**Department of Forensic Sciences**

**Science Advisory Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 7, 2014**

Mr. Irv Litofsky, Science Advisory Board Chairman, calls the Science Advisory Board meeting to order at 9:20 a.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2014.  Chairman Litofsky reminded members that the assembly was audio recorded and open to the public. The minutes of the July 18, 2014, meeting were reviewed. Board member William Grosshandler recommended an amendment to the minutes to reflect his attribution to interest raised in fire forensics rather than board member Sandy Zabell. The minutes were accepted and approved with the recommended amendment.

DFS Director Max Houck reviewed the meeting agenda reminding the board of their expressed interest in meeting with line laboratory staff throughout the department. He further indicated that based on mission-critical casework and availability, staff would appear for open dialogue with board.

Dr. William Grosshandler briefly spoke about attending, on behalf of Science Advisory Board Chair Irv Litofsky, Mayor Vincent C. Gray’s quarterly Board Chairs Meeting July 24, 2014. Although Dr. Grosshandler said that issues covered during the Mayor’s meeting did not directly impact business of the Advisory board, he said that through participating he recognized the Advisory board’s uniqueness in having members representative of disciplines from a broader geographical range, while other boards and commissions are primarily comprised of city residents.

Board member Jay Siegel inquired about the November 4th election for mayor in the District of Columbia and its impact on the appointment of public safety and justice leadership. Director Houck confirmed the approval and loading of fiscal year 2015 budget and added that appointments would be decided by the elected mayor.

**Advisory Board/Laboratory Staff Introductions – An Open Dialogue**

* **Forensic Science Laboratory**:  DNA; Digital & Documents; Firearms; Forensic Biology; Latent Fingerprint; Materials; Quality Assurance.
* **Crime Scene Sciences**
* **Public Health Laboratory**

Deputy Director Christopher Maguire reported department plans for installation of a fully automated rapid-DNA system. He explained that among system advantages, multiple sample testing will surpass the manual system previously used.  The board was encouraged to review and comment on the research document entitled, ‘**Validation of the ParaDNA Intelligence system for use in the D.C. Department of Forensic Sciences**,’ before the department implements the next steps.

Dr. Christopher Maguire informed the board of recent public health alerts, CDC consultations and the Public Health Laboratory’s ability to test Ebola clinical samples.

Director Houck stated that the Crime Scene transition is continuing and that discussions are ongoing concerning the retaining and preservation of evidence.  He further identified a possible allegation of professional negligence or misconduct associated with DNA methodology. Board member Peter Marone recommended that four board members (Drs. Clifton Bishop, Michael Coble, Charlotte Word, Sandy Zabell) assemble to review and make recommendation on the application and methodology of DFS's DNA testing.  In a brief statement to the Advisory Board, Assistant United States Attorney Michael Ambrosino affirmed that no formal allegation of professional negligence or misconduct with regard to DNA testing has been asserted by the Office of the United States Attorney. He further added that he would follow up with the submission of materials to the board concerning the issue.

Dr. Word requested that the DNA review panel receive the interpretation of DFS Standard Operating Procedures at the time of DNA testing during the relevant period, as well as updated SOP, if any, since the testing.

Mr. Marone recommended that Director Houck and staff produce a draft of what would constitute an allegation.

Director Houck indicated that he would review other advisory board policies.

The Science Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.