

1 [Urging the City to Develop Options to Minimize Postmortem Body Handling Costs During the
2 COVID-19 Crisis]

3 **Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to develop options to minimize**
4 **post-death body handling costs and provide these options to the loved ones of people**
5 **who die during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency.**

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7 WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel virus that has been
8 rapidly spreading worldwide; and

9 WHEREAS, The virus, which was originally detected in December 2019, has reached
10 pandemic proportions, with more than 1,965,561 confirmed cases that have resulted in over
11 123,722 deaths around the world; and

12 WHEREAS, As of Tuesday, April 14, 2020, the San Francisco Department of Public
13 Health has reported at least 987 confirmed cases in San Francisco that have resulted in 15
14 deaths; and

15 WHEREAS, The death of a loved one is an extremely difficult, emotionally stressful
16 event in normal times, and the COVID-19 shelter-in-place mandate has placed even greater
17 emotional and financial burdens on the families of the deceased; and

18 WHEREAS, Due to strict public health orders, many patients dying in hospitals during
19 this global health emergency must die alone because family members are prohibited from
20 visiting general acute hospitals; and

21 WHEREAS, As a result of the regional and statewide shelter-in-place orders,
22 thousands of working families have been furloughed or lost their jobs and are struggling to
23 cover even basic needs such as food and housing; and

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1 WHEREAS, The costs of retaining a funeral establishment and burial plot in the San
2 Francisco Bay Area are prohibitively expensive, forcing many families to choose cremation;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The default cremation service retained by the City and County of San
5 Francisco is not the most affordable service available to families; and

6 WHEREAS, The basic costs of handling a body post-death can be taxing for low-
7 income families, especially if family members cannot work during the shelter-in-place
8 mandate, and the City’s post-death body handling process includes Medical Examiner fees
9 that could be avoided if certain steps that are not generally known are taken; now, therefore,
10 be it

11 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the City Administrator, in
12 consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, to explore ways to minimize post-
13 death body handling costs, and to develop and document clear options available to families
14 who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, including a waiver of the basic
15 body-handling fees during the declared state of emergency; and, be it

16 FURTHER RESOLVED, These options should be available in multiple languages and
17 immediately shared with the families of the deceased, enabling them to make informed
18 decisions that minimize the financial burden of putting their loved ones to rest during this
19 unprecedented and challenging COVID-19 public health crisis.

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