

Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc.

VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES
December 29, 2020

The undersigned, being the duly appointed secretary of the Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc., (“HFSC” and/or the “Corporation”) hereby certifies the following are true and correct minutes of the December 29, 2020 virtual special meeting of the Board of Directors (the “board”) of the Corporation.

- A. In a manner permitted by the Corporation’s Bylaws, the meeting was called by providing all directors with notice of the date, time (instructions for Microsoft Teams access and call-in options) and purposes of the meeting more than three days before the date of the meeting.
- B. In accordance with Chapter 551, Texas Government Code and Governor Greg Abbott’s March 16, 2020 temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was duly posted online to www.houstonforensicscience.org on December 23, 2020 along with a free-of-charge videoconference link, dial-in phone number and an electronic copy of the agenda packet, as required.
- C. The virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams was called to order by Board Chairwoman Stacey Mitchell at approximately 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 29, 2020.
- D. Board Secretary Jordan Benton called the roll. The following directors were present: **Stacey Mitchell** (the chairwoman’s photo was visible in her icon during the meeting,) **Mary Lentschke** (“ML,”) **Anna Vasquez** (“AV,”) **Philip Hilder** (“PH,”) **Francisco Medina** (“FM,”) **Janet Blancett** (“JB,”) **Lois Moore** (“LM,”) **Vicki Huff** (“VH,”) **Ellen Cohen** (“EC”)

Tracy Calabrese was absent from the meeting. Chairwoman Mitchell declared a quorum.

- E. Chairwoman Mitchell announced that HFSC’s virtual board meeting was being held in compliance with Governor Greg Abbott’s temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- F. Chairwoman Mitchell said the board agenda included an email address and phone number for members of the public to use to address the board. The Chairwoman asked Secretary Benton if any members of the public wished to address the board. Ms. Benton said no one had requested to address the board. The chairwoman opened the meeting for public comment. No one addressed the board. Chairwoman Mitchell closed the public comment period at approximately 10:03 a.m.
- G. Dr. Peter Stout, president and CEO, told the board HFSC has been evaluating a rapid DNA instrument that will be used by licensed analysts to produce rapid DNA results for stakeholders. The purchase, which Dr. Stout said is more so a subscription, will allow HFSC to utilize the instrument in the lab within budget, and the vendor HFSC selected uses the same

chemistry HFSC uses in the lab. The rapid DNA instrument subscription will include 100 samples for testing annually for three years, with the option to obtain more samples if needed. Dr. Stout said the flexible subscription is an advantage since HFSC can switch out instruments over time as the instrumentation and technology, like software, changes. Dr. Stout said he is not concerned about the technology, but more so how it is used. He added that two manufacturers make this type of instrument that essentially condenses the DNA process down to about 90-minute results. Dr. Stout said the instrument HFSC selected uses the same chemistry as the DNA lab, so training for HFSC personnel will be shorter. Dr. Stout said HFSC's goal is to ensure the rapid instrumentation is maintained, validated and most importantly, evidence is adequately preserved. The instrument will be used by licensed DNA technicians at HFSC, and licensed DNA analysts will interpret the rapid DNA data. Dr. Stout said the lab is working with the state CODIS administrator to work out details regarding how HFSC will use rapid DNA data for local CODIS eligibility. HFSC will process single-source buccal swab samples with the new technology since mixtures will not render ideal results. Dr. Stout said the lab will work to ensure that necessary protocols are in place for evidence samples being used for rapid DNA testing, such as large quantities DNA present in a blood stain. Dr. Stout said the lab will consider licensing some crime scene investigators as DNA technicians who meet educational requirements so they can operate the instrument outside of normal business hours. Dr. Stout said the lab should be able to process samples by summer, and that the instrument's validation is almost complete. Forensic biology/DNA staff still need to complete required training and proficiency testing to operate the instrument. Director Huff asked how much it will cost to process a sample on the rapid DNA instrument compared to processing a sample in the lab. Dr. Stout said a rapid DNA sample costs about \$800 per test, and it costs about \$100 to process a sample in the lab. He added that although the rapid DNA instrument processes samples much faster, the tests are considerably more expensive so testing would be used judiciously. Director Blancett asked if blind quality controls would be introduced for rapid DNA testing. Dr. Stout said it would be a worthwhile possibility to do so in the future.

- H. Dr. Stout asked the board to allow HFSC to enter into an agreement with Thermo Fisher Financial Services and Life Technologies Corporation to purchase subscription services for a RapidHIT ID system, equipment, supplies and support services, for a total contract value of \$246,380.00. Director Cohen made a motion to approve. Director Blancett seconded the motion. Secretary Benton called the roll, and the following directors were in favor: Chairwoman Mitchell, Vice Chair Lentschke, Director Vasquez, Director Hilder, Director Medina, Director Blancett, Director Cohen, Director Moore and Director Huff. With none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.
- I. Chairwoman Mitchell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Moore made a motion to adjourn. Director Medina second the motion. The meeting ADJOURNED at approximately 10:29 a.m.

By: Jordan Benton

Jordan Benton Secretary