



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 14, 2016**

Prior to the start of the Science Advisory Board meeting, Dr. Simone Gittelson, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), received the ceremonial oath of office, from Steven Walker, Director of the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments, appointing her to the advisory board.

At 9:30a, the meeting of the Science Advisory Board was brought to order by board chairman Irv Litofsky. In addition to the board chair, board members Michael Coble, Simone Gittelson, William Grosshandler, Peter Marone and Sandy. Zabell, were present and a quorum was established to conduct board business. Minutes from the January 15, 2016, meeting were presented, read and approved.

Chairman Litofsky announced Joseph Bono's resignation from the advisory board at the expiration of his term on April 18, 2016. DFS Director Jenifer Smith reported that on April 7, Dr. Burton W. Wilcke, Jr., was sworn in as a member of the board and that a search to fill current board vacancies has been initiated.

A report on draft regulations, not included in the legislation, that define the board's role was given by DFS General Counsel Robert Hildum. The regulations have met legal sufficiency by the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs and will be issued in final form following review by the Office of the Attorney General, the Council of the District of Columbia and a period for public comment.

Interim Deputy Director Brittany Graham updated the board on DFS complaints/inquiries received since the board's January meeting, highlighting an incident involving a Firearms Examination Unit (FEU) firearm and its potential connection to firearm cartridge casings recovered from a crime scene. The board will be advised of the department's finding concerning the matter at the completion of an ongoing investigation. Deputy Director Graham also provided a briefing related to the Public Health Laboratory's (PHL) surprise inspections by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT). Of the 25 reported departures resulting from the lab's inspections occurring August 18th and 19th, one was corrected on-site and the remaining 24 Quality Corrective Action Reports (Q-CARs) established afterward were all closed. A subsequent inspection on March 3rd yielded 7 departures, requiring a response and action plan, and 6 concerns for the PHL.

The Public Health Laboratory's recent activities associated with Zika virus testing, mosquito surveillance and CDC interactions were detailed by Dr. Horng Kan.

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Decommissioning of the Public Health Laboratory Annex as the DFS Continuity of Operations (COOP) site and training facility was announced. Also reported are current discussions to establish a COOP partnership with the state of Maryland and the department's recruitment of the Public Health Laboratory Director reaching its final stages.

A discussion involving the utilization of verbal scales in communicating and evaluating DNA statistical data and the new methodologies and procedures used in DNA laboratory testing, as revealed in recent studies, was led by Andrea Borchardt, who also reported the latest developments of STRMIX integration in the Forensic Biology Unit (FBU). Susan Welti conducted a briefing on the unit's current projects that includes kinship testing in support of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner with identification of unknown bodies, as well as other FBU activities and actions related to the closeout of the 2015 quality assurance standards audit.

The nine-month recovery effort and progress of the Forensic Biology Unit was the focus of a discussion led by Forensic Science Laboratory Director Karen Wiggins. Stakeholder collaboration strategies, training and equipment procurement have been key factors in restoring confidence in the laboratory.

Crime Scene Sciences Director, Troy Kelly reviewed the way forward for the merge and transition of Crime Scene Sciences (CSS) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). A meeting with the Mayor is planned. More recently, the division completed training of trauma nurses in collections obtained from major offenses, in addition to providing support to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner with mass fatality training.

Dr. Smith proposed restructuring of the quarterly board meeting and expansion of the board's advisory role to include providing assistance with DFS projects, protocol review and the identification of current and anticipated issues. There was no objection to the Director's recommendations.

Chairman Litofsky expressed concern in response to a delay in the board's receipt of a February 29th report submitted to the Mayor. According to General Counsel Hildum, the document is not final. The board was assured that the final document will be made available to DFS stakeholders.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.