

### Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF NEVADA,  
County of Washoe—SS.

Betty A. Woodward

being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is the

Record Clerk

of The SPARKS TRIBUNE, a weekly newspaper,  
published in Sparks, Washoe County, Nevada; that  
he has charge of and knows the advertising ap-  
pearing in said newspaper, and the

Notice of County Ordinance

Bill No. 433

Ordinance No. 273

of which a copy is hereunto attached, was first  
published in said newspaper in its issue dated  
July 17, 1975

and was published in each of the following issues  
thereafter:

the date of the last publication being in the issue  
of July 24, 1975

*Betty A. Woodward*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this, the

24th day of July, 1975

*Lucille Lee*

Notary Public in and for the County of Washoe,  
State of Nevada.

My Commission expires:

*Jan 16 1978*

**NOTICE OF COUNTY ORDINANCE**

Notice is hereby given that Bill No. 433, Ordinance No. 273 entitled "An ordinance creating the office of Washoe County Coroner; defining the duties of the office; providing for the appointment of a coroner; providing for the administration of the office; and other matters properly relating thereto.

Typewritten copies of the Ordinance are available for inspection by all interested persons at the office of the County Clerk.

*Alex Coon*  
ALEX COON, County Clerk

No. 197526  
Publsh 7-17,24, 1975

**LUCILLE LEE**  
Notary Public—State of Nevada  
Washoe County  
My Commission Expires Jan. 16, 1978

SUMMARY: An ordinance creating the Office of County Coroner.

BILL NO. 433

ORDINANCE NO. 273

AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE OFFICE OF WASHOE COUNTY CORONER; DEFINING THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE; PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A CORONER; PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OFFICE; AND OTHER MATTERS PROPERLY RELATING THERETO.

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF WASHOE DO ORDAIN:

SECTION 1. Definition of Terms.

- A. Autopsy Report: The term "autopsy report" shall mean any report of an autopsy or postmortem examination, including all reports of laboratory examinations and other technical tests performed.
- B. Board: The term "board" shall mean the county commissioners of the county of Washoe.
- C. Inquest: The term "inquests" shall mean an inquiry before a coroner's jury, with testimony obtained under oath, duly recorded, and handed down.
- D. Investigation: The term "investigation" shall mean an inquiry by the coroner's office and may include testimony obtained from witnesses under oath.
- E. Medical Examiner: The term "medical examiner" shall mean an individual licensed to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Nevada; and who, when practicable, shall be a skilled pathologist with training or experience in forensic pathology and certified by the American Board of Pathology or qualified to be so certified. When such a pathologist is not available, the coroner may designate and authorize a qualified doctor of medicine (not necessarily a pathologist) to serve in the place of such medical examiner for the purpose of making a particular examination or report, or to serve as a temporary substitute. The medical examiner or temporary appointee who is not a skilled pathologist may call any other medical examiner who is a skilled pathologist for consultation and assistance. The compensation of medical examiners shall be fixed by the board.
- F. Postmortem Examination: The term "postmortem examination" shall mean an examination of a dead body by a competent pathologist or licensed physician involving the opening and dissection of the body, including the removal of organs and tissues and fluids and other material for microscopic, toxicological, chemical, bacterial, or other examination as deemed necessary to study the cause of death. The term "autopsy" is a synonymous term.
- G. Records: The term "records" shall mean those reports duly summarized on a coroner's office form for inclusion in a register or journal whether bound or not.
- H. Reports: The term "reports" shall mean those findings in written form which are filed in the coroner's office, including examinations, witnesses' statements, correspondence, insurance forms, and other evidence in support of the conclusions and findings recorded on the official records.
- I. Toxicologist: The term "toxicologist" means a specialized toxicologist, or specialist, in the science dealing with

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poisons and their effect, and with chemical, industrial, or legal problems involved in or connected therewith.

SECTION 2. Establishment of Office of Washoe County Coroner -- Jurisdiction, Qualification and Appointment -- Provisions for Costs.

