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From the Chair - Shawn Feist



As 2021 is coming to its end, we have seen improvements within our industry as restrictions have changed and we as funeral service professionals have been able to better serve our client families. COVID still offers us challenges as cases go up and down, and new variants emerge, but this seems to be something that we all will have to live with for the foreseeable future.

As mentioned in our August newsletter, we have created a Legislative Review Committee to perform a thorough review of the legislation to ensure it is reflecting the current environment. This committee has met 6 times so far this year and is creating informative recommendations for the Alberta Government. Along with the AFSRB, the invited industry members that make up this committee are Brad Eleniak, Gille Douville, Chris Martin-Jong, David Root and Tyler Weber.

The mandatory course, 'The 5 Rs of Funeral Service in the Age of Cremation' continues, with very positive feedback by those who have attended. Please visit the website for a list of sessions taking place in early 2022. Larry Stuart Jr has put a lot of effort in making this possible and keeping the ever so popular 'zoom' presentation informative, interactive and light.

As we say goodbye to Debbie Miller as her term expired at the end of October, the province has appointed two new public members to our board. We would like to welcome Deborah Gust and Joshua Jackson to the AFSRB.

On behalf of myself and the rest of the Alberta Funeral Service Regulatory Board we would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday season.

AFSRB Board Members

Board Chair/ Industry Member

Shawn Feist

Treasurer and Vice Chair / Public Member

Jack Redekop

Industry Member

Scott Barbour

Industry Member

Dean Ross

Public Member

Deborah Gust

Public Member

Joshua Jackman

Board Member Changes



Debbie Miller—Past Chairperson

Our past Board Chair, Debbie Miller, completed her term as a public member at the end of October. It is unfortunate that the Government did not reappoint Debbie to the Board for a second term, as she felt there was more for her to contribute. We would like to thank Debbie for her dedication to the work of the AFSRB and her upbeat attitude and wish well in her future endeavours.



Deborah Gust—Public Member

As a Public Member, Deborah brings Board experience from serving on the Criminal Injuries Review Board as well as a Trustee on a Municipal Library Board. She attended Mount Royal University, where she studied Criminal Justice and eventually worked with Community Corrections for 12 years. Furthering her education, Deborah has taken courses from the Foundation of Administrative Justice, with a focus on quasi-judicial adjudication and decision writing. Currently enrolled as a part time on-line student, Deborah is taking Contract Law, as well as the Principles of Leadership, from Harvard Law School in Boston, Mass. Deborah has had the privilege of doing administrative work for a family-owned Funeral Chapel. It was easy for her to see how the Funeral Industry strives to provide the highest standards of integrity and compassion to the families they serve. Deborah is honoured to contribute to the strength of the Funeral Industry in Alberta.



Joshua Jackman—Public Member

As an advocate for consumer protection, high educational standards, and a thriving and trusted funeral industry, Joshua is excited to be a part of the Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board (AFSRB).

He is a graduate of the University of Alberta MBA program (finance) and has over ten years of diverse experience in investment management, accounting, and

financial services. He is also an active volunteer, channeling his passion for financial literacy into teaching and empowering the next generation of business leaders. If he's not in the board room, you might find him on the track or running outdoors, training for his next marathon. He's also a huge Saskatchewan Roughrider fan so expect to see him cheering on his favourite team when they come to town.

Documents

Funeral Services Act:

[www.qp.alberta.ca/
documents/Acts/F29.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/F29.pdf)

General Regulation:

[www.qp.alberta.ca/
documents/
Regs/1998_226.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/1998_226.pdf)

Legislative Review Committee (LRC)

The LRC is continuing its work on reviewing the Funeral Services Act and Regulations for potential amendments. This committee is also meeting with Service Alberta in regard to the Alberta Government's Red Tape Reduction initiative which looks at streamlining the provisions of the legislation. The timing for completing the legislative review is estimated to be spring 2022. The recommendations will then be finalized by the AFSRB and sent to the Minister of Service Alberta. We will provide additional updates as the project progresses. If anyone has any suggestions of provisions for the committee to review, please email these to office@afsrab.ca.

