



Board of Directors Meeting of the Unified Forensic Laboratory

January 22, 2025

1:30 pm - close

The meeting will be held via Teams

Members

DC Sheriff Darren Weekly (V) – Chair	AC Sheriff Tyler Brown (V) – Vice Chair	Aurora Chief of Police Todd Chamberlain (V) – Secretary	18th Jud. District Attorney Amy Padden(V)
Alternate Bureau Chief Mike McIntosh	Alternate – Chief Ken McClem	Alternate Dep. Chief Mark Hildebrand	Alternate - ADA Ryan Brackley
Aurora -Mayor Mike Coffman, (V)	AC Commissioner Jeff Baker, (V)	DC Commissioner , Kevin Van Winkle (V)	Lab Director Kimberly Morrow (NV)

BOARD MEMBERS	
P	Todd Chamberlain , Chief, Aurora Police – <i>(V)</i>
P	Mark Hildebrand , Division Chief, Aurora Police, Alternate
A	Darren Weekly , Sheriff, DCSO – <i>Chair (V)</i>
P	David Walcher , Undersheriff Alternate for Sheriff Weekly <i>(V)</i>
A	Tyler Brown , Sheriff, Arapahoe County – Vice Chair <i>(V)</i>
P	Ken McKlem , Chief, Alternate for Sheriff Brown <i>(V)</i>
P	Amy Padden , DA 18 th Judicial District <i>(V)</i>
	ADA Ryan Brackley , Assistant DA 18 th Judicial District, Alternate <i>(V)</i>
P	Mike Coffman , Mayor, City of Aurora <i>(V)</i>
P	Jeff Baker , Commissioner, Arapahoe County <i>(V)</i>
A	Kevin Van Winkle , Commissioner, Douglas County <i>(V)</i>
P	Kim Morrow , UFL Director, Arapahoe County <i>(NV)</i>
P	Julie Heckman , Aurora Attorney of Record for UFL <i>(NV)</i>

P=Present A=Absent

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES
George Brauchler, DA 23 rd Judicial District
Wendy Wales, Support Specialist UFL, APD (Guest)
Tracey Montano, Deputy Director, UFL, DCSO
Celina Oropeza, Deputy Director, UFL, APD
Marc Paolino, Commander, APD
Mara Nelson, Aurora Financial, APD

Janette Guscott, UFL, APD
Darla McCarley-Celentano, UFL, APD
Brian Murphy, Lieutenant, DCSO
Dan McMillan, Captain, DCSO
Terry Brown, Captain, APD
Diane Romero, Budget Logistics Manager, DCSO
Sonia Sternako, Financial, DCSO
Chanel Ewing, UFL, Aurora
Alex Luby, UFL, 18th
Shane Williams, UFL, DCSO

1. Call to order:

Undersheriff Walcher asked the room to introduce themselves. Undersheriff would like to make note Diane Romero is retiring from the DCSO after 32 years. Congratulations on your retirement. Sonia Sternako will be the new Budget Logistics Manager for Douglas County moving forward.

The meeting was called to order by Undersheriff Walcher at 1.36 pm.

Roll call / Confirm Quorum: A roll call was conducted by Under Sheriff Walcher. We have a quorum.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting:

The last BoD meeting was 10-23-25, with a brief meeting on 10-25-25 to allow for public comment due to a date discrepancy listed on the meeting agenda. A motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting 10-23-25 was presented by Undersheriff Walcher 2nd, Motion passed.

Meeting notice:

Notice of the meeting was posted on the UFL website on Tuesday 01-21-25.

3. New members' introductions:

Commissioner Van Winkle from Douglas County was not present at the meeting. DA Padden the new DA for the 18th Judicial District spoke to the meeting introducing herself. DA Padden observed at the last board meeting and is glad to be back here. She is excited to move forward with the board, there are a lot of priorities in the office and a lot of changes with the splitting of the 18th and 23rd Judicial Districts but she is happy to be here.

