



Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc.

Board of Directors

Virtual Meeting

~ Minutes ~

Friday, July 9, 2021

www.houstonforensicscience.org

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

At 9 a.m., Board Chairwoman Stacey Mitchell called the meeting to order.

The Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (“HFSC” and/or the “corporation”) board of directors (the “board”) convened this meeting on Friday, July 9, 2021. 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 at least three days before the date of the meeting.

Due to health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams, a web-conferencing platform. The board members participated by videoconference 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 posted online to the [website](#) on August 10 along with a free-of-charge videoconference link, dial-in phone number and an electronic copy of the agenda packet, as required.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

The following board members were present via teleconference:

Chairwoman Stacey Mitchell
Vice Chairwoman Mary Lentschke
Philip Hilder
Francisco Medina
Vanessa Goodwin
Ellen Cohen
Lois Moore
Vicki Huff
Tracy Calabrese

The following board member arrived late:

Anna Vasquez

Chairwoman Mitchell announced a quorum was present.

*Director Vasquez joined the meeting at 9:17 a.m. as the executive session convened.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chairwoman Mitchell gave members of the public an opportunity to address the board. No members of the public addressed the board.

4. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING:**

Following a motion by Director Ellen Cohen and seconded by Director Philip Hilder, the board unanimously approved the July 9, 2021 meeting minutes.

5. **CHAIRWOMAN MITCHELL'S REPORT:**

The chairwoman announced the Houston City Council approved the reappointment to HFSC's board directors Philip Hilder, Lois Moore and Vicki Huff for another three-year term. She thanked them for their commitment and work. She also noted her reappointment to serve as board chair for another three-year term. She shared her continued excitement and appreciation to serve as the presiding officer. Chairwoman Mitchell then welcomed Director Vanessa Goodwin, a newly appointed board member. Director Goodwin is the assistant general counsel at Arnold Ventures and is responsible for supporting the organization's overall legal affairs.

6. **DISCUSSION REGARDING RESUMING IN-PERSON BOARD MEETINGS:**

Chairwoman Mitchell noted fully virtual board meetings will end in September since Gov. Greg Abbott has decided not to continue the suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meeting Act, which permitted such meetings during the pandemic. She stated at that time the board will have to meet in-person. However, she reminded the board that General Counsel Akilah Mance previously explained a hybrid option being available in the current statute. This provision allows for some members to join the meeting virtually so long as the presiding officer and a quorum of directors are physically present in a publicly accessible location. Chairwoman Mitchell asked the board members if they're comfortable with returning to full in-person meetings at the annex or if they need to consider a hybrid meeting? And, if the board wanted to be proactive and make this change in location for the August meeting or wait until the September meeting when it's required? She then opened the floor for further discussion. The board reached a consensus to meet virtually in August and to explore options for hybrid meetings once in-person is required in September, noting this could allow board members who are unable to attend in person to still join the meeting.

7. **CLOSED MEETING/EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The board convened in a closed meeting, also referred to as executive session. The executive session was held in accordance with Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 and 551.074(a), et seq., for the purpose of consulting with the corporation's attorney and deliberating or discussing an annual performance evaluation and the appointment or employment of Dr. Peter Stout, president and CEO.

Chairwoman Mitchell closed the open meeting at 9:14 a.m. and convened the executive session, by videoconference, at 9:17 a.m.

8. **RECONVENE INTO OPEN MEETING AND DISCUSSION OR ACTION RELATED TO CLOSED SESSION:**

At 11:32 a.m., Chairwoman Mitchell reconvened the open meeting. She announced a quorum was present.

She first acknowledged the board received a final report from the City of Houston Office of Inspector General ("OIG") investigation into allegations regarding a hostile work environment and mismanagement in HFSC's crime scene unit. The board referred the complaint to the OIG in January

after receiving an anonymous letter detailing the complaint. Chairwoman Mitchell stated the board would consider the recommendations of the report during the August board meeting.

Next, Director Hilder made a motion to raise Dr. Stout's salary by 3% effective August 7, 2021. Director Francisco Medina seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved the raise.

Director Cohen then made a motion to extend and renew Dr. Stout's employment contract and authorize Chairwoman Mitchell and her designees to act on behalf of the board regarding contract negotiations, and Director Lois Moore seconded the motion. Before any discussion was held, Director Medina moved to amend the motion to say, "extend or renew" Dr. Stout's employment contract, and Director Cohen accepted the additional language as a friendly amendment. Director Moore then seconded that amendment which was adopted without any further discussion by the board. The board unanimously approved the motion along with the amendment.

Lastly, Director Vicki Huff made a motion for the board to present its plan to respond to the OIG report at their August meeting and discuss measures to prevent such circumstances in the future. Director Moore seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved the motion.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairwoman Mitchell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Moore made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Mary Lentschke seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:39 am.

The undersigned secretary of the board hereby certifies the following are true and correct minutes of the July 9, 2021 virtual meeting of the "board.

By: *Amanda DeBerry*

Amanda DeBerry, Secretary