Continuing Education

To date, there are 1400 continuing education entries in the FILIS system and we are reviewing them daily. Please visit your continuing education page in your Employee Portal to view the approval status of your entries. If your entry has not been approved (it is marked 'no'), it could be for one of two reasons: the hours were entered as 0 and/or the 'course relevance' (formerly 'justification') doesn't satisfy the explanation. Please revisit and edit for review/approval.

Please note: the 'course relevance' section doesn't have to be lengthy, a brief explanation of the relevance to your day to day work is sufficient. If you have not yet set up your Employee Portal to enter your continuing education, please contact the office and we can assist you.



5Rs of Funeral Service in the Age of Cremation 2022 Course Schedule

Wednesday, January 12

Time: 13:00—16:00

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Tuesday, January 18

Time: 16:00—19:00

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Wednesday February 2

Time: 13:00—16:00

AFSRB Mandatory Course



The final three sessions have been added for the AFSRB mandatory course "***The 5Rs of Funeral Service in the Age of Cremation***". All licensed funeral professionals and students (who will be licensed prior to March 31, 2022) are required to take this course to renew your licence on March 31, 2022. To register, visit www.afsrab.ca, click on 'About AFSRB' and select calendar of events to find a session.

For the most up to date information and guidance visit the Government of Alberta website: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx#gatherings>

Funeral Benefits for AISH, Income Support recipients & Albertans With Low Incomes

The Government of Alberta works with Alberta's funeral service providers to help make sure Albertans with low incomes and their loved ones can access funeral services and are treated with dignity. Funeral service providers offer an immensely valuable service to vulnerable Albertans and the government remains committed to helping low-income Albertans with the cost of funerals so they can honor their loved ones.

On April 1, 2022, the province will amend how funeral benefits are provided to Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and Income Support recipients, as well as other Albertans with low-incomes. These amendments mean funds will be provided directly to individuals so they can select a funeral provider of their choice and negotiate their own services. The upcoming changes are intended to streamline the complex administrative payment process for clients, families, and service providers and provide people with more choice.

The requirements for who qualifies for funeral benefits is not changing. The family, guardian, or loved ones of the deceased will be able to choose their preferred service provider and have a greater variety of options than the services provided under the current contract and fee schedule.

Community and Social Services staff are working closely with funeral provider associations and the provincial regulator to develop new processes and ensure a smooth transition on April 1, 2022. Funeral service providers will receive written notification from the Government of Alberta regarding the termination of the current contract in late December.

The current process for issuing funeral benefits will remain in place until March 31, 2022. On April 1, 2022 a contract will no longer be required to deliver funeral services to Albertans who are eligible for funeral benefits.

Community and Social Services staff will continue to work with and share information with funeral service provider associations to ensure their members are prepared for the upcoming changes. The department will develop materials for clients and service providers to help navigate the new process.

More information about the new process will be provided in January and February. Members should direct questions about these changes to their association.

AFSRB Holiday Hours

The office will be closed starting at noon December 24, 2021 and will reopen Tuesday, January 4, 2022. Phone and email messages will be monitored periodically and urgent messages will receive a response.

CONTACT US

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Upcoming Industry Election

Just a reminder there will be an election for an industry member to the AFSRB in the new year. In order to be eligible to serve on the AFSRB, under section 37.3(3) of the General Regulation, you must be an Alberta resident, and must be actively involved in the day to day operations of a funeral services business as an owner or shareholder, business manager, funeral director or embalmer. If anyone is interested in putting their name forward to be on the ballot for this years election to the Board, the nomination information and form will be coming out in early January by email. The deadline to submit your nomination form will be February 4, 2022. If you would like a copy of this information mailed to you, please contact the office at office@afsrab.ab.ca.

