



Board Summary Report

File #: 26-306

Agenda Date: 6/9/2026

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: John Christofferson, Acting County Attorney

Prepared By:
John Christofferson, Acting County Attorney

Presenter: Dr. Casey Bitting, Forensic Pathologist, Arapahoe County Coroner's Office

Subject:
2:00 PM *Arapahoe County Coroner Compensation - Appointed Term

Purpose and Request:

The purpose of this Report is to discuss the consideration of Dr. Casey Bitting, Forensic Pathologist, Arapahoe County Coroner's Office to fill the unexpired term of office of the Arapahoe County Coroner ending January 12, 2027, and discuss the total compensation for the unexpired term pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between the Board of County Commissioners and Dr. Bitting.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Good Governance - Deliver mandated and essential services with excellence.

Background and Discussion: Pursuant to Section 30-11-117 of the Colorado Revised Statutes and Section 9 of Article XIV of the Colorado Constitution, in the case of a vacancy in the Office of the Coroner, the Board of County Commissioners has the power to fill the vacancy by appointment until the next general election.

On May 27, 2026, Dr. Kelly Lear formally submitted her retirement and resignation from the office of Arapahoe County Coroner effective at 1:59 p.m. on July 1, 2026 (see attached letter). In her letter, Dr. Lear respectfully requests that the Board appoint Dr. Casey Bitting as the Arapahoe County Coroner effective at 3:00 p.m. July 1, 2026. For your convenience, Dr. Bitting's curriculum vitae and testimony history are attached.

Additionally, because Dr. Bitting is qualified to and has committed to performing post-mortem examinations, it is lawful and appropriate for the Board of County Commissioners to compensate her above the statutory amount of \$131,701.00. Dr. Bitting will be requesting an annual salary that will be pro-rated for the unexpired term of office. Historically, the Arapahoe County Coroner's Office performed 820 and 701 postmortem examinations (external, partial, and full autopsy examinations) in 2024 and 2025 and also performed 103 and 186 record reviews in 2024 and 2025, for which the office also signs the death certificate and co-signs (sign the death certificate with another physician due to the manner of death being accident).

Further, Dr. Bitting has consented to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County to establish that she will be performing autopsies for the County, and setting forth the amounts she must pay to the County in the event that she performs autopsies for other jurisdictions or private entities. The draft MOU is attached for your review.

Alternatives: Only the Board has the power to fill the vacancy in the office of the Coroner. The Board could consider other potential candidates.

Fiscal Impact: The setting of the salary for Dr. Bitting creates an increase in pay for her. Further, based on the amounts per body other jurisdictions pay private forensic pathologists, this amount may result in a lower cost to the county than if the county engages independent contractors.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: N/A.

Staff Recommendation: Dr. Lear respectfully requests that the Board appoint Dr. Casey Bitting as the Arapahoe County Coroner.

Concurrence: N/A.