- A. Office Created. There is hereby created and established the office of county coroner for Washoe County with jurisdiction coextensive with the boundaries of Washoe County.
- B. Provision for Facilities and Expenses. The office of the county coroner and related facilities necessary to the administration of the office shall be as designated and provided by the board. Any and all costs, salaries and expenses connected with, or entailed in, the operation of the county coroner's office shall be borne by, and provided for, by Washoe County.
- C. Qualifications of Coroners. The board shall appoint as county coroner a suitable and qualified person who (serving at the pleasure of the board) shall be, either (a) the Washoe County district health officer who, ex officio shall also serve as county coroner; or (b) a physician, surgeon, or pathologist, duly qualified and licensed under and pursuant to the laws of the state of Nevada to engage in such professional services.

SECTION 3. Deputies, Assistants and Other Staff Personnel. Subject to the approval and authorization thereof by the board, the coroner may appoint and employ such deputy or deputies, assistants, and such other staff personnel, as may be necessary for proper administration of his office and performance and discharge of his responsibilities and duties.

SECTION 4. Use of Professional Services. The county coroner, only if not himself a pathologist, and subject to approval of contractual compensation therefor by the board, is hereby authorized to engage the services of qualified and/or licensed pathologists required for proper performance and discharge of his responsibilities. The county coroner is similarly authorized, by contract, to engage any desired toxicological or other professional services required for performance of his duties.

SECTION 5. Bond of County Coroner. The county coroner shall give bond, issued by a bonding or surety company authorized to do business in the state of Nevada, in a sum not less than ten thousand dollars nor more than fifty thousand dollars as fixed by the board, and such bond shall be conditioned for the faithful performance of the duties of his office. The county coroner shall be authorized to require bond to himself on the part of any of his deputies, assistants, or other staff personnel in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars. The expense or premium for the county coroner's bond, or the bond of his deputies, assistants, or staff personnel shall be paid by Washoe County. The board may, at any time during the coroner's term of office, require the county coroner or his deputies, assistants, or staff personnel to give additional sureties on his or their bonds, or to give a new bond. If the coroner or any of his deputies, assistants, or staff personnel fails to give bond within the time required by the board, or fails to give additional surety on his or their bonds, or to give a new bond, within the ten days after he or they have received written notice so to do by the board of county commissioners, the board shall declare the office of such county coroner vacant, and/or may remove and discharge any such deputy, assistant, or staff personnel of the county coroner.

SECTION 6. County Coroner Register.

The county coroner shall keep an official register, labelled "coroner register," in which he shall enter:

- A. The name and any aliases of the deceased, when known, including such description as may be sufficient for identification and which may, in his discretion, include fingerprint records;
- B. A narrative summary of the circumstances leading to and surrounding the death of the deceased, and transportation of the body, together with names and addresses of any witnesses to such events;
- C. The property taken from the person or premises of the deceased by the coroner or by any other law enforcement agency or officer;
- D. The date and cause of death, when known, with reference or direction to the detailed medical reports upon which decision as to cause of death has been based;
- E. Information as to disposition of remains;
- F. Persons notified of the death, together with a notation of any unsuccessful attempts at notification;
- G. The date of holding of any inquest;
- H. The disposition of the property of the deceased made by the coroner.

SECTION 7. Duties of the County Coroner.

It shall be the duty of the county coroner to determine the cause of death of any person reported to him as having been killed by violence, having suddenly died under such circumstances as to afford reasonable grounds to suspect or infer that death has been caused or occasioned by the act of another by criminal means, or having committed suicide. The coroner shall determine the cause of all deaths as to which applicable state law makes it the duty of the coroner to sign certificates of death, or he shall certify that the cause of death cannot be determined with reasonable medical certainty.

