

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center
1109 North Minneapolis Street, Wichita, Kansas 67214

November 16, 2023

Board Members Present

- Dr. Shelly Steadman, Director, Regional Forensic Science Center
- Dr. Ron Varner, Coroner, 13th Judicial District
- Jennifer Magana, City Attorney, City of Wichita
- Brad Crisp, Deputy Chief, Sedgwick County Fire District #1
- Kevin Lanterman, Chief, Sedgwick County EMS
- Dr. David Guo, Interim Director, WSU Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs
- Chris Dugan, Fire Marshal, Wichita Fire Department
- Darrell Atterberry, Chief of Police, Bel Aire
- Russell Leeds, Assistant County Manager
- Joe Sullivan, Chief, Wichita Police Department

Board Members Absent

- Dr. Timothy Gorrill, Sedgwick County Coroner
- Dr. Kevin Brinker, Medical Director, Sedgwick County EMSS
- Jeffrey Easter, Sedgwick County Sheriff
- Aaron Breitenbach, District Attorney's Office
- Dr. Garold Minns, Dean, KU School of Medicine-Wichita

Attendees Present

- Katie Asbury, Forensic Administrator, Regional Forensic Science Center

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 AM.

II. Introductions and Roll Call

III. File Minutes from the May 18, 2023 Meeting

IV. Announce BOCC Advisory Board Member Re-Appointments

- Dr. Ron Varner, Coroner, 13th Judicial District (Res. 227-2023)
- Darrell Atterberry, Chief of Police, Bel Aire (Res. 228-2023)

Both were reappointed at the October 4, 2023 BOCC Meeting for a two-year term expiring October 5, 2025.

V. RFSC Performance Metrics and Center Updates

Dr. Shelly Steadman

OD2A Grant

- RFSC is a partner in Component B - will collect and test drugs found at death scenes and provide reports to the CDC.
- Required to test 500 items in Year 1.
- Funding includes another Drug Chemist, as well as several gas chromatograph instruments.
- Advisory Board will be one mechanism to provide reports and updates on the grant.
- New drug chemist has been hired and will start on November 20.

Performance Metrics and Trends

- Medical Investigations
 - 3,362 reported deaths to date for 2023 - compared to 4,026 in 2022 (up 20% since 2019)
 - 499 death scenes to date for 2023 - on track for about 600 death scenes attended in 2023
- Pathology
 - On track for 1,100 to 1,200 autopsy cases a year, with 903 completed to date, and 279 cases pending (up 28% since 2019)
 - 134 out-of-county vs. 784 in-county cases
 - Suicides are trending similar to previous years, with 12% of cases ruled as suicides
 - Overdose cases account for 27% of the caseload
 - 61% of overdose cases are related to fentanyl
- Toxicology
 - Backlog
 - Toxicology backlog is at 134
 - Both LCMS instruments have validations underway
 - Sending cases out in the interim and training additional lab staff
 - Toxicology cases have increased
 - HPT/DUI backlog cases have decreased from approximately 130 to 50
- Drug Identification
 - Backlog is directly related to staffing challenges (1,087 vs. 718 in 2022)
 - Number of cases submitted has decreased slightly

- Drug ID fentanyl positive exhibits are up 267% from 2021
- Fire Debris
 - Fire Debris program has been temporarily suspended due to the loss of the senior chemist who held the position
 - Working to continue cross-training staff
- Firearms
 - Firearms Examiner is now fully trained and accepting all types of firearms analysis
 - JOCO and KBI completing technical reviews and verifications
 - Second Firearms Examiner will start on November 20 and will begin training
 - Firearms backlog (5) is a function of waiting for reviews to be completed
- Biology/DNA
 - Biology/DNA case submissions have remained stable
 - 3 previous cases worked by Dr. Steadman have been revisited with samples sent out for genealogical testing

Quarterly Summary

- Toxicology has 2 of 7 FTEs in training; DID completed training of all 3 previously in training
- The temporary MI position transferred into the 2024 budget approved permanent position
- Land acquisition for DNA addition is on hold -- considering other parking configurations
- DNA extraction robotics will go online at the end of 2023
- New pathologist (Dr. Schainost) passed all of her Board Certifications and is expecting her second child in March

2025 Budget Scenarios

- Need to start considering funding for LIMS

CIP Requests

- DNA Addition - land acquisition vs. other options

2023 Grants Submitted

- Coverdell Formula (\$99,900) - award pending
- CEBR (\$289,213 - NEPA review pending
- JAG (\$42,824) - awarded and spending underway
- KDHE OD2A (\$50,000) - spending complete

Anticipated 2024 Grants

- KDHE OD2A (\$60,000) - awaiting agreement

Questions and Discussion

- Ms. Magana stated that the City has issued an RFP for an opioid strategic consulting vendor and asked whether the RFSC was involved in that process?
- Dr. Steadman responded that the RFSC is not involved.
- ACM Leeds added that he is hoping that when the consultant is hired that they will speak to stakeholders, including the RFSC, but noted that the county was limited in their involvement with the RFP/contract process.
- Dr. Steadman discussed the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming ATF lab on the WSU Innovation Campus.
- Chief Sullivan stated that the WPD will work on coordinating a meeting with the local partners.
- Dr. Guo added that he'd be happy to connect others with the WSU contacts.
- Deputy Chief Crisp added that the ATF generally offers fire debris analysis as well, but he has not heard whether they'd offer that here yet

VI. Agency Reports

There were no agency reports presented.

VII. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 AM.

Next Meeting: May 16, 2024 at 9:00 AM

1109 N. Minneapolis Street, Wichita Kansas, 67214 or via Zoom (TBD)

Next Quarterly Update: February 2024