

HOUSTON FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER, INC.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
PUBLIC ACCESS WILL BE VIA TELECONFERENCE ONLY
March 12, 2021

In accordance with Texas Governor Greg Abbott's temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, issued March 16, 2020, notice is hereby given that beginning at 9 a.m. on the date set out above, the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (the "Corporation," or "HFSC") will meet via videoconference (Microsoft Teams.) HFSC is conducting this virtual meeting to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face interactions and to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19.)

Gov. Abbott's [temporary suspension of certain open meetings laws](#) was issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code. Gov. Abbott specifically suspended certain provisions of the law, which required government officials and members of the public to be physically present at a specified meeting location. The relevant suspensions are in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the Governor's disaster declaration is lifted or expires. Accordingly, this meeting will not take place in a specified physical location for the public to attend in person, however, the virtual meeting will be available to the public and allow for two-way communication between the Board and members of the public.

As required and in accordance with the Governor's temporary suspension, notice of this meeting, the agenda and the meeting packet are posted online at <https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php>. The items listed in the agenda may be taken out of order at the discretion of the Chair. After the conclusion of the meeting, a recording thereof will be posted to www.houstonforensicscience.org.

Attending the virtual meeting

The public is not required to create an account to attend the meeting online and the videoconference can be accessed, free of charge.

To attend the videoconference meeting via computer, please use the following link:

https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2F%20%23%2F1%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%3Ameeting_Y2E4Y2I2YmMtZjc1ZS00ZjRILWE2OWUtMmViZWJkZDkwMWZk%40thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%2522f03b68b6-d9fe-4735-8648-33b13ef1c3ed%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522a717bead-e9b6-4660-beb2-a7bdef7a335b%2522%257d%26anon%3Dtrue&type=meetup-join&deeplinkId=8a994bc5-ab65-4cf4-92a1-

[441af530576a&directDI=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true](https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php?directDI=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true)

or go to <https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php>

In addition to the required free videoconference link, members of the public may call into the meeting by dialing the following toll-free teleconference number and entering the subsequent conference ID number: 281-866-3266 **Conference ID:** 270186914#

Callers must mute themselves upon dialing into the meeting to limit interruptions.

To attend the meeting using a mobile device and through the free videoconference link, the Microsoft Teams mobile application (“app”) must be downloaded (free of charge) to the device. After downloading the app, proceed to the link above and you will be directed to the videoconference, through the app. However, members of the public must be muted to minimize disruption of the meeting.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is permitted to speak during the public comment agenda item and as permitted by the Chair. However, requests to speak during the public comment period must be submitted via email to the HFSC Secretary of the Board at: info@houstonforensicscience.org no later than 9 a.m. Thursday March 11, 2021.

The request must include the speaker's name, contact number, address and topic of the comment. Speakers should limit their comments to three minutes. The Board Chair may limit both the number of speakers and the time allotted for each speaker. The Chair will call on each speaker by name, during the designated public comment period.

If you have questions regarding attending this virtual meeting please contact Jordan Benton, secretary of the Board of Directors, at **832-699-5442**.

AGENDA

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call; confirmation of presence of quorum.
3. Report from Dr. Stacey Mitchell, board chair, including a monthly update of activities and other announcements.
4. Consider appointment of Mrs. Ashley Henry as interim secretary of the corporation, and possible related action.

5. Public Comment.
6. Reading of draft minutes from February 12, 2021 board meeting.
Consideration of proposed corrections, if any. Approval of minutes.

Reports and presentations by corporate officers, and possible related action items

7. Report from Dr. Peter Stout, president and CEO, including updates on outreach, staffing and HFSC's emergency response to severe winter weather in February and progress being made toward providing new technologies to the crime scene unit.
8. Monthly operations report from Dr. Amy Castillo, vice president and COO, including an overview of how February's severe winter weather impacted production and an update on backlogs.
9. Presentation by Dr. Castillo regarding outsourcing forensic biology/DNA services to help eliminate the HFSC sexual assault kit backlog, to be funded by FY 2019- BJA DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction federal grant.
 - a. Consider approval of a contract amendment for DNA services between the Corporation and Bode Cellmark Forensics, to be funded by the FY 2019- BJA DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction federal grant, anticipated budget of \$457,607.00 but not to exceed the total allotted outsourcing budget of \$915,214.00.
 - b. Consider approval of a contract amendment for DNA services between the Corporation and Signature Science, LLC, to be funded by the FY 2019- BJA DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction federal grant, anticipated budget of \$457,607.00, but not to exceed the total allotted outsourcing budget of \$915,214.00.