4. New Business:

- **Vacancies and Staffing Updates – Director Morrow**

- We have good news at the UFL we have a start date for our incoming firearms examiner. She will be starting in March. She comes to us from upstate New York and formally Texas and is looking forward to starting. She comes to the UFL with experience. An experienced firearms examiner is very difficult to find so we consider ourselves very lucky.
- We have a new DNA analyst in background with ACSO she will be starting early summer due to some commitments where she is currently located. She is coming with a lot of great experience, and we are looking forward to having her.
- By the end of 2025 we expect to be fully staffed and finished with train and progressing to casework. We have two trainees in DNA right now who are doing excellently as they progress through their training, bringing on two new trainees for the lab we will be in a very decent position for the first time in a long time and we are looking forward to that.
- On a personal note, Director Morrow has been selected to represent the local laboratories directors on the new Governor's Panel for the Forensic Oversight Committee for CBI.
- Director Morrow would like to go on record and announce the UFL has 3 Latent Print Examiners who are certified by the International Association of Identification. There are fewer than 1000 certified Latent Print Examiners in the world. We are very proud of them. They have worked very hard to get their unit where it is. They put in a lot of hours studying for this test, which is in 2 parts, the history and science section and the examination section. This test is generally not passed on the 1st attempt, and all 3 passed. Director Morrow can't speak highly enough of the quality of work they are doing, and we wanted the BoD to know of their achievements.
- We would especially like to thank ACSO for paying for their tests. All 3 of them are ACSO employees and we want to thank ACSO for the support they have given them in taking this test. They will also need to maintain their certification with additional training.
- Undersheriff Walcher congratulated our Latent Print Examiners on their achievement.
- Undersheriff Walcher asked Director Morrow what our full FTE count is if we are fully staffed.

7 Latent Prints

7 DNA as well as our systems administrator works part time for DNA

4 Firearms

3 Chemistry

2 Questioned Documents

- Undersheriff Walcher asked if these numbers are from the origination of the Lab. Director Morrow said this is where we are right now (page 6 of the handout). Thanks to Deputy Director's Montano and Oropeza for putting them together. We have had a lot of changing faces; the handout is an overview of the Laboratory.
- Director Morrow said the doors opened in 2018; we were accredited in 2020. Some of the units started doing work in that time but we were completely up and running in the spring of 2020.

- Undersheriff Walcher asked if we have done an evaluation as a group and asked if the number of cases coming in being maintained by the amount of staffing we have. It's been 5 years since the Lab opened, how are we on staffing? These numbers are based on 5 years ago, in some units these numbers are sufficient, some of the units have changed. Aurora gave us 2 latent print positions, so we do have those, we were able to move a part time latent print position to a full-time firearms examiner. We have made some shifts between units throughout the years, but we do have concerns about staffing in the future. Director Morrow is working on a plan for what we anticipate our needs and will be based on what we are seeing on our casework trends. Staffing will need to be increased over the next few years.
- Chief Chamberlain would like to talk about DNA. When he was here at his first board meeting, there was talk about DNA and how it is set up. It is something he is concerned about. He wants to make sure we keep up our DNA processing. How are we looking at DNA processing are we looking at it from the severity of the crime from the harm index or are all cases equivalent across the board. It is really a two-fold question. We have to process case filing and other things we have to do but it also has to be from a point of view of public safety. Chief Chamberlain feels that it is a conversation that needs to happen as a group.
- Director Morrow said we have had conversations about this even as recently as the latest Consortium Meeting. One of the reasons the UFL was started was to have better serve and get more things done than CBI could do. If we have staffing to get things done in real day-to-day time, we absolutely would. We have the capability to prioritize but everything we prioritize, deprioritizes everything else.
- While we can prioritize crimes to a certain extent, we do also have to be mindful that we are dealing with stakeholders from three different jurisdictions that all need to have their constituents honored. You can look at the numbers right now and see who we are doing casework for and how it is coming in and compare that to your own crime rates. For DNA we automatically pull child sex assaults to the top of the pile, we prioritize sex assaults to the point that we are complying with House Bill 1020 and make sure those are being worked within 6 months as resources allow. We were unfortunate to lose very seasoned examiners last year due to personal decisions. One stayed in the DNA field, and one moved into research. Every time we lose an analyst; it is up to 18 months before we have another analyst trained and working case work. DNA is struggling, we lost 2 of the 5 analysts we had working full time, we have 2 in training and one experience coming in over the summer. We will always have ebbs and flows like any lab, we try to process cases 1st in, 1st out but sometimes we are not capable of that.
- Chief Chamberlain asked if DNA is processed based on violent crime and then property crimes?
- Director Morrow said we operate 1st in 1st out except for child sex assaults, making sure all SANE Kits meet legislation, if we have extenuation information on cases; homicide cases and violent cases usually have a significant amount of evidence that a property crime will not. Our analysts do the very best they can, remembering we only have 3 analysts working case work at the present time. Every case that leaves this building gets signed off on my 3 people, the analyst, the technical reviewer and the administrative reviewer. It leaves us very short staffed in DNA, so we prioritize based on the information we have.
- Chief Chamberlain said this is when we need to complete an analysis and see if our staffing needs have stayed up with what the DNA caseload is reflecting we need. That is a discussion the BoD needs to look at and say we need to give some more money and push more funds into the lab to be