The county coroner, or his assigned deputy or assistant, shall go to the scene of the dead person or persons and investigate all deaths as hereinabove generally described, and also inclusive of deaths as follows:

- A. Unattended deaths;
- B. Deaths wherein the deceased has not been attended by a physician in the ten days before death. A previously attending physician shall, however, certify the cause of death to the best of his knowledge;
- C. Deaths related to or following known or suspected self-induced or criminal abortion;
- D. Known or suspected homicide, suicide, or accidental poisoning;
- E. Deaths known or suspected to have resulted in whole or in part from or related to accident or injury, either old or recent;
- F. Deaths due to drowning, fire, hanging, gunshot, stabbing, cutting, exposure, starvation, alcoholism, drug addiction, strangulation or aspiration;
- G. Death in whole or in part occasioned by criminal means;

- H. Deaths in a place of legal incarceration or while under sentence;
- I. Deaths under such circumstances as to afford a reasonable ground to suspect that the death was caused by the criminal act of another, or any deaths reported by physicians or other persons having knowledge of death for inquiry by coroner.

The county coroner, or his assigned deputy or assistant shall investigate, and may go to the scene of, deaths occurring under the following circumstances:

1. Hospitalization of less than twenty-four (24) hours;
2. Operating room or recovery room expirations;
3. Under general or local anesthesia.

SECTION 8. Duties of the Medical Examiner.

The designated medical examiner, upon being notified by the office of the coroner of the location of a deceased human body and the circumstances of the case requiring further medical inquiry shall, at the earliest possible time thereafter, conduct a medical examination, a partial, or a complete autopsy as may be required, and shall immediately report his findings in writing, stating the cause of death, if known, or that additional microscopic, toxicological, or other studies are necessary to establish the cause of death. Such reports shall reflect whether or not the body is medically released for final disposition, pending issuance of the detailed autopsy report.

SECTION 9. Removal or Disturbance of Remains and Effects of Deceased Prohibited.

- A. No person shall disturb or remove, nor search or remove any effects from, the body of a deceased person or persons whose death was occurred under any of the circumstances enumerated in Section 7 above, from the position in which it is, or has been found, without proper authorization therefor from the county coroner or his authorized deputy, except when the preserving of such body or bodies would endanger the life, safety or health of other persons.
- B. When necessary, the coroner may lock the premises and apply a seal to all doors and/or windows, to prohibit entrance to the premises pending the arrival of a legally authorized representative of the deceased provided that this shall not be done in such a manner as to interfere with the investigation being conducted by other law enforcement agencies. Any costs arising from the premises being locked and sealed while occupied by property of the deceased may be a proper and legal charge against the estate of the deceased, and shall be disposed of through the office of the Washoe County Treasurer. Any weapons, property or evidence related to the investigation or prosecution of any known or suspected criminal death may, with knowledge of the coroner, be delivered to a law enforcement agency or District Attorney, receipt for which shall be acknowledged.
- C. Where the absence of severe trauma or other obvious signs of death exist in those cases examined by lay persons prior to the arrival of the coroner, medical examiner or other physician, no ambulance attendant, mortician or other person shall remove a body from the place of its discovery for pronouncement of death without prior knowledge of and express approval from the coroner or his appointed deputy. Willful disregard of the provisions of this section shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not to exceed five hundred (\$500.00) dollars or imprisonment not to exceed six (6) months, or by both said fine and imprisonment.

SECTION 10. Unauthorized Embalming When Cause of Death Is Unknown. Any person embalming a deceased human body when the coroner or the chief medical examiner has certified in writing that cause of death is unknown and that embalming is not to be done, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by fine not to exceed five hundred (\$500.00) dollars or imprisonment not to exceed six (6) months, or by both said fine and imprisonment.

SECTION 11. Interference with Coroner's Performance. Any person hindering, obstructing, or preventing the coroner, or his deputies or assistants' performance and discharge of official duties shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by fine not to exceed five hundred (\$500.00) dollars, or imprisonment not to exceed six (6) months, or by both said fine and imprisonment.

SECTION 12.

