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Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders
STATE OF ARKANSAS

Theodore T. Brown, M.D.
DIRECTOR

Arkansas State Crime Lab Board Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2025

Board Members Present (GoToMeeting-Virtual):

- Gregg Parrish
- Chuck Graham
- Rodney Wright
- Rick Ellitott (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 Chuck Graham. Roll call was taken, four members were present, and a quorum was met. Gregg Parrish made the motion to approve July's minutes, Sheriff Wright seconded the motion, 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.
- Chuck Graham raised the question if we have been directly affected by the Federal shutdown. Sammy responded by explaining that we are not at this time but next year we possibly will be affected.
- Karen expanded further on the Crime Lab's 7 positions covered by Federal Grant Funding and 7 open positions not funded.
- Gregg Parrish asked how we have been affected by the new pay plan and how this has affected employees that have more than 10 yrs. Brown expanded on this concern by saying

that the new pay plan has been beneficial to us in recruitment. We have seen a big increase in applicants seeking opportunities here at the lab. Joan Shipley is working with us on a plan to help those that did not benefit from the pay increase.

I. Section Chief's Reports

Evidence Receiving-Andrea Swift

- Andrea gave an update on the secure storage for each location.

Physical Evidence-Angela Evans

- Angela shared that Lennon Bates has completed her pGSR cross-training and promoting in Title to Senior Forensic Criminalist. Big win for Serology.
- Avery Threlkeld has completed her training and she is now working independently as an analyst.
- An update was given on casework, TAT's and team goals.

• DNA-Lindsey Penner

- Lindsey gave an update on staffing.
- Updates were given on casework and TAT's.
- Lindsey did highlight that DNA saw the largest submissions in SA Kits from May to July.
- We are finalizing the FaSTR software installation and training.
- Dr. Brown gave recognition to the DNA Team for their team work in expediting the increased number of RUSH cases which included public safety cases.

CODIS-Miranda Crawford

- Miranda gave an update on staffing and emphasized that 3 out of 6 employees are grant funded and they are not currently affected by the Federal shutdown.
- As of October 1st, we had 8326 Arrestee/Offender submissions with 553 hits.
- Update was given on the SAKI Grant and on the Rapid DNA in Booking.
- We are working on the validation for the Rapid Instrument.
- Idemia Software upgrades are in process, STACS-DB upgrades is planned to be completed by Q1 2026.
- Sheriff Wright asked once their Rapid Instrument is installed, when can they start processing samples. Miranda explained they are still waiting on the approval from the FBI.

Friction Ridge-Merianne Stinnett

- Merianne gave an update on casework and TAT's which included 122 RUSH cases submitted.
- Friction Ridge had several public safety cases submitted as well.

Drugs-Lauren McDonald

- Lauren gave an update on staffing for Little Rock and our Lowell location.
- Currently in Little Rock our backlog is 4600 with a TAT of five to six months and for Lowell, their backlog is 1500 with a TAT of 4 months.
- Projects we have been working on; Drugs has finished the verification of two instruments which we are now using. That gives us more instruments to run cases on.
- We are currently working on a procurement for a new LCMS System.
- Another program that is in the works is the Blind Proficiency program. We are working with an agency that has allowed us to take in adjudicated cases that the prosecutor approved for us to keep and build cases. In this program, we can see the analyst work on the case and ensure that we are focused on quality and following policy.
- We had three analysts that passed the American Board of Criminalistic Certification test a couple of months ago, which is good for us.

Toxicology-Amanda Jalihal

- Amanda gave an update on staffing.
- For this last quarter, we received 985 cases and we were able work 1018 cases.
- Our backlog is still pretty large, but our TAT have been decreasing. We are down to 120 total for this quarter. Our longest time seem to be the coroner cases because they need all of the testing done (drug testing and THC testing).
- We were able to add a new instrument to Tox, our liquid handling system. It will automate our LC extraction procedures, drug screen and THC screening. Analysts will aliquot samples and the liquid handler will finish the other steps.
- This allows us to increase our efficiency.

Firearms-Rebecca LoBalbo

- Firearms currently have 8 trained examiners and 1 trained technician, and we were just approved for an additional technician. This is a first for us which will be very beneficial for us.
- Right now, we are focused on homicide cases and with a full staff, we should see a decrease in backlog.
- Our goal is having one technician work 60 cases a month and hopefully later doubling that number.
- Having two technicians we should see a difference in our OS cases backlog as well as helping our examiners with Nibin entries.

Digital Evidence-Adam Wilson

- We are meeting all the requests for rush cases. Digital Evidence does get several rush cases.
- Our backlog does continue to decrease.
- We are almost done with proficiency testing and certification testing for this year.

- We have met our team goals for the last few months and our plan is to increase our team goal to 8 to 12 cases.
- We recently completed our testing of locations data. The plan is to help LE track a person's location.
- Chris built a new computer for processing using grant funding through ICAC.
- D.E. has 58 cases to be assigned, 36 mobile device cases, 18 computer device cases. Current TAT for mobile is 400 days and computer is 500 days.

Medical Examiners-Dr. Brown

- In the first 9 months of 2025, we had 1,339 postmortem exams and we projected 1,800.
- We were just inspected by the National Association of Medical Examiners and we maintained our accreditation.
- Several of the doctors are traveling to Louisville, KY for the NAME Conference. Some of the doctors will present, and give talks.
- We have hired two new Associate Medical Examiners. One is our current fellow right now, Dr. Lance Trong and the 2nd doctor is Dr. Jesse Saifullan. Jesse is a current Forensic Pathology Fellow in Miami, FL. Dr. Jesse will officially join us July of 2026.

New Business-Sammy Williams

- Sammy gave an update on Court stats from July-September 2025
- We had 278 employees travel to court and only 124 testified of those times.
- The total time our analysts spent related to court was 2,450 hours. Actual time testifying 78 hours, time spent waiting 1,134 hours and lastly miles driven to court was 12,679.
- We still aren't very successful doing virtual testimony because several judges won't allow it.
- Dr. Brown added that in our new lab, we will have several testimonial rooms with plans to do more virtual testimonies.
- Sammy explained that if our analysts were allowed to do virtual testimonies, they would have more time in the lab doing case work.
- Sammy shared photos and updates on the progress of the new building.
- Chuck Graham expanded on how thrilled he was with the turnout for our groundbreaking ceremony.

Chuck Graham made the motion to adjourn, Gregg Parrish seconded the motion. The motion passed and meeting was adjourned.