



Jami Cook
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Kermit B. Channell II
DIRECTOR

Arkansas State Crime Laboratory Board Meeting October 16, 2020

The Following Board members were present (GoToMeeting):

- o Chuck Graham
- o Josh Farmer
- o Judge Brent Davis
- o Chief Rick Elliott
- o Sheriff Tim Helder
- o Dr. Ian Birkett

The following persons were present:

- o Director Kermit Channell
- o Assistant Director Cindy Moran
- o Dr. Charles Kokes, Chief Medical Examiner
- o B. Anne Cameron

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Chuck Graham. Roll call was taken by Kermit Channell. Six members were present and a quorum was made.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to adopt the minutes was made by Josh Farmer and seconded by Tim Helder. No discussion took place, all were in favor and the motion passed.

ASCL Update

A. Financial

- a. Operating Budget – Funding balances were expounded on by Kermit Channell.
 1. Asset Forfeiture Fund (1VM) - 1st Quarter; this is down but this is not unusual for the first quarter. We will continue to watch
 2. 788 DNA Special Revenue- was budgeted lower since the funding that came in last fiscal year was down
 3. ACT65 (Civil filing fee) – this funding is significantly down which is expected with the courts shutdown. We expect this to start coming back in once the courts start up again.

B. Caseload Status and Trends

- a. Turnaround times, priorities, out sourcing of evidence, and ASCL struggles and goals were expounded upon by Cindy Moran. The lab continues to make improvements in the different sections and fill vacant positions as needed. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on cases submitted to the lab Drug cases significantly decreased in April and have rebounded. Cases for autopsy: Significant increase in homicides and an increase in drug overdose deaths. Maps were presented to show where the cases are coming from. It is also noted that drug overdose deaths containing methamphetamine in combination with fentanyl have significantly increased in the last year.

C. Renovation and Construction – Little Rock

- a. We have 20 new reporting stations and a breakroom for DNA section, 3 new CODIS stations, and 6 new reporting stations for Toxicology.
- b. Due to improvements we are able to get off shift work.

D. New Business

- a. Pre-session budget hearing Oct 13th thru November 12th, 2020
- b. ME Loan-Forgiveness – help with recruitment and retention of Forensic Pathologist for ASCL.
 - 1. \$25,000 incentive with \$100,000 cap per employee
 - 2. Each \$25,000 requires employee to stay with ASCL 2 years
- c. Special language to pay current and new Forensic Pathologist up to 50% above max. This will allow the ASCL to negotiate with prospective candidates.

We have had the Chief ME and Associate ME positions remain vacant for a significant amount of time and are hopeful that these items will help us be successful with recruitment and retention.

E. ME-Fellowship Program

- a. Intended to breathe life back into Forensic Pathology and keep our students in state
- b. 73 Fellowship slots exist in United States and only about 40 are coming out of these programs each year; we cannot have this program without UAMS sponsorship. The ASCL, Governor’s Office and UAMS had an initial meeting to discuss

F. Fees-Release of case file (civil situations)

- a. 12-12-314 sets out fees for the crime lab. Fees for case files and reports can be set and approved by the ASCL Board. A motion was made by Rick Elliott and seconded

by Ian Birkett to increase ASCL Fee Structure. Discussion took place, all were in favor and the motion passed. The motion was as follows:

1. Lab Report- \$50.00
2. Case file (CD or through email) for civil case actions- \$200.00
3. All others remain the same.

G. Meeting Adjourned.