- A. When Required. When the county coroner, or his deputy or assistant has been informed that a person has been killed or committed suicide or has suddenly died under circumstances affording reasonable ground to suspect that the death has been occasioned by unnatural means, he shall (1) immediately notify the offices of the District Attorney of Washoe County so as to afford said district attorney and police or sheriff's officials an opportunity to assist in the inquiry as to cause of death; (2) hold an inquest as herein provided, if such should be indicated, requested, or ordered, within the sound discretion of district attorney, or a judge of the district court within the county, but such inquest need not be conducted in any case of death manifestly occasioned by natural cause, suicide, accident or when the death is publicly known to have been caused by a person already in custody, and the district attorney, or a judge of the district court within the county, certifies that no inquest is required.
- B. Jury. If an inquest is held, the county coroner, or his deputy, or assistant, in addition to notifying police or sheriff's officials, shall summon three persons qualified by law to serve as jurors to appear before him forthwith at the place within the county as may be designated by the coroner or his deputy or assistant, to inquire into the cause of death.
- C. Single Inquest for Multiple Deaths. A single inquest may be held with respect to more than one death, where all of such deaths were occasioned by a common cause.
- D. Penalty for Failure to Attend as Juror. Every person summoned as an inquest juror who shall fail to appear without having a reasonable excuse, shall forfeit any sum not exceeding one hundred dollars to be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction by the coroner and paid by him into the county treasury.
- E. Oath of Jurors. Attending inquest jurors shall be sworn by the county coroner to (1) inquire who the dead person was; (2) determine when, where and by what means the person came to his death; (3) determine the circumstances attending the person's death; and (4) render a true verdict thereon according to the evidence.
- F. Compensation and Travel Expenses for Jury. Inquest jurors shall be entitled to receive for each day's service the sum of six dollars upon certification therefor to the county clerk by the county coroner, such payments being audited, allowed and paid as are other claims against the county. When it is

necessary for an inquest jury to travel a greater distance than one mile to view the remains of a dead person, or to the place where the inquest is to be held, the necessary and actual expenses entailed for the transportation of the jury shall also be allowed, audited and paid as are other claims against the county, upon proper certification therefor by the county coroner.

G. Summoning and Examining Witnesses.

1. Summoning and Paying Witnesses. The county coroner is authorized to issue subpoenas for witnesses, returnable as he may direct, said subpoenas to be served by himself or such person as he may direct. Witnesses at a coroner's inquest shall be compensated as provided by law for witnesses required to attend in the courts of this state, and such charge shall be a charge against the county.
2. Required Witnesses. The county coroner must summon and examine as witnesses every person who, in his opinion, or in the opinion of any of the jurors, has or may have any knowledge of the facts. He may also summon a qualified surgeon or physician to inspect and examine the body or hold a postmortem examination thereon, or a chemist to make an analysis of the stomach or the tissues of the deceased and to give their professional opinions as to the cause of the death.

H. Witnesses Failing to Attend. Any witness failing to obey the subpoena to attend an inquest, may be attached and fined for contempt of such inquest jury, in like manner as in a court of the justice of the peace.

I. Rendition of Verdict -- Certifications. Upon conclusion of the inquest, the inquest jury shall render their verdict and certify the same in writing, signed by them, and setting forth the name of the deceased, and when, where, and by what means, he came to his death; and, if death was by criminal means, factually known or reasonably established, the name of the person causing the death, if known.

J. Filing Testimony. Testimony at such inquest shall be reduced to writing without delay, and filed in the office of the clerk of the district court of Washoe County.

K. Warrant to Issue for Accused. If the inquest jury finds that the person was killed by another under circumstances not excusable or justifiable in law, and the party committing the act is not already in custody, the county coroner or district attorney, shall immediately take appropriate action for the issuance of a warrant for the arrest of the accused.

L. Service and Return of Warrant. The warrant may be served in any county of the state and returned by the officer serving the same before a judge of the county in which issued. The officer receiving such warrant shall have the same power under such warrant as is afforded under a warrant from any court or judge in the state of Nevada.