consistent with the objective of the lab as far as public safety. The way we prioritize now is problematic. It is not a fault with the lab, but more a reflection on the lab not having enough analysts to push through to make it happen. What seemed great in 2020 is not sufficient in 2025 based on the amount of workflow coming into the lab. It is something as a BoD that needs to be looked at and say we need to add staff to meet our objectives.

- Director Morrow said before we lost our trained analysts, our backlog was very good. We were maintaining a very good turnaround. We are making our way back to that. We have stakeholders from 4 agencies right now and we are doing our very best to meet demand. They are working in a batch method, where they will take a bunch of cases and run them at the same time, they add in big cases and if they have room they will add in a couple of smaller cases. Once they start a batch, they can't start another until they have completed the one they started. We don't want to burn our analysts out; we don't want to lose the great staff we have.
- Undersheriff Walcher said this is a great opportunity for the board to see what we are doing versus the historical data. Come back in a couple of months and show them the information after running an evaluation and show especially the new members of the board what work we are producing in the lab. As we move into the budget cycle for 2026, we go to the agencies and potentially ask for more FTEs for this lab so we can complete the work to meet the demands.
- Director Morrow said as a sidenote Chief Chamberlain, there is a whole packet of stats, listed by year, by agency, by discipline, by case type, by item number. We can pull these numbers on demand if you would like.
- DC Hildebrand said, he knows items are tested in batches, but what is the process for deciding what is tested and when. How is it determined who will testify? Why are some items tested at different times? They will get a couple of items tested, they get results back, now with the staffing issues, there are delays and testing is pushed out then there will be two more items tested. They find themselves going to court and not all items have been tested and there are a lot of questions about that.
- They have been getting questions from DAs about the test delays. What is that process for testing? What is the communication protocol? Is somebody from the lab communicating with the detectives? Here is the reason we are not testing those items and here is the person who will testify in court.
- Director Morrow said, we do what we can to triage cases, there is not a lab in the world who test every piece of evidence for every case they have, nobody has the resources to do that. Our analysts are very aware of what is the most productive evidence. Not every case is a DNA case, not every case is a forensic case. We wish they all were because if you can throw some science at a jury, they love it. There would always be a desire for more.
- We do our best to answer the investigative questions up front as quickly as possible. Sometimes it is that you don't have a name. Let's test the most likely items to get you a name. Then they can move forward from there, so there is some back and forth we do our best to explain why we test certain items.

- Cartridge cases are terrible items of evidence, if there is any other evidence in your case, that is what we want to start with. Cartridges may be the most important item to you, but it is not going to help us, help you. Once we have a name, we can test the evidence that isn't that great but without a name, we aren't going to be able to give you anything. Focusing on Latent Prints because the database is larger than the DNA database, we try to prioritize what is going to give you the quickest information. We are absolutely willing to do multiple rounds of testing, but we are short staffed. If we can get the information as to why a piece of evidence is super important, that is helpful to the analyst.
- We just held a class on how we find the best biological evidence or the best latent print evidence the most likely to have a result is not always what you and your investigators are going to want to hear. It is unfortunate and if it was magic and not science we would all be thrilled. We have our limitations, so we must prioritize the best use of resources. We never hesitate to go back to something. When you submit it often takes us days to find out what is the best evidence. If you have already processed it, we need the lifts and the swabs not the item. We get things in the lab that have already been processed it is about improving communication it is something we have been working on.
- This summer we did classes for all of patrol. We were teaching those out on patrol what they should be looking out for so hopefully when they move up through the ranks, those things will be easier. It will never be a perfect system.
- Chief Chamberlain said it is not about what we are doing in the lab, it is about are we being consistent with the workload and whether we are staying consistent with the personnel to support that. Crime changes over time, the amount of crime changes over time, people in the community and the size of the community, census information changes, they want to be sure we are doing an analysis to keep up on that.
- Chief Chamberlain asked Mayor Coffman if he had any questions? How long does it take CBI to complete some of these tests we are talking about.
- Director Morrow said CBI is currently running over 500 days to turn around a SANE Kit.
- Mayor Coffman asked if they should expect a formal proposal at the next board meeting? Director Morrow asked if they would like a formal proposal for staffing or would they like what we anticipate our potential needs are based on the data? It makes a difference if it is added to the agenda as a voting item.
- ❖ *Chemistry is running without a backlog.*
- ❖ *Questioned Documents run without a backlog.*
- ❖ *Latent Prints our backlog is down to 3 ½ months. Because Latent Prints work a case at a time, they have the capability to prioritize much easier than DNA.*
- ❖ *DNA is prioritized based on certain criteria. Is there a court date coming up? Is something desperately needed for disclosure? Is it an emergency public safety issue? Every case is*

important, and we wish we could treat every victim with the same priority. We do our best to get the major crimes, but we also have to do our due diligence with all three agencies. We only have 3 analysts working cases right now. It is important to remember every case that leaves this building has been signed off by 3 different analysts, the analyst, the technical reviewer and the administrative reviewer. They are doing the very best they can. It leaves us very short staffed in DNA and we prioritize based on the information we have.

- Chief Chamberlain said he understands the process, but it is now that we need to do an analysis and see if our staffing is enough to meet our needs and it obviously isn't. We need to see what the agencies want to do as far as public safety goes, if we are struggling to prioritize cases it's problematic. What seemed great in 2020 might not seem stellar in 2025 based on the amount of workflow coming into the lab.
- Every time we lose a body we are looking at 18 months to have another one trained. We try to do first in first out, chemistry runs without backlog, QD runs without a backlog. LP because they work a case at a time, Latent Print evidence is a lot easier to prioritize than DNA. We do our best to prioritize.

- **Contract Quality Assurance Administrator update – Director Morrow**

- We have acquired outside help with Quality Assurance through a contract position. Every BoD meeting we would like to give an update on how that is being handled and what has been accomplished. Brooke Arnone has completed our new workflows, and we are in the testing process. With our current system, although we document well, it is hard to see trends and evaluate the severity of issues. Our system just wasn't designed for that. Brooke has built an entire new system that we can apply retroactively so we can track and better identify trends. We will be able to sort by problem type, unit, etc. We will be able to pull the data quickly to better identify trends. She has been working very diligently, and we expect to be up and running very soon.

- **23rd Judicial District Discussion – Board**

- Undersheriff Walcher said there was a lengthy discussion from the last meeting about the makeup of the voting members on the board of directors. To have a baseline, when the UFL started we had 3 CEOs, one from each agency, 1 Commissioner, 1 citizen from Douglas County, 1 DA and a 1 Mayor. Since we added the 23rd Judicial District there has been a long discussion regarding the makeup of the board.
- Undersheriff Walcher said he feels it is important the CEOs of the law enforcement agencies are on the board; it is also important that a city council member or a commissioner from the 3 entities are also on the board. The discussion continues, what do we do now that we have two district attorneys?
- Chief Chamberlain said Aurora would prefer to keep the Mayor as the City representative. Undersheriff Walcher also endorsed Commissioner Van Winkle for Douglas County, Commissioner Baker for Arapahoe County. Are there any discussions for the DA's?
- Aurora Legal representative Julie Heckman said the discussion last meeting involved there being an even number of votes if both DAs are added to be voting members. Undersheriff Walcher said he agreed but if it was a tied vote, there would be a tiebreaker.

- Julie said she looked back at the original IGA, she doesn't believe anything has been amended since then, in the event of a tied vote the vote fails. That would be able to be changed if the board feels they want to change that. Until it is changed, any vote resulting in a tie would fail. There is also a specific provision about additional parties, if any other law enforcement wants to join, there must be unanimous approval of the existing parties as a precondition of any additional entity joining. If the governing body of the additional entity approves participation, the additional party must first pay a sum as determined by the board. The original IGA continues to talk about cost sharing and what would happen with a new entity coming in.
- Chief Chamberlain asked if the only 3 entities putting money into the UFL are the 3 law enforcement agencies?
- Director Morrow said the 18th Judicial District although part of the MOP, not the IGA does provide a Firearms Examiner for the Lab. They also previously paid for legal representation for the Lab.
- Chief Chamberlain asked if the 17th Judicial District does the same, Director Morrow said the 17th doesn't participate in the Lab operations.
- Julie said the terms of the IGA state the parties, which is the 3 law enforcement agencies being the ones who decide if another entity could join, and then the board would decide on the cost sharing to the interested party.
- DA Brauchler said they would like to be a member of the board. He also understands there has to be some sort of a buy in, he doesn't know what that would look like. He would need to go back to his county commissioners and have a conversation.
- DA Padden said she agrees the 23rd should be a part of the lab.
- Undersheriff Walcher said he does believe the 23rd should be a part of the board and would suggest that the board finds a way to make that happen. DA Brauchler doesn't necessarily have to be a financial contributor, however, Undersheriff Walcher feels he should be.
- Chief Chamberlain said he will be very candid, he does believe the 23rd should have some "skin in the game" to be a part of the Lab. He feels the buy-in is very important. Chief Chamberlain would like to see an analysis of how time and resources are used. Chief Chamberlain is concerned that if we add more entities with more requests, and they are all bringing different amounts to the table, how are those cases being worked. There is a concern over violence vs property and how the delegation of cases is being assigned. The pool gets bigger, the amount of funding gets smaller, and we are struggling with processing. We need to be very cognizant of it as it will put extra stress and have a greater impact on the lab.
- Director Morrow said there is a summary in the folders, it shows all of the requests across the years from the non-parent agencies. Most of those cases are; if you received those services before the inception of the lab, you still receive those services now. i.e. Greenwood Village still receives Latent Print evidence processed. The majority of the requests that come in from the 18th the actual lab request submitted are almost entirely chemistry cases, generally because the drug case has not been assigned to an investigator at the home agency. The DA's will submit the request. Any other requests submitted by the DA's are minimal.

- Undersheriff Walcher asked if the board wanted to add another board member, what would it entail.
- Julie Heckman said according to the IGA, the governing bodies, Aurora, Arapahoe and Douglas would need to provide unanimous approval to add an additional entity as a precondition. In order to do that, you would need to take information back to your Commissions or City Council. It would be helpful to take the data that would help with making that decision. A special meeting could be held to get that data. “It would need to be a written amendment to the agreement that at minimum calculates cost sharing; modifying any existing cost sharing that may be impacted by the addition and incorporates the additional entity into the annual budget recommendations and approvals.”
- If you want to look at numbers before the budget cycle now it might be a good time to look at adding other entities. It would be a good time to do it now, before the budget cycle is completed. It might be a good idea to try to do that before the next meeting since you are looking at making some changes to the IGA.
- Director Morrow asked if Julie could clarify the IGA change vs the MOU? Currently we have an MOU with the 18th. Would we need both a change to the IGA and the MOP? Julie said it could all be handled through the IGA depending on the amount of lead time you need to present it the City or Commissioners.
- Undersheriff Walcher asked if there was any opposition to having the 23rd District joining the board? Chief McKlem said he is conceptually fine with it, depending on the level of financial commitment. Chief Chamberlain said he would like to move forward to further conversations with the idea of bringing the 23rd Judicial District into the lab.

- **Update on COSAK (Colorado Sexual Assault Kit tracking) – Director Morrow**

- Director Morrow said she doesn’t have a lot of new information, known as COSAK, it is expected to be implemented at the beginning of July. Several meetings have taken place already, this is a state project, not a lab project. It allows victims of sexual assault to know where their case is in the process. CBI should be getting the software to begin testing soon. They are working on getting all the kits across the State barcoded. This will be the tracking system. This project involves all hospitals that collect kits as well as law enforcement. There should be outreach to all the agencies shortly with what will be needed. The lab is already working on what we will need to be able to pull the data from the system. It will track all information from the date of the exam to when it was submitted to law enforcement agencies, the date submitted to a lab, the date testing is completed and whether anything goes into the database. We are on track for July, please let us know if any questions come up. The software being used was developed by the Oregon state police.

- **Questions regarding new legal representation for the lab – Director Morrow**

- This is based on all the conversations that have been had over the past few meetings with amending the IGA. Do we want to pursue an outside entity to represent the lab in legal matters? We don’t want to be a burden on Aurora and with a possible amendment to the IGA should we put the RFP back out? In the IGA it states, the board shall consult legal advice for legal representation of the lab. Director Morrow would like to open the subject up for discussion. Julie said in 2022 there was an RFP put out City Attorney’s office. In the IGA it says the board shall consult with legal counsel from a qualified attorney licensed to practice law in the state of Colorado. Upon approval by the

board the fiscal agent shall have the legal authority to contractually retain and compensate a general legal counsel for the lab for the purpose of providing legal advice regarding any legal issues related to operations of the lab. The City Attorney's Office helped to put the RFP together and worked with each of the legal counsels for the counties. The board has the discretion to accept legal services from a qualified staff attorney from one of the parties.

- Undersheriff Walcher would suggest meeting with the County's attorneys and asking them if we go outside, or if the Board is willing to stay with the agency. Julie said if you want an amendment to the IGA, they will reach out to each agency to make those. Undersheriff Walcher said the Board appreciates the City Attorney's Office for helping in the interim.

5. New Business:

Fiscal budget presentation for 2026 – John Schneebeck

- The spreadsheet send out by John contains the preliminary actuals for 2024. There was a column for 2026 in preparation for the recommendations of the board. column 2026 fiscal adds, splits for general consumables, based on 2024 use by the agencies.
- Director Morrow put the spreadsheet on the monitors. Please let John know if you would like to discuss it further. The sheet shows splits for general vs consumables for DNA
- Undersheriff Walcher asked John to walk everybody through the spreadsheet. This document has columns for each agency across the top. It has a list of all FTE employees (30 actuals). It shows the fiscal budget for 2025 and has a column for 2026. It shows contributions for the consumables for DNA and others as well as a list of lab wide supplies and services. It contains Grant information; we had Grant actuals of \$351,000 in 2024. We have another \$219,000 in Grant funds for 2025. Applications will be processed in 2025 based on the Director and the grant specialist in Aurora. It shows IT support for the lab as well as building maintenance. Estimates for capital purchases are listed. The most recent item was the construction on the Evidence area completed by Douglas County which was \$134,000.
- Diane Romero from Douglas County asked a question of John. The non-DNA consumables for DC in 2026 are projected to go up 68% does that number make sense based on the cases 2024. The splits are provided in a document from Director Morrow based on the requests. The second page of the document is general expenses.
- Undersheriff Walcher asked if the budget managers from the Counties have the same document. The information for this document is shared by Director Morrow. Diane said she has looked at the spreadsheet but has not looked at the documents shared by Director Morrow, but she sees that is where the numbers are coming from. Olga was asked if she has reviewed the document, and she replied she had.
- John Schneebeck said the information provided in January is important to review if you are looking to add any items for 2026 budget, you need to be prepared for that so they can build a priority list and bring those items to the April meeting. It seems we will be looking at requests for the 23rd and with DNA.
- Undersheriff Walcher asked the BoD if they had any other items to discuss. They did not.

6. Executive Session (if needed):

- No executive session was needed. Chief Chamberlain asked for an executive session. Julie Heckman said nothing had been posted on the agenda for an executive session so one could not be held during this meeting. It will be added to the agenda for the April meeting.

7. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn presented by Undersheriff Walcher, there was not a second.

- Next Meeting – April 23 / 1:30 – 3.30 @ UFL
- Meeting concluded at 2.42 pm