



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

July 2, 2021

Board Members Present (GoToMeeting-Virtual):

- Chuck Graham
- Dr. Ian Birkett
- Tim Helder
- Dr. Eric Rosenbaum
- Gary Smith (by proxy)
- Hon. Brent Davis

Others Present:

- Assistant Director Cindy Moran
- Dr. Charles Kokes, Chief Medical Examiner
- Ryan Black
- Michelle DePriest

Welcome/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Chuck Graham. Roll call was taken, 5 members were present and a quorum was made.

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Motion to adopt the minutes was made by Brent Davis and seconded by Dr. Ian Birkett. No discussions took place and all were in favor and motion passed.

1. ASCL update

A. Financial Update/Year End

- Cindy Moran expounded on the financial status and briefly discussed year-end progress. AASIS is down right now so we do not know the year-end totals. We do know that we were

in the green and we did have some carry forward from our general revenue. We will have a better idea for our next Board Meeting.

- We have applied for Federal Grants and one of the Grants we have applied for is the Anti Heroin Grant that we partnered with Kirk Lane and the ASP. This is a \$4 million dollar Grant that will spread over a 3 year period. Our part of the grant is for \$1.3 million which we will use most of in the 1st year for Drugs and Toxicology. \$1 million will go toward equipment for Drugs and Toxicology, in addition to hiring additional scientists in these areas. DEA is working on drug overdose deaths. They want results quickly so they can try to find the drug dealer and get them off the streets.
- The other Grant is the Coverdell Grant that we apply for every year. This is formula based, and it did increase to close to \$300,000.00. This is the only flexible grant that we can use to train forensic personnel. Part of this grant will be used in a renovation project on the 3rd floor, Drug Chemistry Section. We have 25 analysts and this will allow us to expand their work area.
- DNA Grant that we apply for every year is a little over \$1 million and this helps to cover 7 scientists, supplies and small equipment.
- Overall, our current funding should be over 3 million if these Grants are approved.

B. Merit

- DPS has set the merit rate for all of the divisions. There was an increase in percentages from last year, which is a morale booster.

C. Medical Examiner Status

- Our Medical Examiners received increases in salaries beginning this month. Board certified Pathologist received a 30% increase and the non-Board Certified Pathologists (2) will receive a 15% increase.
- Dr. Peretti is retiring effective 8/31/2021 and has been with the lab for 29 years.
- Dr. Kokes has agreed to stay on with the lab for another year to mentor Dr. Brown and continue to work cases.
- Dr. Christy Cunningham (Associate) started with the Crime Lab on July 1, 2021 and has worked with us in the past.
- Dr. Kokes gave a background on Dr. Brown and discussed his qualifications and expressed that Dr. Brown has a very impressive resume. He has a set of skills that will serve this office very well in the future.
- Motion was made by Tim Helder to accept Dr. Ted Brown as our new Chief State Medical Examiner and Dr. Birkett seconded the motion. All were in favor and none opposed.

D. Feasibility Study

- We have completed the process of getting the RFQ's, picking the vendor and getting the all bids in. It was passed without questions by the Legislative Committee.
- The SmithGroup, Inc. which is well known in the forensic community, was awarded the project. They are partnering with a local Architect, Polk, Stanley who has designed several crime laboratories and morgue facilities.
- They will come on-site and assess our needs. In our contract we asked for this to be completed in 60 days. This should allow us to report the feasibility study results in our next board meeting.

2. New Business-Rules

A. Promulgation of Rules

- The Legislative Session has approved the loan forgiveness program and this is why we wanted to go ahead and have our board meeting a little early so we could promulgate rules. The first step is for the board to approve the rules.
- Doctors usually having a heavy debt by the time they finish school; this is a step in the right direction to help us bring more Medical Examiners to our agency.
- There is an application process which has to be approved by Director Kermit Channell.
- We will pay directly to the lending institution, which shows proof of amount of debt.
- With the salary increases, loan forgiveness program, and the development of the fellowship program, we should be state of the art here in Arkansas.

Tim Helder made the motion to accept the Loan Forgiveness Program and Judge Brent Davis seconded the motion. All were in favor and no opposed.

Adjournment-

Motion to adjourn was made by Chuck Graham.