

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 25, 2025

The current 30,000 square foot OCME facility is used for autopsies, laboratory testing, death investigations, and the maintenance of our death investigation records. Beginning in 2020, working with DAS, we began a project to increase the size of the facility and remedy other facility deficiencies. The initial assessment done in 2021 proposed a 5,700 sq ft addition and received a \$28,000,000 bond appropriation. In January of 2023, an architectural firm with expertise in forensic autopsy facilities did an in-depth analysis for the size, scope, and location of a facility based on professional laboratory design standards, regulations, and our current and projected work needs. They priced several options which included expansion/renovation as well as new stand-alone facility options.

Current Project Status and Discussions:

To assess the feasibility of a new stand-alone facility, we had conversations with UCONN Health. One option was to build a new facility in the parking lot in front of our current facility. UCONN Health was open to this option with the idea that there would be space for UCONN Health operations through the addition of a third floor. At the beginning of March 2025, we decided to consider an additional option (option 7) that involves renovation of the current facility with a two story, 40,000 sq ft addition in the rear of our current facility (in a wooded area).

Costs:

The costs are in our Concept Analysis Estimate document included with our testimony (page 4 of 37). There were six proposals ranging from 64 to 80 million dollars (in 2024 dollars). The cost of any renovation or any of the new construction options will require additional funding beyond the \$28 million previously approved.

Challenges:

The next step is for a design and feasibility assessment of option 7. The addition would sit on two adjoining properties on State of Connecticut land, which is within the UCONN Health domain. With careful staging and planning of workspace, we believe that this option will allow us to maintain 24/7/365 operations throughout construction of the addition. There is no other facility in the state where our work can be performed.