

Draft Minutes
Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee
Department of Forensic Science
October 6, 2026
All-Virtual Meeting

Committee Members Present

Christopher Bommarito
Jennifer Breaux, *Vice Chair*
Kathleen Corrado, PhD
William E. Demuth II
Claire M. Dragovich
Erin P. Forry, *Chair*
Marc A. LeBeau, PhD
Alka B. Lohmann
George C. Maha, PhD
Trey Miles
Aine Ramirez
Peter M. Vallone, PhD
Kenneth B. Zercie

Department of Forensic Science (DFS) Staff Members Present

Kate Adolf, Western Latent Prints & Impressions Section Supervisor, Acting Western Laboratory Director
Elizabeth Ballard, Forensic Biology Program Manager
David A. Barron, PhD, Deputy Director
Jennie Duffy, Breath Alcohol Section Supervisor
Samantha Glass, Physical Evidence Program Manager
James Hutchings, PhD, Toxicology Program Manager
David Koppenhaver, Eastern Laboratory Director
Amy C. Jenkins, Chief Deputy Director
Ryan Labor, Northern Controlled Substances Group Supervisor, Acting Northern Laboratory Director
M. Scott Maye, Central Laboratory Director
Jessica B. Norton, Legal Assistant Supervisor
David Siecker, Communications and Executive Support Specialist
Farryl Sorokin, Secretary to the Scientific Advisory Committee
Ellen Spain, Forensic Evidence Program Manager
Theresa Staropoli, Director of Technical Services
Rebecca Wagner, PhD, Chemistry Research Section Supervisor
Robyn Weimer, Chemistry Program Manager

Call to Order

After verifying that a quorum of the Scientific Advisory Committee (“Committee” or “SAC”) was present, Chair Erin Forry called the meeting to order at 9:29 a.m. She reminded the members to speak clearly and to keep their cameras on throughout the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Forry advised that the first order of business was the adoption of the draft agenda for the meeting and noted that the agenda was previously shared with the Committee Members by Ms. Sorokin. With there being no questions or changes, Chair Forry then called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Dr. LeBeau made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes from the April 21, 2026, SAC Meeting

Chair Forry noted that the draft minutes from the April 21, 2026, meeting were previously shared with the Committee by Ms. Sorokin. Chair Forry asked if there were any questions or changes to the draft minutes. Being none, Dr. LeBeau made a motion that the minutes be approved, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

SAC Chair’s Report

Chair Forry stated that she did not have a report.

Report from the Forensic Biology Subcommittee

Dr. Corrado, Subcommittee Chair, reported on the October 5, 2026, Subcommittee Meeting. She reported that the Forensic Biology Subcommittee reviewed the updated VeritiPro Validation, and the review of this validation was subsequently closed. The Subcommittee also reviewed the Department’s proposed edits to the Forensic Biology Procedures Manual Quality Assurance Program. Forensic Biology Program Manager Elizabeth Ballard answered questions from members about the impetus behind the edits and ongoing training provided to the forensic scientists regarding activity level testimony. The Subcommittee subsequently voted to close the review of the Quality Assurance Program Manual edits.

Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to approve the reports from the Forensic Biology Subcommittee. Ms. Ramirez made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Report from the Toxicology Subcommittee

Dr. LeBeau, Subcommittee Chair, reported on the October 5, 2026, Subcommittee Meeting. He reported that the Toxicology Subcommittee reviewed one validation summary and three validation plans. The review of the validation summary for Utilization of a Circulating Bath in the Amphetamines, Phentermine, and Designer Stimulants Quantitation and Confirmation by LCMSMS was closed pending some suggested corrections. Three validation plans were discussed, including the Addition of alpha-PVP-d8, Bupropion-d9, and MDPV-d8 to the Amphetamines, Phentermine, and Designer Stimulants Quantitation and Confirmation by LCMSMS, the Qualitative Basic Drug Screen by GC-MS, and an Addition to the Miscellaneous Basic Drug Quantitation and Confirmation by LCMSMS. The Subcommittee proposed modifications for each of these validation plans, and the reviews of those plans were closed subject to those modifications.

Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to approve the reports from the Toxicology Subcommittee. Dr. Corrado made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Report from the Breath Alcohol Subcommittee

Mr. Miles, Subcommittee Chair, reported on the October 5, 2026, Subcommittee Meeting. He reported the Breath Alcohol Subcommittee met to review the new Breath Alcohol Procedures Manual and Instrument Testing Worksheet for the Department's new Draeger Alcotest® 9510 breath instrument. Staff provided overviews of both documents, and Subcommittee Members asked questions regarding each. The Subcommittee approved closing the reviews of both documents.

Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to approve the reports from the Breath Alcohol Subcommittee. Ms. Ramirez made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Report from the Firearms & Toolmarks Subcommittee

Mr. Demuth, Subcommittee Chair, reported on the October 6, 2026, Subcommittee Meeting. He reported the Firearms & Toolmarks Subcommittee received an update from DFS staff regarding the status of the pending corrective actions involving the Western Firearms Section. Physical Evidence Program Manager Samantha Glass reviewed the defense disclosure that had been disseminated at the recommendation of the Subcommittee and the ongoing case reviews conducted by an external provider. The Subcommittee reviewed the Validation Plan for the Quantum 3D Microscope and closed the review without any recommended modifications.

Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to approve the reports from the Firearms & Toolmarks Subcommittee. Mr. Zercie made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

DFS Director's Report

Director Lohmann provided her presentation related to various new and ongoing activities of the Department. Below are some key highlights of her presentation:

- DFS celebrated the retirement of Director Linda C. Jackson after 31 years of dedicated service. Effective August 1, 2026, Alka Lohmann was appointed as the new Director of DFS by Governor Abigail Spanberger. Ms. Lohmann has been with the agency for 26 years. For the last 13 years, she has served as the Director of Technical Services. She previously served as the Breath Alcohol Forensic Scientist Supervisor, Section Chief and the Calibration and Training Program Manager at DFS.
- The relocation into the new Central Laboratory has been completed and all sections resumed casework as of June 9, 2026. Governor Spanberger and other state officials joined the Department at the grand opening/ribbon cutting ceremony held on June 8, 2026. At the ceremony, the new Training Center was dedicated to the former Director of DFS, Dr. Paul B. Ferrara.

- DFS continues to transfer firearms comparison cases from the Western Laboratory to the other regional laboratories and selected latent prints cases from the Northern Laboratory to the other regional laboratories. DFS is continuing to outsource selected non-persons cases for DNA testing to Bode Laboratory and edibles cases for THC quantitation to NMS Laboratories. DFS completed outsourcing of OCME toxicology cases from the Western Laboratory on August 31, 2026.
- In response to a change to the Code of Virginia, DFS distributed an updated policy notice to stakeholders providing submission guidelines of cannabis modifying the submission for simple possession cases (contested civil offenses) to greater than two ounces but less than four ounces.
- Director Lohmann reminded the Committee that firearms comparisons were halted in the Western Laboratory in April 2025. Additionally, she provided an update about the associated corrective action process and informed the SAC that the Department is being sued by a former examiner. No additional details were provided due to ongoing litigation.
- DFS received \$1.8 million from the BJA FY25 DNA Capacity Enhancement for Backlog Reduction Formal Grants Program and received funding from two DMV Highway Safety Office Grants for Toxicology and Breath Alcohol. DFS applied for the FY25 Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program for continuing education, but project dates have not been announced to date. DFS has applied for two additional grants; the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network Modernization Project for \$1.8 million, and the FY25 Research and Evaluation for Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded National Forensic Laboratories for just over \$560,000.

Division of Technical Services (DTS) Updates

Theresa Staropoli, Director of Technical Services, provided an update on the Division of Technical Services. Her report included updates on agency accreditation, which was renewed in January 2026. She reported that the Department's accrediting body, ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), conducted a site evaluation for the new Central Laboratory in May, and the updated certificate and scope have been issued. The current accreditation cycle expires January 31, 2030. Additionally, she discussed the graduation of the 117th Session of the Forensic Science Academy, the commencement of 118th session (which began September 21, 2026), and the various other courses that have been offered by the Forensic Training Section. She provided further updates regarding ongoing chemistry research projects, staffing, and training.

The Program Managers for the Chemistry, Forensic Evidence, Forensic Biology, Physical Evidence, and Toxicology program areas provided updates on staffing, training, new methodology, and caseload statistics for the various disciplines within those program areas.

Old Business

Chief Deputy Director Jenkins reviewed the proposed amendments to the Scientific Advisory Committee Bylaws that required updates pursuant to the passage of House Bill 680. A summary of the proposed edits was presented at the April 21, 2026, SAC Meeting and previously shared with the Committee Members.

Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to approve the amendments to the Bylaws. Dr. LeBeau made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Dr. Christina Barnes Arrington (Virginia State Crime Commission) provided a status update on the review of Mary Jane Burton (MJB) cases. She reported that all known MJB cases have been reviewed and cross-validated, and the current focus is on verifying the conviction status of 2,844 named suspects yet to be determined.

Tracy Roe (Virginia State Crime Commission) provided an update on the MJB Review Panel. She outlined the provisions of House Bill 2730 and Senate Bill 1465, legislation enacted in 2025, pertaining to the independent panel review of Burton's testing, analysis, and testimony, to determine whether she engaged in a pattern of misconduct. To date, the panel has identified 319 unique cases for review.

Chief Deputy Director Jenkins provided an update on the notification status related to the MJB cases. She informed the Committee that, of the 1,281 confirmed convictions, DFS has sent 569 notices to convicted offenders, 492 individuals have been determined deceased, and 220 individuals are not able to be located based on the information in the DFS case files. DFS continues to cooperate with the Virginia State Crime Commission and the UVA Innocence Project and, as any additional incarcerated individuals are identified, DFS provides the DFS case files for both the independent panel and the UVA Innocence Project coalition of attorneys. DFS is testing the taped down swabs from 28 cases that had previously been excluded from the Post-Conviction (PC) Project. Based on more recent conviction information obtained that conflicted with the information provided during the PC Project, these cases should have been included for testing. As testing is completed, DFS is providing the results to the parties.

New Business

Chief Deputy Director Jenkins provided a review of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the FOIA requirements that are imposed on the SAC as a public body.

Chief Deputy Director Jenkins briefed the SAC on the existing Electronic Meeting Policy which was previously shared with the Committee Members by Ms. Sorokin. She informed the Committee that they must readopt an Electronic Meeting Policy on an annual basis to comply with law. Chair Forry asked if there were any questions. Being none, she called for a motion to readopt the existing policy in its current form. Ms. Breaux made the motion, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Public Comment

An opportunity for public comment was provided. No comments were made.

Confirm Future Meeting Dates

Chair Forry shared the dates for future meetings of Scientific Advisory Committee: April 20, 2027 (in-person meeting), and October 5, 2027 (all-virtual meeting).

Adjournment

226 Chair Forry asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Ramirez made a motion to adjourn, which was
227 seconded and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.
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