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ATTORNEY GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301-6397

JOHN M. FORMELLA
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 18, 2023

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Your Excellency and Members of the Council:

REQUESTED ACTION

That approval be and hereby is given to the Attorney General to appoint Susan Watkins, Position # 9U754, (Appropriation #02-20-20-202010-1033-014-500134) as a Deputy Chief Forensic Investigator, at a salary level of $85,629 (LG CC, Step 5), effective upon the first pay day of the first pay period following Governor and Executive Council approval, for a term ending November 8, 2028.

EXPLANATION

Chapter 79 Laws of 2023 (HB2) abolished the classified Planning Analyst/Data Systems Position #9T3175, granted the Department of Justice an unclassified position entitled Deputy Chief Forensic Investigator, and allowed the incumbent holding the abolished classified position the opportunity to seek the Attorney General's nomination for the new unclassified position.

Ms. Watkins, a Sanbornville resident, began working with the Department of Justice, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in 2012 and was promoted to Planning Analyst/Data Systems in 201. While serving in that role for the past decade, Ms. Watkins assisted in hiring and training Assistant Deputy Medical Examiners and was responsible for the inventory, control, and chain of custody for all specimens and physical evidence from autopsy and external exam cases. I intend to continue her assignment in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, performing substantially similar duties, as Deputy Chief Forensic Investigator. Given her years of service, relevant experience, and subject-matter expertise, a salary of $85,629 is requested. Her resume is attached for your consideration.

I am pleased to offer Ms. Watkins for this appointment and respectfully urge your favorable consideration. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Formella
Attorney General

#4226660

Susan Watkins

Employment Experience:

Deputy Chief Forensic Investigator, New Hampshire Medical Examiner's Office, 2013 to present, Concord, NH

Summary of Current Position: Assists in hiring and training of Assistant Deputy Medical Examiners. Responsible for the inventory, control, and chain of custody for all specimens and physical evidence of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) autopsy and external exam cases. Oversees and analyzes statistical data and the methods of collection, processing, and dissemination of such data necessary to implement and coordinate all aspects of the ProLaw, MDI Log and toxicology databases for the OCME.

Responsibilities:

- Assists in hiring, training, scheduling, and supervising of Assistant Deputy Medical Examiners, (ADMEs) who investigate death scene in New Hampshire. Available 24/7 for case questions from ADMEs.
- Responsible for training OCME staff and ADME investigators on MDI Log case management system. Create NH OCME custom reports, mapping of ProLaw data to MDI Log and custom searches for specific data requests.
- Established monthly drug data documentation for publication. Tracks overdose death data, identifies trends, and creates monthly publication in conjunction with Chief Forensic Investigator.
- Assists in the hiring and training of OCME staff and interns on various data collection and data entry systems within the office.
- Establishes and maintains chain of custody and proper storage for all specimens and physical evidence from external exam and autopsy cases. Oversees the proper and safe shipping of biological specimens to various labs throughout the country.
- Assisted in the design and implementation of the electronic death certification system (eCOD) as it relates to the OCME and ADMEs. Trains ADMEs on using the eCOD system.
- Creates and implements training programs for ADME investigators on all toxicology related matters as well as on evidence and digital image procedures.
- Evaluates toxicology, and data collection systems regularly, to ensure proper procedures, including proper chain of evidence entry and reporting.
- Shares information regarding OCME operations, the ADME role and death investigation processes, through presentations to high schools, colleges and other agencies.
- Communicates with decedents' families, Police, funeral homes, and other state agencies regarding death certification, toxicology, identification and policies of the OCME.
- Responsible for sudden infant death and sudden unexplained infant death case toxicology and submission to the biorepository for testing.

Assistant Deputy Medical Examiner, NH Office of Chief Medical Examiner, 2012 to present

- Responsible for the forensic death investigations of medicolegal deaths within several counties throughout the state of NH.
- Document and photograph death scenes and preform external examinations on decedents.

- Gather medical information; scene and social history from multiple sources and communicate findings with on-call doctor to determine cases requiring autopsy or death certificate certification on scene.
- Work closely with decedent's family, police, fire, EMS and state agencies to collect and interpret information to assist in determination of the cause and manner of death.
- Complete ADME Investigation reports on autopsy, external exam and decline cases. Draws blood, vitreous and Covid swabs for toxicology studies on all cases deemed appropriate.

Exeter Hospital Emergency Department, Exeter, NH, 2006 - 2012 Unit Coordinator, 6/11- 2/12, NR-Paramedic 2006 to 2011, Exeter, NH

- Provide administrative support to emergency department physicians and nurses. Maintain work flow of diagnostic tests, lab work, x-rays, ultrasounds, CAT Scans, etc.
- Coordinate trauma and medical, ground and air transports, and initiate physician contact at receiving facilities. Responsible for preparing patient medical records for hospital admissions and discharges.

NR-EMT-Paramedic

- Working as part of a two-paramedic team, respond to 911 calls for medical, trauma and psychiatric incidents. Working within NH Protocols providing patient assessments, EKG interpretation, med administration, advanced airway and trauma skills.
- Maintain patient billing information, tracking Medicare patients, interfacing with the towns billing services and handling all billing problems regarding the Paramedic billing. MediTech, Excel and ACCESS software programs.
- Responsible for the monthly paramedic schedule: Schedule 14 full-time and 7 per diem paramedics. VSSPro and KRONOS software programs Initiated, created and designed a bi-monthly newsletter for the Emergency Department

Advertising Director, Prudential Rush Realty, 8/01- 9/06, Hampton, NH (prior to that time, worked for Prudential Rush for several years covering maternity leaves, sick times, and periodic absences of staff)

- Responsible for all aspects of real estate advertising and marketing for five real estate offices, with over 70 agents and 300 active listings.
- Designed and maintained relational database in ACCESS to schedule and track all listings, budgets, and advertising submissions.
- Implemented marketing strategy to increase market share, promote company, agents and properties. Created print marketing materials, website content, radio, and trade show materials.
- Developed and maintained budgets for individual listings, real estate developments, special projects and high-end homes.
- Weekly ad submission for three daily newspapers, four monthly magazines, and website material. Tracked status changes for all listings to maintain accuracy of ads and communicated changes company wide.
- Negotiated arrangement with local newspaper for weekly real estate column. Researched and ghost wrote column for company CEO.

EDUCATION:

Associate Degree; Paramedic Medicine, New Hampshire Technical Institute, 2005 to 2007
Business Management courses, with a concentration in Marketing, New Hampshire College, 1986 to 1989