

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco 94102-4689
Tel. No. 554-5184
Fax No. 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 13, 2020

To: Naomi Kelly, City Administrator
Dr. Amy Hart, Acting Chief Medical Examiner

From: *AC* Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Subject: Urging the City to Develop Options to Minimize Postmortem Body Handling Costs During the COVID-19 Crisis (File No. 200382)

On April 21, 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 180-20, sponsored by Supervisor Hillary Ronen (File No. 200382, Urging the City to Develop Options to Minimize Postmortem Body Handling Costs During the COVID-19 Crisis); enacted on May 1, 2020.

Attached please find a copy of the Resolution for your Department's information and consideration, which is being sent as directed by the Resolution.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board at (415) 554-5184.

c: Members of the Board of Supervisors; Supervisors Hillary Ronen, Matt Haney
Lynn Khaw, Office of the City Administrator
Lihmei Leu, Office of the City Administrator
Dr. Ellen Moffat, Office of Chief Medical Examiner
Ken Bukowski, Office of Chief Medical Examiner

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.**
6

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
24
25

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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City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 200382

Date Passed: April 21, 2020

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

April 21, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 200382

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 4/21/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Unsigned

London N. Breed
Mayor

5/1/2020

Date Approved

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

5/1/2020

Date