u> |
| Stephanie Anne Huser Cleveland, TN | Funeral Director and Embalmer |
| Savannah Mackenzie Meek Henderson, TN | Funeral Director |
| Shelbe Patrice Rouse Cordova, TN | Funeral Director |
| Kathryn Anne Hayes Hixson, TN | Funeral Director Reciprocity – Illinois |
| Cedric Leroy Redmon Cordova, TN | Embalmer Reciprocity – Mississippi |

CLOSED ESTABLISHMENT REPORT:

Two (2) establishments have reported closing since the last board meeting:

- Poole Funeral Home & Cremation Services at Fike Chapel, 2415 North Ocoee Street, Cleveland, TN and

- Poole-Serenity Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 3010 Ocoee Street North, Cleveland, TN

DISCIPLINARY ACTION REPORT:

These are Consent Orders that have been administratively accepted / approved by the Executive Director pursuant to Board authority and as reported on the November 2025 Regulatory Boards Disciplinary Action Report

Respondent: Trinity Memorial Centers, Kingsport, TN
Violation: Misleading advertising (establishment's advertisement did not include an itemized price listing of each and every item, procedure, or service)
Action: \$500 Civil Penalty

OPEN COMPLAINT REPORT:

As of January 7, 2026, there were a total of 65 open complaints, 28 against funeral directors and/or embalmers and 37 against funeral establishments.

A motion was made by Chris Lea to accept the Executive Director's Report. The motion was seconded by Randy Nash and adopted by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

President Wendell Naylor inquired if any members of the public wished to provide comments on the agenda items. No public comments were offered at that time by those attending the meeting, either in person or virtually.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Randy Nash to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Tim Wheeler and adopted by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned by President Wendell Naylor at 11:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert B. Gribble

Robert B. Gribble, CPM, CFSP
Executive Director