

M E M O



TO: Commissioners
FROM: Robert W. Wilson
DATE: August 10, 2020
SUBJECT: Interim Coroner Appointment

**County
Administrator**

Robert W. Wilson
701-241-5770
wilsonro@casscountynd.gov

Dr. John Baird will retire as Cass County Coroner on August 31, 2020 after 37 years of service. Dr. Baird's work has been exemplary, and this organization is indebted to him for his exceptional service and leadership.

Dr. Baird has developed a job description that is now being reviewed by Gallagher Benefits to identify a PAQ for the position. When completed, the full-time position and salary range will be advertised, and candidates will be screened and interviewed like the process used for other department head positions.

Previously I indicated my office would make every effort to complete the advertising and hiring process prior to Dr. Baird's retirement. Despite our best efforts, we will not make that timeline. I don't expect the hiring process to take an unreasonable amount of time, but it won't be completed by the end of the month.

Therefore, I recommend the Commission appoint Ms. Kriste Ross, the current Cass County Deputy Coroner, as Interim Coroner until the appointment of a permanent Coroner. Dr. Baird has recommended Ms. Ross for this position. I also reached out to Sheriff Jesse Jahner to gauge his interest in the interim appointment. He indicated he was willing to serve in this capacity if asked but would prefer not to add the additional responsibility if there was another option.

Regarding the Coroner search, once we receive the PAQ, the position will be advertised similar to other department head positions. All applicants will be screened by Human Resources to identify those that meet the minimum qualifications. The Human Resources Director and Administrator will select finalists to interview. The Administrator, Commission Chair (Coroner's Office Portfolio Commissioner), Human Resources Director and a yet to-be-determined individual familiar with the role of County Coroner will make up the panel to interview candidates and determine a recommendation.

The Commission will then be provided with the interview panel's recommendation and consider the appointment of a permanent County Coroner. There are unique statutory requirements of the coroner position. I have, and will continue to, work with Mr. Burdick to ensure we meet all statutory requirements.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to appoint Ms. Kriste Ross as Interim Cass County Coroner, effective September 1, 2020 through the appointment of a full-time Cass County Coroner.

PO Box 2806
211 Ninth Street South
Fargo, North Dakota 58108

www.casscountynd.gov