



Jami Cook
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 Asa Hutchinson
STATE OF ARKANSAS



Kermit B. Channell II
DIRECTOR

Arkansas State Crime Lab Board Meeting

Minutes

April 9, 2021

Board Members Present (GoToMeeting - Virtual):

- Josh Farmer
- Judge Brent Davis
- Chief Rick Elliott
- Sheriff Tim Helder
- Gary Smith
- Dr. Ian Birkett

Others Present:

- Director Kermit Channell
- Assistant Director Cindy Moran
- Dr. Charles Kokes, Chief Medical Examiner
- Michelle DePriest

Welcome/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. by Director Channell. Roll call was taken by Kermit Channell. Six members were present and a quorum was made.

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Motion to adopt the minutes was made by Rick Elliott and seconded by Judge Brent Davis. No discussion took place and all were in favor and motion passed.

1. ASCL Update

A. **Financial**

- Director Kermit Channell expounded on the Financial Status of the Lab. We are doing well with our current budget until the end of Fiscal Year.

Director Channell asked if there were any questions.

- Gary Smith asked if monetary collections from cases were down due to Covid 19?

- Josh Farmer answered by saying that the Criminal Cases are backed up because courts have been closed due to Covid 19. He believes the Jury Trials will begin May 1, 2021. It can take a year before we are back to normal before Covid.

A. Caseload Status & Trends

- Cindy explained the turnaround time for each division for Homicides, Sexual Assaults, Property/other, Drugs, Toxicology cases. Our goal is to have all labs have the same turnaround time.
- We are efficient but not where we want and need to be. Cindy explained that when we lose an analyst the time that it takes to hire a new analyst is extensive.
- We need more analysts. However, because of Covid we had to pause hiring but are filling positions now.
- We have moved the analyst from the Hope Lab to our Little Rock Lab. The facility was not an ideal place for the lab. We had ongoing problems with mold, moisture, heating & cooling. We currently have 2 Evidence Techs there receiving evidence. This location has been beneficial for Law Enforcement.

B. Analyst Retention

- We lost 10 analysts last year and we currently have 86.
- Cindy expressed concerns regarding statics that show 51% of employees are looking to leave their current jobs. She encourages employees to find ways to stay engaged with their jobs.
- Director Channell would like to make pay salaries an enticement.

C. Renovation/Construction

- Director Channell discussed the Feasibility Study. He is looking into what it is going to take to have a new facility. We are working with the State for RFQ. Vendors have begun submitting bids for this project.

II. New Business

A. Legislative Session

M.E. Status

- B. In 2020 Methamphetamine was the leading cause of death and in 2021, Fentanyl has surpassed Methamphetamine.
- C. 300 homicides was our highest until last year, we had 386 homicides. In 2018, we had 322 drug overdose cases and in 2020, we had 327.

Covid Status

- D. We are staying on track with temperature checks each morning. We are still requiring mask to be worn and social distancing.
- Director Channell explained that we are not allowing outside meetings and are still in virtual mode. We have found that zoom meetings to be successful.

Adjournment-

Motion- Gary Smith made the motion to adjourn.

Josh Farmer 2nd the motion.