SECTION 13. Issuance of Death Certificate.

The cause of death appearing on a certificate of death signed by the coroner shall be in conformity with facts ascertained from inquiry, autopsy and other scientific findings. In case of death without medical attendance and without violence, casualty, criminal or undue means, the coroner may, without holding an inquest or autopsy, make the certificate of death from statements of relatives,

persons last in attendance, or persons present at the time of death, after due medical consultation and opinion has been given by one qualified and licensed to practice medicine and so recorded in the records of death, providing such information affords clear grounds to establish the correct medical cause of death within accepted medical practice and within the requirements for accuracy prescribed by the Division of Vital Statistics of the State Division of Health.

SECTION 14. Property of Deceased.

- A. Property of Deceased Delivered to County Treasurer. The county coroner shall establish and maintain adequate receipting and accounting procedures and records respecting decedents' money and personal property and effects. The county coroner, as soon as practicable, shall file an affidavit setting out the amount of, and shall deliver to the county treasurer, any money or property which may have been found with the deceased, unless taken from the coroner's possession by legal authority. If the county coroner, or his deputy, or assistant fails so to pay or deliver such money or property, the county treasurer may recover the same by an action at law. Nothing in this section contained shall preclude prosecution under applicable state law.
- B. Duties of County Treasurer Pertaining to Money or Other Property of Deceased.
1. Upon payment of money into the county treasurer's office in such case, he shall place it to the credit of the county. Upon the delivery of property, he shall:
    - (a) Deliver such property to the public administrator for disposition according to law; or
    - (b) Give written notice to the public administrator of his intention to sell such property at public sale.
  2. If within ten days after the giving of notice pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1, the public administrator claims the property for disposition, the county treasurer shall deliver it to him.
  3. If the public administrator does not claim the property as provided in subsection 1, the county treasurer may, after giving notice by posting at the courthouse for at least 10 days, sell the property at public sale and place the proceeds to the credit of the county.
- C. Payment to Representatives of Deceased. If the money so deposited be demanded within six years, the county treasurer shall pay the same to the person legally authorized to receive it; the same may also be paid at any time subsequent to the expiration of six years to the representatives of the deceased upon order from a competent court of authority invested with the power to allow claims against the county.

SECTION 15. Burial of Deceased -- When a Charge Against County. After a coroner's inquest, if no one takes charge of the remains of the deceased, the county coroner shall cause the same to be decently buried. The expenses of the burial shall be paid from the money deposited with the county treasurer or the estate of the deceased, as the case may be. If the deceased has no money or estate, or the money or estate of the deceased is insufficient to bear the entire cost of the burial, the county shall bear the cost of the burial in excess of any money or estate available.



SECTION 16. Penalty for Failure of Coroner to Comply. Any county coroner or his deputy or assistant or staff personnel who shall violate any of the provisions hereof shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars.

SECTION 17. Notification of Death.

- A. Responsibility to Notify Coroner Generally. It shall be the duty of every person who knows of the existence and location of a dead body coming under the jurisdiction of the county coroner as herein set forth to notify the coroner thereof in the most expeditious manner possible.
- B. Physician's and Mortician's Responsibility. A physician, funeral director, or any other person having knowledge of a death which has occurred, or having charge or custody of a body where death has occurred, shall immediately notify the county coroner if he has knowledge that the death has occurred (1) without medical attendance; (2) during the continued absence of the attending physician; (3) where the attending physician is unable to state the cause of death; (4) where suicide is suspected; (5) following an injury or an accident; (6) under such circumstances justifying a reasonable inference that the death was caused by the criminal act of another.

