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|  | **District 1 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting****Minutes**Monday, June 12, 2023 | 5:30 p.m.*Regional Forensic Science Center,* *1109 N. Minneapolis Wichita, KS 67214* |

**Board Members in Attendance:** Daniel Bateman, Judah Craig, Joseph Dozier, Diane Gjerstad, Jim Reid, Steven Burt, Natalie Phan, Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann

**County Representatives:** Shelly Steadman Director of Regional Forensic Science Center

1. **Call to Order**
	1. Chair Judah Craig called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
	1. A motion was made by Daniel Bateman to approve the minutes. Steven Burt seconded this motion. **The CAB approved the motion with a vote of 4-0.**
3. **Public Agenda**
	1. No Public Comments
4. **New Business**
	1. Shelly Steadman opens with an introduction and background on her position and the center
		* 1. The center has 40 employees with most of them working in the laboratory division
			2. Situated with the District Coroner
			3. The center serves 21-25 counties
			4. 25% of work is out of county work
			5. Has three forensic pathologists
			6. Spends a lot of time tracking down next-of-kin
		1. Diane Gjerstad asked, isn’t it still your budget? Aren’t you asking for an additional budget MTE?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, Correct. So we have six. When you have 5 FTE’s and you have are going to need 6 months to fill and one who is gone for 3 months, that you can’t replace. That leaves three for period of at least 3 months, maybe 6 months. We need to have relief with a fully trained person. In the forensic laboratories like the DNA Lab, the FBI Quality Assurance Standards, once we hire a person, they have to have been working in Forensic DNA facility for 6 months before they can even touch a case. It really takes 2 years to be somebody who is an independently working case-work scientist. Johnson County will always pay more.
		2. Daniel Bateman asked, well they also don’t have the same level of work?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, Correct. Johnson County does about 400 autopsies a year.
			2. Daniel Bateman responded, right. But if you’re here because you like the work, it would be more interesting to work here.
		3. Daniel Bateman asked, the ground for an investigator is?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, you need a bachelor of science right now with one year of related experience. We look for anybody who has served with any level of trauma response. We have a lady on call tonight who worked as a dispatcher but also went through a Medical and Legal Investigator course, which is a 40 hour course that prepared her much better. You have to be very well-versed with the terminology. They are also the people that the families interact with. Besides being scientifically skilled, a much larger piece of what they do is people oriented. We are looking to expand our field of applicants and it’s been hard to find.
		4. Jim Reid asked, you said you supported other counties around us as well, did your staff go to those counties?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, no. The bodies are transported from there to here. They usually have a local coroner. So every district, we are district 18, a coroners district can include a county or several counties and I assume it is divided on population. We maintain all of the records.
		5. Natalie Phan asked, I read online that fentanyl was creating a backlog of autopsies, is that still an issue for you guys?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, yes, it’s not the autopsy itself that is a backlog. We have experienced about a 35% increase in coroners cases that we are working since 2019. If you look at what is largely attributing to that, it’s the increase in overdoses. We look at what drug is causing those, about 60% involve fentanyl to some degree. It’s our toxicology examination that is the bottle neck right now. Within 90 days we should be issuing our autopsy reports however when toxicology takes 4 months, I can’t beat that. Until we have that third doctor and a fully trained toxicology staff it will continue to bottle neck.
		6. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann asked, so the tox is done here not in KDHE?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, yes. We are the only post-mortem toxicology lab in the state of Kansas.
		7. Steven Burt asked, so is it standard practice to do a toxicology?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, our standard practice is every single case.
			2. Steven Burt asked, every single case you suspect of being drug or fentanyl or every single case?
			3. Shelly Steadman responded, every single case.
			4. Steven Burt responded, so it’s more of a workforce issue.
			5. Shelly Steadman responded, it’s our inability to keep a fully trained toxicology laboratory staff.
		8. Diane Gjerstad asked, so how many open EMT roughly?
			1. Shelly Steadman responded, we have 40. Our real deficiency right now is drug identification. They identify pills and plants from the street. We have a staffing issue on that as well.
		9. We began our tour.
5. **Adjournment**
	1. The District 1 Citizen’s Advisory Board adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

*The next Citizens Advisory Board Meeting will be* ***Monday, July 17, 2023, 5:30 p.m.***  *at Bel Aire City Hall, 7651 E. Central Park Ave., Bel Aire, KS*