

Illinois Forensic Science Commission

Meeting Minutes

10 June 2026

I. **Call to order**

Chairperson Claire Dragovich called to order the meeting of the Illinois Forensic Science Commission at approximately 10:00 a.m. on June 10, 2026. The meeting was held in-person at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, 1206 W. Gregory Room 1619, Urbana, Illinois. The meeting also was available via Web Ex.

II. **Roll-call**

1. The following Forensic Science Commission members and staff were present:

1. Claire Dragovich, Chairperson
2. Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, Member (via Web Ex)
3. Jillian Baker, Member
4. Jeff Buford, Vice Chairperson
5. Katherine Drummond, Member (via Web Ex)
6. Judge Art Hill (ret.), Member
7. Dr. Cris Hughes, Member
8. Jeanne Richeal, Member (via Web Ex)
9. Peter St. Andre, Member
10. Caryn Tucker, Member (via Web Ex)
11. Carrie Ward, Member
12. Robin Woolery, Director Designee (via Web Ex)
13. Amy Watroba, Executive Director

2. Quorum confirmed.

3. The following members of the public were present via Web Ex:

1. Maya Dukmasova
2. Gina Havlik
3. Jan Johnson*
4. Kevin McMahon
5. Amanda Shanbaum
6. Lindsay Simpson
7. Timothy Tripp
8. Sarah Ware

*Denotes participant who joined meeting after roll call.

III. **Review/Adoption of Minutes**

1. The motion to adopt the minutes from the March 11, 2026 Commission meeting was unanimously approved (1 member absent).

IV. **Executive Director Summary**

1. General:

- a. ED Watroba informed Commission Members that renovations are complete on the auditorium at the Illinois State Police Forensic Science Center at Chicago. As such, the Commission will hold its September 9th meeting at that location.
- b. ED Watroba reminded Commission Members of the annual One Net training requirement.
- c. Members submitting for reimbursements for FY2026 should submit as soon as possible to ensure processing before the June 30th processing deadline. A new point of contact was provided to Commission Members for reimbursement requests.
- d. ED Watroba provided an update on her efforts to create a LinkedIn account for the Commission.
- e. National Forensic Science Week (NFSW) is celebrated annually during the third full week in September (September 20-26, 2026). The event is dedicated to recognizing the role forensic science plays in criminal investigations, exonerating the innocent, and cold case investigations. ED Watroba hopes to push out content highlighting the Commission's work via the Commission's LinkedIn page during NFSW.
- f. ED Watroba will be soliciting content from Commission Members and subcommittees for the Commission's first annual report.

2. Legal & Legislative Update:

- a. ED Watroba summarized the appellate court decision in *People v. Tyrese Bell*, 2026 IL App (1st) 231344 (March 31, 2026).
- b. Legislation from the last session will be discussed as an agenda item later in the meeting.

3. Education/Outreach Update:

- a. ED Watroba was a guest speaker at a high school forensic science class in May.
- b. ED Watroba gave a presentation about the Commission at the Illinois Division of the International Association for Identification (IAI) in April. Following the presentation, she was invited to present on the Commission at the Indiana Division of the IAI's annual conference in October.

- c. National Association of Forensic Science Boards (NAFSB) Annual Conference: The 2026 NAFSB Conference will take place from October 13-15, 2026 near Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

V. Subcommittee Reports

1. Quality Systems Subcommittee: Claire Dragovich, subcommittee chairperson, shared that the subcommittee met three times to finalize the 2025 Significant Non-Conformity Report which will be discussed and presented for possible Commission approval during the discussion portion of the meeting.
2. Training and Career Development Subcommittee: Caryn Tucker, subcommittee chairperson, summarized current subcommittee projects. The subcommittee has met twice since the last Commission meeting and continues its work on the remaining videos for the “Fundamentals of Forensic Science Video Series.” The remaining disciplines (Toxicology, DNA, and Trace) are in the content-development phase and may be ready for Commission review at the September meeting. ED Watroba and the subcommittee are tracking the number of views for the posted videos, and all videos show an increase in views over time. The subcommittee has begun discussion on creation of a training video for forensic scientists on the topic of ethics and using the Commission as a convenor for stakeholders by hosting a speaker series and/or panel discussions centered on continuing education for forensic scientists.
3. Public Policy Subcommittee: Katie Drummond, subcommittee chairperson, reported that the subcommittee met twice since the last Commission meeting. The subcommittee discussed the CODIS Access Modernization Act which is pending federal legislation that proposes expansion of access to CODIS by allowing private labs to directly upload DNA profiles to NDIS. The subcommittee also reviewed and discussed position statements from national forensic organizations (CFSO and ASCLD) on the general topic of CODIS access. The subcommittee will continue to monitor developments related to the Act and discuss issues related to DNA databases at future meetings.
4. Technology Subcommittee: Jeff Buford, subcommittee chairperson, reported that the subcommittee is exploring a new topic, namely quality management systems (QMS). At the last subcommittee meeting, the subcommittee heard a presentation from two subject matter experts on the use of these applications. The speakers provided an overview of the features and uses of these systems for quality matters. The subcommittee will continue to delve into this broad topic including having discussions about how particular applications can assist labs with meeting regulatory and accreditation requirements.
5. Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) Subcommittee: Subcommittee chairperson Cris Hughes reported that the subcommittee met twice since the last Commission meeting and continued drafting the FAQ

resource document for law enforcement agencies. The subcommittee expects to have the FAQ document complete for review at the next Commission meeting.

