

1 **Draft Minutes**
2 **Meeting of the Firearms & Toolmarks Subcommittee**
3 **of the Scientific Advisory Committee**
4 **Department of Forensic Science**
5 **April 21, 2026**
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8 **Subcommittee Members Present**

9 William E. Demuth, II, *Chair*

10 Erin P. Forry

11 Kenneth B. Zercie

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13 **Staff Members Present**

14 David A. Barron, Ph.D., Deputy Director

15 Samantha Glass, Physical Evidence Program Manager

16 Linda C. Jackson, Director

17 Amy Jenkins, Chief Deputy Director

18 David Koppenhaver, Eastern Laboratory Director

19 Alka B. Lohmann, Director of Technical Services

20 Kevin Patrick, Western Laboratory Director

21 David Siecker, Communications and Executive Support Specialist

22 Farryl Sorokin, Secretary to the Scientific Advisory Committee

23 Theresa Staropoli, Principal Forensic Scientist - Quality Assurance

24 Rebecca Wagner, Ph.D., Chemistry Research Section Supervisor

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26 **Call to Order by Subcommittee Chair**

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28 After verifying that a quorum of the Subcommittee was present, Chair Demuth called the meeting
29 of the Firearms & Toolmarks Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) to order at 8:18 a.m.

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31 **Adoption of Agenda**

32 Chair Demuth advised that the first order of business was the adoption of the draft agenda for the
33 meeting and noted that the agenda was previously shared with the Subcommittee members by Ms.
34 Sorokin. He then asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Zercie made a motion to adopt the
35 agenda, which was seconded and adopted by unanimous vote of the Subcommittee.

36 **New Business**

37 Director of Technical Services Alka B. Lohmann and Chief Deputy Director Amy Jenkins
38 presented to the committee a Review and Status of Corrective Actions and the Disclosure Process
39 relating to the Firearms Section in the Western Lab.

40 Ms. Lohmann discussed the ongoing corrective action involving CTS proficiency test 23-
41 5262. The corrective action was initially opened after a Western Firearms comparison examiner
42 reported unexpected results for the proficiency test. The corrective action was initiated, and both
43 the test taker and verifier were temporarily removed from casework. Both were placed on a
44 retraining plan, but the test taker retired from DFS prior to completing the plan.

45 As cases were reviewed and some reexaminations were conducted, there have
46 been additional corrective actions opened connected to the initial corrective action. While the
47 initial root cause was contextual bias, as the additional issues were identified, the root cause was
48 expanded to include drift in both examiners' criteria for sufficiency of marks for source origin.
49 After the nonconforming work in the additional corrective actions was identified, the remaining
50 examiner was decertified as a firearms comparison examiner. Firearms case transfers from the
51 Western Laboratory to other regional laboratories for examination will continue for the foreseeable
52 future.

53 DFS contracted with Ron Smith & Associates (RS&A) in April 2025. DFS was able to have
54 evidence resubmitted for the RS&A consultant's review in approximately 12 cases worked by the
55 retired examiner. Due to difficulties in obtaining the resubmission of firearms evidence, DFS has
56 modified and expanded the RS&A contract to include remote case file reviews.

57 Ms. Lohmann reviewed the disclosures made to ANAB regarding those corrective actions, the
58 customer notices released by the Department regarding the removal of firearms comparisons from
59 the Western Laboratory scope of accreditation, and the various updates provided to the Forensic
60 Science Board and the SAC regarding the ongoing actions.

61 Ms. Jenkins reviewed with the Subcommittee the various disclosures made by the Department
62 subsequent to the opening of the initial corrective action. Pursuant to the Department's Giglio
63 policy, both examiners were required to disclose the proficiency test issue and the corrective action
64 prior to testifying in any firearms comparison case. After the retirement of the examiner that was
65 the test taker, another Giglio notice was issued by the Department. Following the additional
66 corrective actions, the review of cases by RS&A, and reexaminations by other DFS firearms
67 comparison forensic scientists, DFS issued two separate sets of Giglio notices to law enforcement
68 regarding both examiners. Case lists were provided to the prosecutors and the law enforcement
69 agencies involving 497 comparison cases for one examiner and 2,173 cases for the other examiner.
70 DFS has offered reexaminations of cases where the firearms evidence is available. Reexaminations
71 will need to be prioritized and conducted within available resources.

72 There were multiple questions from the Subcommittee members and discussion related to the
73 potential for additional internal proficiency testing, the potential for incorporating the Mideo
74 system into the discipline, the Department's verification processes, and case reviews.
75 Subcommittee members inquired whether the defense bar had been notified by DFS of the
76 corrective action process. DFS staff indicated that, while they were aware that the
77 Commonwealth's Attorneys were notifying defense attorneys, the Department would prepare a
78 general notice for dissemination to the defense bar.

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80 Department staff indicated that DFS had made several modifications to the Department's policies
81 and training, including requiring verification of all comparison suitability determinations, updating
82 the training manual, providing additional continuing education, ongoing training, and the purchase
83 of networked cameras for microscopes. The Department notified the Subcommittee members that
84 it is also purchasing and deploying 3-D microscopy instrumentation for the Firearms Sections to
85 utilize for comparison examinations. DFS staff indicated that additional Subcommittee meetings
86 will be scheduled to provide updates on the corrective action process and case reviews by RS&A.

87 **Public Comment**

88 An opportunity for public comment was provided. No members of the public were present to
89 provide comment.

90 **Adjournment**

91 Chairman Demuth asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Zercie made a motion that the
92 meeting be adjourned, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was
93 adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

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