

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission - Coroner Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Date: November 3, 2025,

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

Time: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Mountain Time

Facilitators: Senator Melissa Wintrow and Kelli Brassfield (IAC)

Subcommittee Members Present:

- 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
- 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
- Jimmy Roberts, Bingham County Coroner
- John Fudenberg, Executive Director, IACME
- Robert Bleazard, Ada County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney - Holly
- Brent Mendenhall, Madison County Commissioner

Subcommittee Members Absent:

- Chief Kirt Gaston, Bellevue Police Department
- Will Carson, Twin Falls County Coroner
- Tara Parsons, Butte County Coroner

Action Item – Approval of the minutes from October 14, 2025.

Jimmy Roberts requested the addition of this language on page three in regard to recommendations around certification: Further investigation will be done and provided to the committee on states that have implemented for further.

Jimmy Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes from October 14, 2025 with the amendment listed above, Brett Harding seconded. Motion carried.

Possible Legislative Ideas – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Death Certificate fee increase – The fee increase could generate ~\$80-90K per year. What do we want to use the fee for?

Washington requires certification and accreditation for autopsy reimbursement. This will give accountability. Idaho is in a hard place. We don't have infrastructure, and

other resources. Some counties don't have the ability to become certified. We need to look at some sort of a regional system that coroners could utilize. We can look at MOU between county coroners to cover those needs of certification. Funds need to be flexible but not too vague. Costs could get too expensive but want to help cover the needs of the counties. There also needs to also put a time frame on when certification must be completed and there needs to be a distinction between certification and accreditation. Look at a standards and training board.

Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Wyoming charge \$25 per certified copy, California \$24-26, Montana \$12. I think there is room to increase for sure.

Need to have accountability for coroners also. What would accountability look like? Possibly a fine for not doing the work or getting the continuing education? Indiana and Arkansas send coroners a notification that they are not compliant and if they fail to meet standards then pay is withheld. Once standards are met, back pay is caught up. If they still don't meet the standards within a time, it is a misdemeanor.

Idaho Boards and Commissions that have oversight of funding:

POST

Idaho brand board

Idaho racing commission

*List of who is accredited/certified? – see additional attachment

- Required autopsies – Could we prioritize these and add just one? How do we prioritize one life over another. We need to have them all, but we don't want to overwhelm the system. We need facilities and forensic pathologists before we can require all the cases suggested to be autopsied.
- Create a strategic plan – The group decided that this subcommittee should put together somewhat of a strategic plan. A small group of people will try to put together a rough draft. This strategic plan will have what we need to accomplish with approximate timeframes. We should also show a method to educate constituents also. Ada County has a community slide show that is for the public. Brett Harding will ask about sharing it.

Confidentiality Update – Senator Melissa Wintrow

Sen Wintrow has requested and received input from a variety of stakeholders and community members who have shared some suggestions for her legislation including sealing photos, access to photos by family members, use of photos for training. Senator Wintrow has sought out feedback from law enforcement, coroners, prosecutors, media to provide pros and cons of some of the suggestions. She asked people to share input based on impact to public safety, justice, and privacy.

She is discovering that the issue is complex and there are many issues to consider and many viewpoints. For example, some community members want to provide family (next of kin) access to decedent photos, while some coroners/law enforcement share concerns about that due to potential trauma family can experience as well as considering the motive of a family member who may have ill intent.

She will do her best to balance all the feedback to protect privacy, allow for appropriate public accountability, support public safety and justice needs. There will be continued work and consultation with the goal of having a bill ready to go in January.

Other Business – Kelli D. Brassfield & Senator Melissa Wintrow

- Presentation Update –
 - Who are the County Coroners & Why are they important
 - OPE – Challenges & recommendations
 - Progress
- Bonneville County facility, Jimmy Roberts stated that the facility was created to be a regional facility. Looking into more information. Will provide information when it becomes available.
- Assignments – Subcommittee members will be working on drafting language for a death certificate fee increase for coroners, autopsy cost reimbursement and required autopsies. Other members will work on the initial draft of a strategic plan.