6. Drugs Subcommittee: Subcommittee chairperson Jill Baker reported that the subcommittee met three times since the last Commission meeting. The subcommittee is working on creating the first quarterly report for publication as discussed at the last Commission meeting. The subcommittee also is preparing for the next legislative cycle by evaluating and comparing the Illinois Controlled Substances Act to federal statutes and by reviewing bills related to kratom to decide how best to provide guidance to legislators during the next General Assembly.

VI. **Issues for Discussion**

1. Discussion and possible action on Quality Systems Subcommittee's Annual Report of Significant Non-Conformities for 2025:

Ms. Dragovich thanked the members of the Quality Systems Subcommittee and the participating laboratories for engaging in the process of preparing the annual report and opened the floor to discussion and questions.

ED Watroba then opened the floor to public comment prior to the vote. No public comment was offered.

A motion was made to approve the Quality Systems Subcommittee's Annual Report of Significant Non-Conformities for 2025 subject to non-substantive changes by ED Watroba. The motion passed following a roll call vote (12 yes votes, 0 no votes/abstentions, 1 Member absent).

2. Discussion and possible action on revised Commission Bylaws:

ED Watroba summarized the proposed revisions to the Commission's Bylaws and opened the floor to discussion and questions.

ED Watroba then opened the floor to public comment prior to the vote. Mr. McMahon raised a question about when and where the ethics module being developed by the Training and Career Development Subcommittee will be discussed. ED Watroba and Ms. Dragovich asked Mr. McMahon to pose his question during the general public comment portion later in the meeting. No public comment was offered on the topic of the Commission Bylaws.

A motion was made to approve the proposed changes to the Commission's Bylaws. The motion passed following a roll call vote (12 yes votes, 0 no votes/abstentions, 1 Member absent).

3. Discussion of 104th General Assembly legislation and 105th General Assembly legislative initiatives:

ED Watroba gave a presentation summarizing the bills related to forensic science that the Commission tracked during the 104th General Assembly and providing the status of those bills. ED Watroba also provided a timeline for the final Fall veto session and the beginning of the 105th General Assembly and discussed the ideal timeline for the Commission to draft language related to forensic science for legislation in the 105th General Assembly.

The Commission discussed possible legislative topics for Commission input including: Kratom, controlled substances, and legislation related to DNA databases such as CODIS.

4. Update and discussion on THC testing at UIC Analytical Forensic Testing Laboratory (AFTL):

ED Watroba provided an update on topics related to THC testing at UIC/AFTL. First, ED Watroba noted that UIC/AFTL have not responded to or otherwise communicated with the Commission about the statement and recommendation the Commission issued in response to the UIC Report. Media coverage of the story included a comment from UIC that acknowledged the Commission's statement and recommendation.

Next, the Commission discussed what action the Commission may want to take next related to UIC/AFTL. The Quality Systems Subcommittee has discussed drafting a supplemental 2024 Significant Non-Conformity Report that could encompass information/events that occurred after the 2024 SNC Report was issued. ED Watroba noted that the Commission's enabling statute specifically provides in subsection (b)(4) that the Commission shall review significant non-conformities with the sound practice of forensic science documented by publicly funded ISO 17025 accredited laboratories and offer recommendations for the correction thereof. ED Watroba suggested that a supplemental 2024 SNC Report would fall under several of the Commission's enumerated duties including that specific charge.

The Commission then discussed the importance and impactful nature of this issue and the importance of transparency to underscore public trust in the forensic science community. If the Commission issues a supplemental report, the original report will remain archived on the Commission's website. There were 2 SNCs included in AFTL's 2024 report to the Commission and the UIC Report includes information related to both of those SNCs. The Commission may want to discuss the information in the UIC Report and/or make additional recommendations about the corrective actions AFTL took in relation to the 2 SNCs. Based on the discussion, the Quality Systems Subcommittee will move forward with its plans to draft a supplemental 2024 SNC Report.

VII. Housekeeping Items

None.

VIII. Public Comment

ED Watroba responded to the question previously raised by Mr. McMahon by stating that the Training and Career Development Subcommittee will discuss the ethics project at future subcommittee meetings. The current plan is to develop a training video similar to the fundamentals videos that could be used by forensic scientists state-wide.

Ms. Dukmasova offered public comments about the webinar that Injustice Watch will host on June 23rd on the topic of pathways to strengthening forensic science oversight in Illinois. She stated that ED Watroba will be one of the participating speakers. Ms. Dukmasova plans to email information about the event to Commission Members. The event will be in webinar Zoom format with a Question and Answer (Q & A) portion at the end.

IX. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at the Illinois State Police Forensic Science Center at Chicago, 1941 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting also will be available via Web Ex.

X. Adjournment

Chairperson Dragovich adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:00 a.m. on June 10, 2026.