

MINUTES
FORENSIC SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Date: October 23, 2018

Location: North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

Start Time: 10:00 a.m.

I. ATTENDANCE

Present: John Byrd, Adam Becnel, Demetra Garvin, Tim Kupferschmid, Pete Marone, Chris Palenik, Michael Coble, Mike Jiroutek, Deborah Radisch, and David Hinks.

Not Present: Kermit Channell, Tracey Dawson Cruz, Bethany Pridgen, Ronald Singer, and Alka Lohmann.

Others in Attendance: Ana Baxter, Amanda Thompson, Liz Patel, Aaron Joncich, Timothy Suggs, Dave Freehling, Karen Morrow, Wayne Lewallen, John Dilday, Josh Hickman, Jody West, Sarah Jessica Farmer, William Hart, Jr., Jason and Monique Clark.

II. MINUTES

Minutes of the August 2, 2018 meeting were approved with amendments by the Board.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Director's Update

- DPS Sexual Assault Kit Working Group's goal has met three (3) times. Anticipated final meeting is October 24, 2018 and group will present a draft of the protocols, policies, and rules that they have come up with.
- Annual report is completed. Wayne Lewellan and Alison Gantt have been promoted since last meeting. Sarah Jessica-Farber is new ombudsman.
- John Byrd will visit Puerto Rico with Matthew Gammet in January, 2019 to work with the Puerto Rico Crime Lab. Currently waiting for funding for Moldova and such funding will assist Moldova in establishing DNA protocols.

- Under new budget, State employees received a two (2) percent increase and five (5) additional days of bonus leave. State Crime Lab received funding for renovations, and it currently has \$5.2 million to do so.
- STIMS went live on October 1, 2018, and Attorney General Josh Stein did a press conference on such. State Crime Lab was awarded \$2 million from the SAK grant, and part of those funds will be used for testing and planning. A working group has been established, and 609 kits have been approved for testing and 351 have been completed by vendor labs. Director Byrd presented the live STIM site to the Board.
- National Forensic Science Week celebrations were a success. Director Byrd shared pictures from the photo booths that were set up.

b. Administrative Operations Update – AD Amanda Thompson

- Grants Awarded: (1) SAK - \$2 million; (2) 2018 Coverdell - \$4.6 million.
- In the process of implementing random drug testing, which should be brought to fruition this quarter.
- Currently, there are 33 vacancies with 25 in process. Six to eight positions are being pushed at a time. There were six (6) resignations since July 1, 2018. Two of those resignations due to integrity issues resulting in Brady Giglio releases in August.

c. Technical Operations Update – AD Liz Patel

- There are 13,500 cases in laboratory, up 1,500 from the beginning of the year. There has been a large number of submissions in latent evidence and drug evidence cases. Turn around time is down, but more cases coming in. Drug analysis has become more complex. Lead time is now 176, down from 183. There are some disciplines that are within a 30 day turnaround, like blood alcohol testing. Actual time of case from inception to completion is 53 days.

d. Western Regional Laboratory FSM Anna Baxter

- Western celebrated its first anniversary in new building on September 27, 2018. Over the last year, approximately 25 tours have been given, ranging up to 65 people.
- Case Trends:

Drug Chemistry: There are currently seven (7) chemists working, 1 in training, and 2 vacancies. Approximately 2,800 cases have

been completed. They are now working on April 2018 cases, and there is a 12% increase in submissions.

Toxicology: There are currently 8 analysts, one in-tech, and one in-tech vacancy. They are working blood alcohol as they come through the door. However, they have to have 45 blood drug cases submitted before preliminaries can be run. They are relatively caught up and there has been no increase in submissions.

Forensic Biology: There are currently 6 analysts and 2 vacancies. All of the cases that were housed at the Western Lab have been completed, and the lab receiving cases from Raleigh. Fifty-five (55) cases have been received from the Triad area, with the oldest one being from April 2018. On October 22, 2018, Western received approval to use CODIS. There is a 21% increase in submissions.

Latent Evidence: There is currently one analyst who is also the supervisor, and one vacancy. They are working June 2018 cases, and there are 45 that have not been started. There has been only about 2 percent increase in submissions.

Firearms: There are currently two (2) examiners and one (1) vacancy for office tech. There are 111 cases total, 34 remaining from 2017. There is an 18% increase in submission.

- Celebrated National Forensic Science Week with approximately 150 participants.
- **Renovations:** John discussed the renovation projects, which includes expanding space and adding intake area, additional office space and conference room, and larger toxicology lab.

e. Triad Regional Laboratory – FSM Wayne Lewallen

- **Drug Chemistry:** There are five (5) examiners, and there was a 37% increase in submissions. Due in large part to the loss of a senior analyst, there has been a 25% decrease in completion.
- **Latent:** There are two (2) examiners and one (1) vacancy. There is a 34% increase in submissions driven by three major agencies losing examiners. There is a 41% increase in case completions.
- **Toxicology:** There are four (4) examiners, and one (1) vacancy. There is one (1) one hemp tech, and one hemp tech vacancy. There is a 35.2% increase in submissions, and a 13% increase in case completion. In

March 2017, a batch testing protocol was instituted. Months prior to that, analysts were averaging approximately 21 cases per month. In the first 3 months of the new protocol, the average went up to approximately 27.6 and, over the past fiscal year the average increased to 30 cases per analyst per month, resulting in a 50% increase in case production.

f. DOJ Annual Crime Lab Report - FY 2017-2018 – PowerPoint Presentation

- There has been a continual increase in annual case submissions from 2016-2018. There were 61, 997 submissions last year.
- John has not asked for positions since 2013, but will be requesting positions for 12 scientists and a STIMS Administrator. The scientist positions will be allocated to drugs, latent evident, and forensic biology. He will also request funding to test untested kits.
- John requested the Board to write a letter of endorsement to the JPS Committee by the end of December, 2018.
- John is retiring effective July 1, 2019 after 32 years of service to the State.

15 minute break was taken. Chairman called meeting back to order.

IV. UPDATE ON QUALITY DOCUMENT REVIEW OF TRACE

The Trace Evidence quality document review has been completed. It was recommended that Trace Evidence: (1) take advantage of the availability of digital cameras in documenting, and (2) perform an overview of procedures and to align all of the documents to the same level of detail as they were written by several people over a period of time.

Chris Palenik made a motion to draft a memorandum regarding the quality review of the Trace Evidence section, and Demi Garvin seconded. John Byrd indicated that he would draft the memorandum and send it to the Chairman for review.

V. SCHEDULING OF WINTER TELECONFERENCE AND SPRING CONFERENCE

Winter Teleconference: January 24, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. est.

Spring Conference: May 7, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. est. (Travel on May 6, 2019)

Motions were carried for both dates.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Ronald Singer, an AFTE member, has resigned from the Board. Committee has been formed to find and recommend a replacement for his seat. The Committee consists of John Byrd, Peter Malone, Demi Garvin, and Adam Bechnel. The Committee will vet and present recommendation to the Attorney General, who will appoint new member.
- Demi Garvin has volunteered to assist with SOP reviews once they are in place.

Adjourned: Motion to adjourn made by Peter Marone; seconded by Michael Coble.
Meeting adjourned.