

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
July 13, 2021

The July 13, 2021 special meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened at 11:10 a.m. in the Board room of the GHC 9-1-1 headquarters at 10220 Fairbanks N. Houston Rd., Houston, Texas 77064.

Board Members Bill Anders, Mark Denman, Vergil Ratliff, Russell Rau, Dennis Storemski, Shawn Thompson, and legal counsel Phillip Berzins, Harris County Assistant Attorney were present for the special Board meeting; 22 people were in attendance.

Agenda Item 1—“Pledges of Allegiance.” The U.S. and Texas pledges of allegiance were recited.

Agenda Item 2—“Citizens Appearances.” There were no citizens wishing to appear before the Board.

Agenda Item 3—“Presentation and Action: Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO) Public Safety Communications Division Presentation of Proposal Requesting Funding for Staffing of 9-1-1 Call Takers; and Action by the GHC 9-1-1 Board Directing Staff How to Proceed with the Request.” Mr. Heffernan stated that GHC 9-1-1 staff received a different version of FBCSO report with a change in numbers and supplemental background information. FBCSO Public Safety Communications Manager, Meghan Rivas introduced FBCSO Major Manuel Zamora and Captain Nasir Abbasi (Board Member Vergil Ratliff arrived at 11:15 a.m.). Ms. Rivas began her presentation by highlighting the critical recommendations provided by Fitch & Associates’ consultant report. She stated that Fitch & Associates were hired by Fort Bend County (FBC) Commissioners Court in October, 2019 to review their daily operations and EMS/Fire call data due to complaints made by Fire and EMS services that calls were not being processed fast enough.

Ms. Rivas stated that Fitch & Associates completed their review in February, 2020, which included several recommendations from high to medium priority. The following recommendations were made; 1) to increase the number of staffing, one supervisor to six dispatch personnel. 2.) Discontinue practice of cradling 9-1-1 handset between neck and shoulder to prevent neck and shoulder injuries, and integrate 9-1-1 and 10-digit telephone system into noise cancelling headset

connection(s) at all call-taking positions. 3). Opportunities for effectiveness can be achieved with the integration of an Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) at all the call-taking positions. Lastly, detailed analysis need to be performed to solidify recommendations to increase staffing based on call intake demand. Next, Ms. Rivas mentioned that implementing the ACD system at FBCSO has been a challenge because it requires additional staff positions to support the ACD system to ensure that no 9-1-1 calls are on hold. Ms. Rivas added that even after the Consultant's report; FBCSO requested for additional staffing to FBC Commissioners Court but was not approved due to the financial impact by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This year, FBCSO has again requested funding for staffing to FBC Commissioners Court, but have not yet received approval. Board member Ratliff asked about the time frame of their fiscal year budget. Ms. Rivas stated that their fiscal year budget runs from October to September. Chairman Rau asked GHC staff if the ACD system is installed at FBCSO. GHC 9-1-1 Service Officer, Roger Hauck answered that the ACD system is not installed at FBCSO. Chairman Rau asked what system is FBCSO currently using and how their calls are processed. Mr. Hauck stated that FBCSO is currently using the "ring-all" system, when a 9-1-1 call goes through, the 9-1-1 call goes to all the 9-1-1 call-taking stations and the first call-taker who answers gets the call. He compared the ACD system as an equal call distributor that automatically receives incoming calls and distributes them to call-takers with the longest idle time. Its purpose is to help centers manage large call volumes. Furthermore, Mr. Hauck addressed questions from the Board, regarding how the ACD system work.

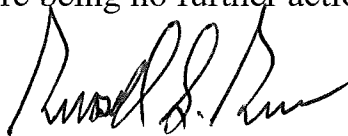
Ms. Rivas proceeded to present the FBCSO call volume. She mentioned that she provided additional document that shows FBCSO call data to Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Fonseca. Chairman Rau noted high 10-digit call volume. Ms. Rivas stated that FBCSO do not have a 3-1-1 non-emergency number which explains why they have high 10-digit call volume. She highlighted that FBCSO is not requesting funding for 10-digit positions, but by implementing the ACD system it requires staffing for 9-1-1 call-taking positions. Furthermore, Ms. Rivas continued to discuss the benefits and needs for an ACD system, she stated that the ACD system requires sufficient staffing and the importance for supervisor positions to monitor call-takers logged in to 9-1-1 and 10-digit lines to maintain service levels. Ms. Rivas reported that FBCSO used the Erlang C formula (95% of calls being answered within 15 seconds) to determine their staffing needs for the ACD system. Ms. Rivas stated FBCSO is requesting funding from GHC 9-1-1 for 24 9-1-1 call-taking positions and 4 supervisors. The cost of staffing would be 1,977,166.76. Chairman Rau explained that GHC 9-1-1 is currently pursuing a wireless fee increase due to a tight budget.

Board Member Storemski moved to authorize GHC 9-1-1 staff to determine the amount of funding needed to staff FBCSO to support the ACD system. Board Secretary Anders seconded the motion. Chairman Rau inquired about the position

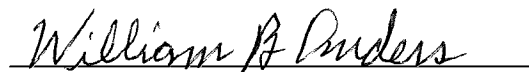
of the Fort Bend County (FBC) Commissioners Court in regards the request for funding. Board Member Denman added that two months ago FBC Commissioners Court approved \$157 Million for projects, according to County Judge KP George, “which includes many items that had nothing to do with the County’s recovery from the pandemic (COVID Relief and American Rescue Act).” Board Member Denman expressed his appreciation to the FBCSO representatives for their presentation to the Board, and commented that he was displeased that FBC Commissioners Court had an opportunity this year to address FBCSO’s critical need for funding, yet they did not. Chairman Rau repeated the motion made by Board Member Storemski and seconded by Board Secretary Anders; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Fonseca stated that the proposed budget presented at the August 25, 2021, Board meeting will include FBCSO funding request. Chairman Rau expressed his concern regarding FBC Commissioners Court taking money out of FBCSO budget. Board Member Ratliff asked if FBCSO talked to Commissioners Court regarding their funding request to GHC 9-1-1. Major Zamora stated that FBCSO are in the middle of their budget cycle and the Executive Command have spoken to the finance director about the request for additional personnel. There’s no definite number of personnel positions that will get approved; however, there’s a possibility that FBCSO might get some additional funding from FBC Commissioners Court.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary