



Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc.

Board of Directors

Public Meeting

~ Minutes ~

Friday, November 14, 2025

www.hfctx.gov

1. CALL TO ORDER:

At 9:00 a.m., Chairwoman Ellen Cohen called the meeting to order.

The Houston Forensic Science Center, Inc. (“HFSC” and/or the “corporation”) board of directors (the “board”) convened this in-person meeting on Friday, November 14, 2025, in the City Hall Council Annex Chamber, 900 Bagby St. (public level), Houston, Texas 77002. In a manner permitted by the corporation’s bylaws, the meeting was called by providing all directors with notice of the date, time, and purpose of the meeting at least three business days before the scheduled date.

In accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (Texas Open Meetings Act), a notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board located on the exterior wall of the City Hall building at 901 Bagby on November 7, 2025.

2. ROLL CALL:

The following board members were present in-person:

Chairwoman Ellen Cohen
Vice Chairwoman Joni Baird
Jorn Yu
Jed Silverman
Anna Vasquez
Vicki Huff
Jessica Gooch

The following board members were absent:

Sonia Corrales
Asma Mirza
Philip Hilder

Chairwoman Cohen declared a quorum was present.

3. CHAIRWOMAN COHEN’S REPORT:

Chair Cohen started her report by thanking Director Corrales for completing a VEB tour towards the end of October to better understand one of HFSC’s services. Next, she informed the Board of the one-pager HFSC factsheet that Ms. Morgan, HFSC’s Public Affairs Specialist, created as a resource for the directors to learn more about the organization and provide facts to others. This is the first step towards the Board becoming a better advocate for HFSC. Ending her report, Chair Cohen expressed her gratitude to the directors for their service and looks forward to working with them in 2026, wishing them all a wonderful holiday season.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chair Cohen gave members of the public an opportunity to address the Board. No members of the public addressed the Board.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING:

Following a motion by Vice Chair Baird, seconded by Director Vasquez, the Board unanimously approved the September 12, 2025 meeting minutes.

6. PRESIDENT AND CEO DR. PETER STOUT'S REPORT:

To begin, Dr. Stout announced the new Crime Scene Unit (CSU) management team. CSU Senior Manager, Ashley Henry, greeted the directors and introduced Jaclyn Millholon, CSU Scene Manager, and Jordan Solis, CSU Administrative Manager. Additionally, Dr. Stout introduced new Senior Attorney Hope Smith, who recently joined HFSC. As for notable updates, the construction in the basement to prepare for the receipt of evidence is nearly complete, and Dr. Stout provided pictures to show the progress being made. HFSC now has a property team who will soon begin the process of relocating certain types of property and evidence from HPD's property room to HFSC's. The second notable update is that one of the two LC-QTOF (Liquid Chromatography – Quadrupole Time-of-Flight) equipment has been installed in Seized Drug's (SD) lab and will be undergoing validation before it can be used for casework. The second LC-QTOF is being installed in Toxicology's (TOX) lab.

In Forensic Biology (FBio), the non-sexual assault kit (SAK) backlog was reduced by 58% in the last calendar year, thanks to outsourcing and an incentive plan for forensic analysts. The SAK backlog is almost cleared after recovering from the Qiagen manufacturing issue from earlier this year. With incoming requests at a manageable number, FBio plans to eventually stop outsourcing work, which will save on expenses. To accommodate this plan, FBio management has been hiring and training new forensic analysts. Likewise, SD implemented an incentive plan to encourage their forensic analysts to tackle the backlog in non-marijuana cases, which yielded a 37% reduction within 2025. Additionally, three SD analysts were signed off for casework in May and three more in training. With these factors, SD should eliminate their non-marijuana backlog soon. Plus, the turn-around time for SD's in-jail cases has also been lowered. Lastly, Firearms' (FA) backlog is holding steady, thanks to outsourcing and the hard work of the FA examiners. Currently, four examiners are in training. A request for proposals was issued to find and select an external trainer to assist with training five new examiners who are scheduled to start in early 2026. Securing a training vendor will allow established examiners to focus more on casework instead of training new hires. Meanwhile, HFSC is continuing to work with the Harris County District Attorney's Office (HCDAO) and the Houston Police Department (HPD) to ensure priority FA cases are addressed.

7. PRESENTATION FROM MR. DAVID LEACH, TREASURER AND CFO, OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025:

Mr. Leach announced that HFSC passed the financial statement audit, completed by Blazek & Vetterling, and no non-conformances were found during fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). However, he added an exception for this year's audit. Typically, the audit is conducted in two parts, the traditional financial statements and government funds, such as grants. The latter has not been audited yet because the federal government has not released the updated rules on how to audit the government funds used by agencies. Blazek & Vetterling completed the second part of the audit based on the previous rules, but they cannot release the report until the new rules have been published.

8. PRESENTATION FROM MR. DAVID LEACH, TREASURER AND CFO, OF YEAR-END REVIEW FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025:

In the second presentation, Mr. Leach informed the Board that HFSC's overall operations remain consistent with the previous fiscal year's figures. One topic Mr. Leach highlighted is that under the capital expenditure category, HFSC has some equipment on leases, which is not typically considered capital expenditure, but the equipment's actual value still falls into this category. When comparing the year-end review between fiscal years 2025 and 2024, in 2025, the revenue is higher because the City of Houston approved HFSC's request for more funds to support FBio's needs. Concurrently, the other revenue category dropped due to ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) no longer being in effect. Lastly, HFSC hired more staff to accommodate the higher request demands for testing. FBio and CSU remain the biggest expenditure in terms of cost by department, as well as forensic disciplines as a whole making up 65% of the spending by department category. Next, he presented the trend data for revenue, payroll, services, supplies, capital, and non-capital from 2018 to 2025. To conclude his presentation, Mr. Leach briefly explained the line-by-line items and how to read the data. As a result, the data continues to prove that HFSC's funds are put towards the need to satisfy the high demand to process more cases.

9. QUALITY DIRECTOR MRS. JACKELINE MORAL'S REPORT:

To begin, Mrs. Moral notified the Board of the upcoming ANAB (ANSI National Accreditation Board) property & evidence reassessment for the Client Services & Case Management (CS/CM) division, scheduled for Dec. 10th. This reassessment will focus on all accreditation requirements due to the two-year review cycle ending on Dec. 25th. Both Quality and CS/CM are prepared for the visit and have already uploaded all the necessary documentation. Additionally, the safety, security, and facilities internal audit was conducted during the week of October 20-24th, and no non-conformances were found regarding the safety and facilities categories. However, the security audit revealed five non-conformances, albeit the issues were minor. Overall, opportunities for improvement were found for all three categories.

For the last topic, Mrs. Moral shared with the Board that the Texas Forensic Science Commission (TFSC) determined Signature Science's disclosure satisfactorily resolved and required no further action needed. Mentioned in the previous board meeting, the disclosure was regarding an FBio inventory technician at Signature Science who was found to have several documentation errors. The technician did not perform any serology or DNA analysis during her employment. The errors found on the evidence at Signature Science have already been corrected, and the lab offered to re-verify additional evidence upon request. Furthermore, the inventory technician was removed from the forensic department.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Director Silverman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Vasquez seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:46am.

The undersigned secretary of the board hereby certifies the following are true and correct minutes of the November 14, 2025 public meeting of the board.

By: Natalee Veazey Haley
Natalee Veazey Haley
Board Secretary