

April 15, 2019

To: Scott County Judge and Quorum Court

RE: Scott County Coroner's Office

I would like to start by saying thank you to the citizens of Scott County for putting their trust in me to serve them as the Scott County Coroner for the past 10 plus years.

For many years the Scott County Coroner's office has had little funding. The office has had to rely on the funeral home's in the county to provide equipment, and facilities to carry out its responsibilities. This has improved over the last few years with the purchase of a vehicle and cot, but the funeral home of the coroner was still responsible for receiving and holding the deceased, office space, and disposal of all biological and hazardous waste.

In June of 2018 there was an incident at the funeral home which involved a state police investigator using inappropriate language in the funeral home. The funeral home was servicing another family at the time. The funeral home advised the Scott County Judge, from that point on, no investigation would take place at the funeral home. I ask that the county to please provide a cooler, and space to do the investigations that are required by law. The Quorum Court appropriated the funds for a cooler and building which became available in January 2019 but this office was not provided a place for said building and cooler. The coroner's office has had four persons whom we have had to transport to facilities in Fort Smith for holding for the Arkansas State Crime lab or unclaimed individuals since June 2018. Again, this office has no funds for paying outside facilities for this service.

In recent weeks the office has had a situation where we received an unclaimed deceased. There is provisions in the law for this to be handled. One is to donate the body to a medical school, but this was not an option in this case. The Scott County Coroner's office has no funds for this situation. The coroner talked to the Scott County Judge on numerous occasions about what our options were. The coroner talked with the Arkansas State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Director, Arkansas Department of Health, and the Arkansas Association of Counties, I was advised that it was the counties responsibility to provide for the final disposition of the deceased. I requested that to be put on the agenda to ask for funds for the final disposition and was told it was to late. I made the request 10 days after receiving the deceased and four day before the Quorum Court meeting. I also understand that a request has to be made 10 days in advance of the Quorum Court meeting but being that I felt that this was an emergency situation, and the health and welfare of the citizens of the county were at stake and I felt that there should be a mechanism for this to take place. At that point, by me being coroner, being a funeral director and funeral home owner I did not want it to appear I was having a conflict of interest. I made every effort to avoid that. After two weeks of not being able to resolve this matter, my wife and I felt it was our Christian duty and as human beings to lay the deceased to rest with dignity and respect. Therefore, the individual was laid to rest, all legal paper work required by law on the funeral service side

has been completed, and any all charges for the storage of all four deceased individuals at the facility in Fort Smith has been taken care of.

With great regret I feel I must resign as Scott County Coroner for the following reasons. I feel that it is a conflict of interest for me to own a funeral home and that funeral home be responsible for paying the fees for storage of deceased individuals, for which the Coroner's office must receive in to our care for legal investigation or be responsible for the final disposition of unclaimed deceased persons.

My resignation will be effective 12:00 midnight, Monday, April 15, 2019.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Callahan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sam Lynn Callahan