



ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. CHRISTOPHER D. GREENE

LEGISLATOR

June 16, 2022

Comm. Marie Cannon
Erie County Department of Social Services
158 Pearl Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Protocol for Burial of Unclaimed Persons

Dear Commissioner Cannon,

Earlier this year Erie County personnel mistakenly ordered the burial of Mr. William Sherman in the potter's field at Lakeside Cemetery in Hamburg.

Mr. Sherman's family was understandably distraught upon learning of the mistake, as Mr. Sherman was to be buried next to his wife in Mt. Olivet Cemetery. In addition to burying Mr. Sherman prior to publishing the notice of his death in the newspaper, his family's claim of his body was delayed due to custodial issues relating to who had legal authority to order his body be exhumed.

It is my hope that your department has already implemented new policies related to the care of an unclaimed person, or revised existing policies, to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family. At your convenience, please forward to me Erie County's current policy, noting any changes that have occurred as a result of the incident involving Mr. Sherman.

Please contact me at: Christopher.Greene@erie.gov, I appreciate your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher D. Greene".

Christopher D. Greene
Erie County Legislator, District 6