

**MINUTES**  
**FORENSIC SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**Date:** August 2, 2018  
**Location:** North Carolina State Crime Laboratory  
**Start Time:** 1:00 p.m.

**I. ATTENDANCE (Director John Byrd)**

**Present:** John Byrd, Tim Kupferschmid, Tracy Dawson-Cruz, Adam Becnel, Michael Coble, Demi Garvin, Peter Marone, Christopher Palenik, Bethany Pridgen, and Deborah Radisch. (All except John Byrd were present via telephone as agreed to at the May 15, 2018 meeting.)

**Not Present:** Kermit Channell, II, David Hinks, Michael Jiroutek, Alka Lohman, Bethany Pridgen, and Ronald Singer

**Others in Attendance:** Ana Baxter, Erin Biggio, Jason Caccamo, Monique Clark, John Dilday, Sarah-Jessica Farmer, David Freehling, Alison Gantt, William Hart, Jr., Josh Hickman, Aaron Jonich, Zach Kallenbach, Wayne Lowell, Sarah Rackley-Owens, Elizabeth Patel, Kathy Schell, Timothy Suggs, and Jody West

Meeting turned over to Chairman Tim Kupferschmid

**II. MINUTES**

Minutes of the May 15, 2018 meeting were approved as is by the Board. Motion to approve minutes made by Peter Marone, and seconded by John Byrd.

**III. PROTOCOL REVIEW AND UPDATE AND RECAP OF COMPLETED WORK**

Chairman Kupferschmid opened discussion of approvals needed by the FASB. John indicated that the Lab noted no significant changes to the Quality Committee's email summaries reflecting its onsite both prior to and subsequent to May 2018. Adam Becnel and Demi Garvin also agreed to such. Chairman Kupferschmid made a motion to approve the Quality Committee's protocols regarding Drug Chemistry, Latent Prints, Digital Evidence, Evidence Control, Quality, Forensic Biology and Firearms. Demi Garvin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Trace Evidence is ongoing. Chris indicated that his review regarding Trace Evidence would be completed by the Fall meeting.

**IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

John Byrd presented his report via PowerPoint, and a hardcopy was distributed to the Board.

- The revised organizational strategy was introduced, and there were no questions from the Board concerning such.
- The accreditation assessment of the Western Lab is complete and scheduling of expansion is expected soon. Installation of the CODIS software at the Western Lab is scheduled for September.
- The accident investigation regarding a firearm discharge by an employee is complete, and it was determined to be an accidental discharge. The employee is doing well. As a result, a number of recommendations have been implemented for training and equipment, which will be added to the section and reported to the DOJ. The matter is now closed at the State Crime Lab.
- The Security Infrastructure is basically complete and performs well. Minor kinks are being worked out.
- The General Assembly approved the budget at the end of May 2018, allotting 4 million dollars to the State Crime Lab for renovations to the fourth floor. An additional \$1 million was requested for a roof replacement.
- Director Byrd and William Hart, Jr. are participants in the Sexual Assault Working Group.
- House Bill 945 passed, which in part includes testing of all kits along with preservation of kits. Under this bill, the Department of Public Safety will determine the rules and guidelines. Recommendations from the Working Group must be submitted by December 1, 2018.
  - The intent of “testing all kits” is to test all kits except anonymous. However, the Working Group will further define and determine this.
  - Preservation: Tested kits will be returned; untested kits will remain at the Lab or at a storage facility provided by the Department of Public Safety. The Working Group will review the current statute regarding preservation of biological evidence to help determine more concise recommendations.
- Tracking System is established and will be housed at the DOJ. The software will track both new and old cases that were completed at the end of 2017. There is a temporary programmer on staff at the DOJ working in sprints, and it is anticipated that the system will be rolled out on October 1, 2018. User training is being developed concurrently, with assistance by the Justice Academy.
  - There were 600 hits in 2017-18, which is an increase from the previous year. NC was one of the states to receive the new software.

- Outsourcing: Recurring funds of \$250,000 is available through the DOJ and is being used for assisting agencies that request the Lab's assistance with DNA testing. The Lab does not receive or maintain the kits; it only screens the information to ensure CODIS eligibility. Once the information is screened, agencies are directed to send the kits directly to the vendor. After the vendors complete the testing, the Lab reviews the profile and uploads the information into CODIS. There were 4 CODIS hits, one that extended back to 2004.

**V. ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS (Amanda Thompson)**

- The Lab has applied for grants totaling approximately 5.6 million dollars, and responses are anticipated by mid-August or September.
- Random drug testing has been approved, and policy and testing are expected to be implemented in the next quarter.
- Vacancy threshold is at 27. There are two pending resignations due to family relocations to other states. Vacancies are in the electronic system. Six (6) employees were hired in June 2018.

**VI. TECHNICAL OPERATIONS (Liz Patel)**

- Caseload currently at 12,000 cases, consistent with the last few months. Lead Time has dropped from 191 days to 183 days. The Lab is currently working on determining how DNA will be handled at the Western Lab, and which counties will be worked on at the Western Lab.
- 50 employees volunteered for Operation Spring Strike (comp time strategy for processing cases), resulting in the processing of an additional 1,100 cases.
- The Lab, Agriculture Department, and several law enforcement agencies are following Hemp CDC discussions to ascertain how the DEA will push through scheduling. John Byrd stated that a State Task Force has been developed to look into the Hemp CDC issue. At this point, the Lab is operating as usual under Chapter 9.

**VII. DNA (John Byrd)**

- Goal is to have CODIS on board at the Western Lab by September.

**VIII. FALL MEETING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

- Fall meeting is scheduled for October 22 - 23, 2018. Traveling will occur on October 22, 2018 and the meeting will be held on October 23, 2018.
- Tim Kupferschmid and Adam Becnel agreed to assist Christopher with the protocols regarding Trace Evidence.

- There was no new business presented to the Board.

**Adjourned:** Motion to adjourn made by John Byrd; seconded by Peter Marone. Meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.