

Bond Hearing Testimony  
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
Design of Alteration, Renovation, and Additions to the Office of the Chief Medical  
Examiner in Farmington  
March 27, 2023

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is using bond funding to finance a feasibility study and then the design and construction for the expansion of the agency's existing 30,000-square-foot facility on the UCONN Health Center campus in Farmington.

Over 35 years ago, when the OCME's building was first occupied in June 1987, the agency performed approximately 1,300 autopsies per year. Currently, OCME is transporting 3,500 bodies to its facility and performing approximately 3,200 autopsies annually. Based on the most recent census, Connecticut needs an OCME facility that can autopsy up to 3,600 bodies a year and refrigerate up to 200 bodies at any given time.



Inadequate autopsy space, as well as inadequate refrigerated storage space, has resulted in our agency's loss of full accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). We currently have three refrigerated tractor trailers in our parking lot to store bodies that we do not have space for in the facility.

Our initial goal is to have an assessment of our needs for autopsy and storage space by an architect with expertise in medicolegal facility construction. Using this information, a feasibility study for expansion of the current facility will be undertaken. There are two important factors to note in this process. The first is that the current site of the office has some geographic limitations (e.g., setbacks and adjacent wetlands) that may limit the

expansion opportunity. The second is that our agency operates 24/7/365 and we must maintain operational ability during any subsequent renovations.

We initiated this project in 2020 and it was delayed due to COVID-19 and the loss of our project manager. Friar Associates has been selected as the design team. The Department of Administrative Services-Department of Construction Services (DAS-DCS) is currently drafting the contract with them. A new project manager has been assigned.

The project will ultimately consist of the addition of autopsy space, body storage coolers, general office space, and storage space for OCME. Renovations and improvements will be based on the analysis and recommendations of deficiencies identified from the Scientific Working Group for Medicolegal Death Investigation (SWGMDI), and industry best practices. By statute, OCME must be located at a Connecticut medical school (CGS Sec. 19a-403).

Fig. 1. Breakout of the \$2.5 million GO Bond for the OCME

Purpose	Projected Project Costs	Current Activity
Architect/Engineer Fees	1,755,000	1,316,250
Construction Administrator Fee	825,000	807,500
DAS Fee	660,000	330,000
Artwork	165,000	41,250
Studies	5,000	5,000
Construction	16,500,000	-
Contingency	1,650,000	-
Equipment	1,650,000	-
Testing and Inspections	150,000	-
Commissioning	100,000	-
Telecommunications	50,000	-
Relocation Costs	25,000	-
Permits	10,000	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,545,000</b>	<b>2,500,000</b>