



## **Minutes of the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors**

On Thursday, March 13, 2025, the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors (“LSBEFD”) conducted a regularly scheduled in-person meeting at the board office located at The Executive Towers 3500 N. Causeway Boulevard Suite 1232 Metairie, Louisiana 70002 in accordance with La. R.S. 37:831, et seq and other applicable law.

### **1) Call to Order**

President Rev. S. C. Dixon called the meeting to order at 9:12 AM.

Opening remarks were given by President Dixon stating the mission statement and the purpose of the LSBEFD.

### **2) Roll Call**

#### **Board Members Present**

Stephen Boudreaux – Vice President

Rev. Shelton Dixon – President

Juan Joseph

Terry Luneau

Rev. Rodney McFarland, Sr.

*\*\*\*Five Board Members were present at the time of roll call. A quorum was present. \*\*\**

#### **Board Members Absent**

Louis Charbonnet, III

Willie Davis, Jr.

Gregory McKneely

Maurice Southall

#### **Others Present**

Kim W. Michel - Executive Director

R. DeMale Bowden, Jr. - Inspector

Carrie L. Jones - General Counsel, and

Chanel R. Debose - Prosecuting Attorney.

### **3) Invocation**

Board Member Juan Joseph led the invocation.

### **4) Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Member Terry Luneau led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **5) Public Comments**

President Dixon asked if there were any public comments.

*There was no one from the public present at the meeting and no public comment cards were submitted. No public comments were submitted online via Microsoft TEAMS by virtual participants.*

*Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland, Sr. made a motion to accept the agenda, which was seconded by Board Member Terry Luneau. The motion passed unanimously.*

## 6) Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business for discussion.

## 7) Executive Session

This agenda item was taken out of order because the contempt hearing was noticed for 9:30 AM and the Respondent(s) were not present.

*Board Member Terry Luneau made a motion to go into executive session, which was seconded by Board Member Stephen Boudreaux. The motion passed unanimously. Executive Session began at 9:15 AM.*

### a. Report on Litigation

1. Marybeth Harrington v LSBEFD – Nicholas Oshea Barber-Cypress Funeral Services, CDC Orleans Parish, State of Louisiana, Docket # 20124-00124
2. Gary Lewis, New Orleans Funeral and Cremation Service v LSBEFD, CDC Orleans Parish, State of Louisiana, Docket # 2024-06195
3. Gary Lewis, New Orleans Funeral and Cremation Service v LSBEFD, CDC Orleans Parish, State of Louisiana, Docket # 2024-06196
4. Gary Lewis, New Orleans Funeral and Cremation Service v LSBEFD, CDC Orleans Parish, State of Louisiana, Docket # 2025-00465

### b. Personnel Issues

*The Board returned from executive session at 9:49 AM. Board Member Stephen Boudreaux made a motion to return to the open meeting, which was seconded by Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland, Sr. All of the Board members listed above as present during the initial roll call were present when the Board returned to the open meeting.*

## 8) New Business

### a. Contempt Hearing

- i. *In the Matter of Gregory Strother and the entity operating as White Oaks Funeral Home, Oakdale, LA (Complaint No. 23.24.0034 and Complaint No. 24.25.0004)*

Rev. Dixon called the matter of Gregory Strother and White Oaks Funeral Home, which was set for a consolidated contempt hearing at 9:51 AM.

Licensee Gregory Strother and the entity operating as White Oaks Funeral Home were properly noticed of the consolidated contempt hearing; however, neither was present. Board staff contacted Mr. Strother via telephone. He indicated that he was not attending the hearing in person due to a clerical mistake and requested to participate via phone. The Board allowed Gregory Strother to participate in the contempt hearing via telephone and instructed the Prosecuting Attorney to bring additional contempt charges based on Gregory Strother's violation of the subpoenas requiring him to attend the March 13, 2025, contempt hearing at the Board office.

The Prosecuting Attorney, Chanel R. Debose, presented evidence to the Board regarding Gregory Strother and White Oaks Funeral Home's violation of La. R.S. 37:846 (A)(5) (unprofessional, unethical or dishonest conduct) by failing to abide by the LSBEFD's subpoenas ordering Gregory Strother and White Oaks Funeral Home to appear and testify at a preliminary conferences on January 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. and January 14, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Discussion ensued, including dialogue with Mr. Strother via speaker phone.

*Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland moved to go into executive session to deliberate, which was seconded by Board Member Stephen Boudreaux. The motion passed unanimously. The Board entered executive session at 9:59 AM.*

*The Board returned from executive session at 10:31 AM. Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland moved to return to an open meeting, which was seconded by Board Member Juan Joseph. All of the board members listed above as present during the initial roll call were present when the board returned to the open meeting.*

*Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland moved to fine Gregory Strother \$2,500.00 for contempt in each case (No. 23.24.0034 and No. 24.25.0004) for a total of \$5,000.00, to suspend the personal license of Gregory Strother for six (6) months, to suspend the establishment's license for forty-five (45) days – effective March 17, 2025, at midnight, the license shall not be reinstated until another licensed manager is named to the Board, and both locations shall post a notice viewable to the public that the funeral establishment's license is suspended for forty-five (45) days, effective March 17, 2025. Board Member Juan Joseph seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Stephen Boudreaux – yes, Rev. Shelton Dixon – yes, Juan Joseph – yes, Terry Luneau – abstained, Rev. Rodney McFarland, Sr. – yes. The motion passed.*

*The Board directed the Inspector to go to the funeral home to verify that the Board Order was being complied with and that a suspension notice was placed on the door.*

*The Board further directed Board staff to move forward with formal hearings in these matters.*

## **9) Closing Remarks**

Final statements and closing remarks were given by President Dixon.

## **10) Announcements**

Executive Director Michel announced the upcoming tentative meeting dates. The March meeting dates are as follows:

- Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 19, 2025, at 9:30 AM
- Dates will be circulated between the committee chair, representatives of LFDA and LFD&MA and the staff for an April meeting as both associations are having conventions during the month of April.

## **11) Adjournment**

*Board Member Stephen Boudreaux moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Board Member Rev. Rodney McFarland, Sr. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:41 AM.*