

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission - Coroner Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

Date: August 18, 2025,

Location: Idaho Association of Counties,
700 W. Washington St., Boise, ID 83701

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Mountain Time

Facilitators: Senator Melissa Wintrow and Kelli Brassfield (IAC)

Subcommittee Members:

- Senator Melissa Wintrow, JLOC Co-chair
- Kelli D. Brassfield, Idaho Association of Counties
- Ryan Langrill, Director, Office of Performance Evaluations
- Sheriff Bart Quayle, Fremont County
- Kirt Gaston, Bellevue Police Department
- Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services
- Bernie LaSarte, Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Robert Beers, Bonner County Coroner
- Joshua Hall, Nez Perce County Coroner
- Brett Harding, Ada County Chief Deputy Coroner
- Scott Carver, Valley County Coroner
- Torey Danner, Bannock County Coroner
- Will Carson, Twin Falls County Coroner
- Tara Beard Parsons, Butte County Coroner
- John Fudenberg, Executive Director, IACME
- Robert Bleazard, Ada County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Action Item – Approval of the minutes from May 15th, June 3rd, and June 17th.

Confidentiality Language – Current status, Senator Melissa Wintrow & Kelli D. Brassfield

Resources Update – Matthew Gamette

Autopsies

JFAC Presentation Discussion – Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Cost of autopsies
- # of autopsies/forensic pathologist
- Deaths required for autopsies
- New facility possibility?

Notes from Previous Meeting:

Reimbursement Program for Autopsies

- **Target:** Smaller counties lacking adequate autopsy funding
- **Priority focus:** Child autopsies (where Idaho ranks last nationally)
- **Structure:** Similar to EMS grant system - examining county needs and distributing funding accordingly
- **Administration:** ISP would manage the grant; stakeholder advisory board would make distribution decisions

East Idaho Pathology Facility Development

- **Immediate opportunity:** Young pathologist completing fellowship next year and interested in Idaho
- **Starting location:** Potential partnership with existing facilities in Bonneville or Pocatello
- **Independence requirement:** Must maintain operational independence from Idaho State Police (per accreditation standards)
- **Precedent:** Montana runs forensic pathology through state lab with proper independence structure
- **Next steps:** Begin scoping facility requirements, partnerships, and funding mechanisms

Resources

- **Matthew Gamette's observation:** Many counties lack basic supplies (gloves, PPE, body bags)
- **Proposed solution:** State-level purchasing and distribution system for basic supplies
- **Implementation:** Relatively simple for state agencies with purchasing contract access

Standardization of Autopsy Requirements

Current Problem:

- Inconsistency in when autopsies are performed
- Point of contention between law enforcement and coroners often centers on autopsy decisions
- Law enforcement may bypass coroner by having prosecutor order autopsy (comes from coroner's budget)

Proposed Solution:

- **Legislation requiring "automatic" autopsies** for specific case types
- **Priority cases identified:** Child deaths, homicides, suspicious deaths
- **Caveat:** Must ensure adequate facility capacity before mandating increased autopsy volume