SECTION 18. Powers and Duties of Coroner in Examination of Bodies. If the preliminary investigation of the county coroner, or of others assisting him, has failed to satisfy the coroner or medical examiner as to the cause of the particular death, or where reasonable grounds exist to suspect that a crime has been committed, the county coroner, or medical examiner is hereby authorized to:

- A. Take possession of, and inspect, the body of the deceased person, which shall include the power to exhume such body, and no search warrant shall be necessary for access thereto.
- B. In his discretion, make or cause to be made, an analysis of the stomach, blood, or contents of organs, or tissues of the body, and secure professional opinions as to the result of such postmortem examination. The information so secured shall be reduced to writing and filed by the coroner in his records of the death of the deceased person. In his discretion, the county coroner may, if the circumstances warrant it, hold an inquest as hereinabove provided. The county coroner or medical examiner shall have the right to retain only such tissue of the body removed at the time of the autopsy as may in his opinion be necessary or advisable to make proper investigation of the case, or for verification of the findings relating to the cause of death.
- C. The county coroner, or any person assisting him, who may be duly licensed by the state of Nevada so to do, may perform an autopsy of any remains as to which the coroner has jurisdiction and authority as herein provided, if the deceased, prior to his death, has authorized such an autopsy in his will or other written instrument, or upon receipt of a written authorization from a person representing himself to be any of the following: (1) The surviving spouse; (2) A surviving child or parent; (3) A surviving brother or sister; (4) Any other kin or person who has, or has acquired, the right to control the disposition of the remains; (5) The district attorney of Washoe County; (6) Any other duly authorized public officer.

SECTION 19. Designation of Morgue or Mortuaries.

In the absence of a county morgue only, the county coroner is authorized, equitably, to designate one or more commercial mortuaries, if furnished with sufficient accommodations and facilities, to receive bodies. No person or firm operating a morgue or mortuary, and no person employed in the same, shall be liable for the acts of the county coroner, or for the acts of any of his deputies, assistants or staff personnel or other persons assisting the county coroner in performing the removal of any body to a morgue or mortuary, or for the performance of an autopsy upon such body.

SECTION 20. Notification of Deceased's Relatives -- Release and Disposition of Remains.

The county coroner shall use due diligence to locate and notify the relatives of the deceased of the death, and of the location of the remains. The county coroner, after his investigation has been completed, and upon proper identification of the body by the next of kin, legal representative, or close friend, who assume responsibility for burial, shall release the body to such claimant. The body of any unknown or unclaimed person shall be buried by order of the county coroner after a period of not to exceed ten days from completion of the coroner's investigation.

SECTION 21. Rules and Regulations.

The county coroner may from time to time promulgate such rules and regulations as may be deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of this ordinance, and such rules and regulations shall have the same effect in law as the provisions of this ordinance when approved by the board.


SECTION 22.

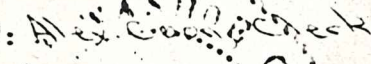
This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after October 1, 1975, and after publication as prescribed by NRS 244.100.

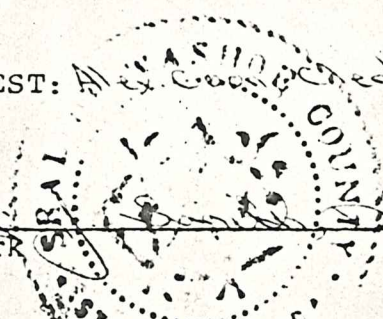

Proposed on the 5th day of May, 1975.  
Proposed by Commissioners Scott, Rusk, Nelson and Gaunt.  
Passed on the 7th day of July, 1975.

Vote:

Ayes: Commissioners: Scott, Grow, Rusk, Nelson and Gaunt.  
Nays: Commissioners: None.  
Absent: Commissioners: None.

  
Chairman

ATTEST: 

  
Clerk 

This Ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after the 24th day of July, 1975.

ORDINANCE NO. 273

Amended by Ordinance No. 336, Bill No. 502, Item 76-1988

Amended by Ordinance No. 375, Bill No. 544, Item 78-730

Amended by Ordinance No. 428, Bill No. 599, Item 79-1221