



Mike Hagar
SECRETARY

ARKANSAS STATE CRIME LABORATORY

LITTLE ROCK
#3 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock AR 72205
(501) 227-5747

LOWELL
1120 West Monroe Avenue
Lowell AR 72745
(479) 365-8717

HOPE
2500 South Main Street
Hope AR 71802
(870) 722-8530



Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders
STATE OF ARKANSAS

Theodore T. Brown, M.D.
DIRECTOR

Arkansas State Crime Lab Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2025

Board Members Present (GoToMeeting-Virtual):

- Dr. Eric Rosenbaum
- Sheriff, Rodney Wright (virtual)
- Brent Davis (virtual)
- Danny Ormand (virtual)
- Gregg Parrish (virtual)

Others Present:

- Director, Dr. Ted Brown
- Deputy Director, Jennifer Beaty
- Deputy Director, Sammy Williams

Welcome/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Brown. Roll call was taken, five members were present, and a quorum was met. The motion was made to approve April's minutes, all approved and none opposed. The minutes were approved as written.

ASCL Update

Financial Update

Karen Perry, Chief Fiscal Officer at DPS

- Karen gave a financial update for the quarter and fiscal year.

I. Section Chief's Reports

Evidence Receiving-Andrea Swift

- In January, Evidence had its first inventory of the year, with a total of 12,884 items inventoried in Little Rock, Lowell and Hope. All items were accounted for.

Physical Evidence-Mandi Wertenberger

- Mandi gave an update on her section's staffing. Despite having one analyst cross training another analyst, and one analyst providing training to their newest hire, they were still able to meet or exceed their 1st quarter team goals.

DNA-Kelli Dixon

- Kelli gave an update on SA kits backlog reductions and TAT.
- Updates were given on Homicide and Property cases.
- DNA has hired 3 new analysts; one analyst has completed their training.
- FaSTR software and computers are being installed and that program will be up and running soon.

CODIS-Miranda Crawford

- CODIS had 2911 Arrestee/Offender submissions, 198 hits and 449 sample backlog as of April 1st. This gave us a 7-10 day TAT.
- Miranda gave an update on staffing and an update on one analyst that has completed their casework training and moot court, she is finishing CODIS technician training.
- Miranda gave an update on the SAKI Grant
 - We currently have the SAKI coordinator position open and interviews will begin soon.
 - We are currently working on the database upgrades for Idemia and STACS.
- Miranda expanded on the RAPID DNA in booking stations.
 - Faulkner and Saline counties are up and running and hope to expand to other agencies throughout the state.

Friction Ridge-Merianne Stinnett

- Merianne spoke about the Summer Intern Program; 2 interns will be brought in to have the opportunity to work in each discipline of the lab.
- An update was given on case work, with 154 current cases pending.
- Merianne shared that her section is working on validations, and two analysts will be taking their Friction Ridge Certification Test.

Drugs-Felisia Lackey

- Felisia gave an update on their staffing for Little Rock and our Lowell Lab.
- Felisia expanded on the scope of their case work, backlog reduction and their TAT for Little Rock and Lowell.
- We are currently working on a new method of testing for new drugs that have come out.

Toxicology-Amanda Jaliha (Our new Toxicology Section Chief)

- Dr. Brown introduced Amanda as our new Section Chief for Toxicology. She started in March 2025.

- Amanda gave an update on staffing for her section.
- The section had an instrument go down in October that was pivotal to our testing methods. This issue had an impact on our backlog. The instrument was repaired in February and they're making progress in reducing their backlog, (1450 in January to 1331 currently).
- The plans for overall improvement include working on validating our Q-ToF instrument using a third-party, implementing back-up instruments as a preliminary testing method and a re-evaluation of the training program.

Firearms-Rebecca LoBalbo

- Rebecca gave staffing updates for her section, six trained examiners, two trainees and one technician.
- Rebecca gave an update on casework and TAT.

Digital Evidence-Adam Wilson

- We have been working on Proficiency Testing and one analyst is working on his competency test.
- We are working on our software licensing. Several solutions are in the process of adding new features to their tools.
- One analyst is currently working on her BFCE (Basic Computer Forensic Examiner) certification.

Medical Examiners-Dr. Brown

- In the 1st quarter, we completed 461 autopsies, which puts us on track for another close to record breaking year of greater than 1800 autopsies.
- Dr. Brown introduced our new Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Emily Ogden. Dr. Ogden came to us from Dallas, TX. She has 10 years of experience, and has led the Fellowship Program in Dallas for the past 5 yrs. We are excited to have her on our team.
- We still have 2 open positions.
- Congratulations to Dr. Jennifer Forsyth for receiving the Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review Champion Award. This recognizes her decade long dedication to improving the lives of Arkansas Children.
- Dr. Lance Van Truong, our First Pathology Fellow will start in July, and we are excited to have him. He is currently doing Pediatric Pathology Fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital.

New Business-Sammy Williams, Deputy Director

- Dr. Brown had Ryan Black share the great news that we had no non-conformances with our ANAB accreditation.
- Sammy gave an update on our new pay plan, expanding on how much the positions should increase salaries. This will hopefully help with employee retention.

- A couple of downsides of what it will do as we have seen in previous pay plans, it causes salary compression. DPS is working on this and meeting with OPM to find a solution for our tenured employees.
- Update on the New Crime Lab building. Sammy was able to share pictures of what our new lab will look like. Construction documents are being submitted to Division of Building Authority for their review and hopefully completed by May.
- Our groundbreaking ceremony is planned for Friday, June 6th at 1:00 pm. All board members were invited to join.
- Site work is scheduled to begin in June and construction is set to immediately follow.
- Dr. Brown asked if there were any questions, and Dr. Rosenbaum asked if the accreditation was just for the Medical Examiners section or the entire lab. Dr. Brown shared that it is for the lab.
- Joan Shipley, DPS Chief of Staff shared that they have heard from other agencies that are also talking to OPM about the pay plan and they have heard mixed responses on their feedback.
- Joan shared how thankful she is for our hard work here at the lab and that our work does not go unnoticed. She shared that she hears positive feedback from Prosecutors throughout the state on our people who testify in court.
- Joan shared that Eric Wacaster is the new Chief Legal Counsel with DPS.

Dr. Brown asked for motion to adjourn, Brent Davis made the motion and Sheriff Rodney Wright seconded the motion and all were in favor.