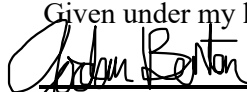
Reports and presentations by staff

10. Report from Ms. Erika Ziemak, quality director, including an overview of the blind quality control program, a latent print disclosure to the Texas Forensic Science Commission, efforts to meet new national guidelines, proficiency testing and testimony monitoring.
11. Report from Ms. Carina Haynes, acting director of the crime scene unit (CSU,) regarding CSU's handling of February's severe winter weather, proposed changes to CSU's emergency response plans and an update on homicides in Houston and CSU's response.
12. Adjournment.

**Certification of Electronic Posting of Notice of the Board of Directors (“the Board)
of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (the “Corporation)**

I, Jordan Benton, coordinator of board relations and executive administration, do hereby certify that a notice of this meeting was posted online at <https://houstonforensicscience.org/meeting-archives.php> on Tuesday, the 9th day of March, 2021, as required by Section 551.043 et seq., Texas Government Code and in accordance with Governor Abbott’s March 16, 2020 temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Given under my hand this the 9th day of March 2021.


Jordan Benton

Open Meeting Laws Subject to Temporary Suspension

Effective March 16, 2020, and subject to the following conditions, the following statutory provisions are temporarily suspended to the extent necessary to allow telephonic or videoconference meetings and to avoid congregate settings in physical locations:

- those that require a quorum or a presiding officer to be physically present at the specified location of the meeting; provided, however, that a quorum still must participate in the telephonic or videoconference meeting ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.122(b)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.127(a-3), (b)–(c), (e), (h)–(i)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.130(c)–(d), (i)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE § 322.003(d), (e)(2)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE § 845.007(f)(2)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE § 855.007(f)(2)
 - TEX. CIV. PRAC. & REM. CODE § 74.102(f)
 - TEX. INS. CODE § 2151.057(d)(1)
 - TEX. LOCAL GOV’T CODE § 379B.0085(a)

- those that require physical posting of a notice; provided, however, that the online notice must include a toll-free dial-in number or a free-of-charge videoconference link, along with an electronic copy of any agenda packet ○ TEX. GOV’T CODE § 551.043(b)(2)–(3)
 - TEX. GOV’T CODE §§ 551.049–551.051

- those that require the telephonic or videoconference meeting to be audible to members of the public who are physically present at the specified location of the meeting; provided, however, that the dial-in number or videoconference link provided in the notice must make the meeting audible to members of the public and allow for their two-way communication; and further

provided that a recording of the meeting must be made available to the public ○ TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.121(f)(1)

- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.122(d)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.125(e)–(f)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.126(d)(1)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.127(f), (j)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.130(e)–(f)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.131(e)(1)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 322.003(e)(3)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 436.054(e)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 845.007(f)(3)
- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 855.007(f)(3)
- TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.061(c)–(d)
- TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.1565(c)–(d)
- TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 41.205(d)–(e)
- TEX. AGRIC. CODE § 62.0021(c)–(d)
- TEX. EDUC. CODE § 66.08(h)(2)(B)
- TEX. FAM. CODE § 264.504(e)
- TEX. FIN. CODE § 11.106(c)(4)–(5)
- TEX. FIN. CODE § 154.355(d)(2)–(3)
- TEX. INS. CODE § 462.059(a)(1), (c)
- TEX. INS. CODE § 463.059(d)
- TEX. INS. CODE § 2151.057(e)
- TEX. INS. CODE § 2210.1051(b)(2)–(3)
- TEX. INS. CODE § 2211.0521(b)(2)–(3)
- TEX. LOCAL GOV'T CODE § 379B.0085(b)(2)–(3)
- TEX. SPEC. LOC. DIST. CODE § 9601.056(c)
- TEX. TRANSP. CODE § 173.106(e)–(f)
- TEX. TRANSP. CODE § 366.262(c)–(d)
- TEX. TRANSP. CODE § 370.262(c)–(d)

• those that may be interpreted to require face-to-face interaction between members of the public and public officials; provided, however, that governmental bodies must offer alternative methods of communicating with their public officials. ○ TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.007(b)

- TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.125(b)(1), (d)

These suspensions are in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor, or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.