

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
June 23, 2021

The June 23, 2021 meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened at 1:03 p.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, Russell Rau, Dennis Storemski, Vergil Ratliff, and legal counsel Tommy Ramsey, Harris County Assistant Attorney, were present for the Board meeting; Board Member Shawn Thompson did not attend the meeting; 21 people were in attendance.

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

Agenda Item 2—“Approval of Minutes.” The minutes of the Board meeting on May 26, 2021 and the special Board meeting on June 7, 2021 were approved with a motion by Board Secretary Anders and seconded by Board Member Ratliff. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 3—“Citizens Appearances.” Director of Public Safety and Homeland Security, City of Houston, George Buenik announced that on June 12, 2021 Mayor Sylvester Turner appointed Robert Mock to serve as Director of the Houston Emergency Center (HEC), where Mr. Mock had been the interim Director since February 1, 2021. Mr. Buenik stated that any questions or concerns the Board and GHC 9-1-1 staff could reach out to him. Mr. Buenik added that the HEC is looking into hiring 12-14 new call-takers and received approval from the City of Houston.

Next, Mr. Buenik reported that a perimeter security incident happened at the HEC, a van drove through the exit gate (resulting in the tires being punctured by the Spike Barrier System), drove into and around the lot, then back out. The incident is being investigated by HPD and the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Lastly, Mr. Buenik mentioned that HEC is preparing for hurricane season. Mr. Mock, HPD, and HFD are reviewing emergency operation plans and testing equipment. Chairman Rau expressed the importance of performing a hurricane drill and encouraged everyone to have contingency plans. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Buenik to keep GHC 9-1-1 and the Board updated on the incident.

Taken Out of Order: Agenda Item 8—“Transmittal and Discussion of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network’s Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ending December 31, 2020 .” Chief Financial Officer Tino Fonseca introduced Auditor Lupe Garcia with the auditing firm Whitley Penn LLP. Mr. Garcia provided an overview presentation of the financial statements, audit results, financial highlights, and required communications. Mr. Garcia advised that a clean and unmodified opinion of the audit was issued. Board Member Denman asked how often GHC 9-1-1 changes auditors. Mr. Fonseca stated that GHC 9-1-1 has a five year contract with Whitley Penn and this is year three of the contract. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Garcia if he examined the GHC 9-1-1 low earning investments in consolidation with Harris County investment policy and/or recommended any changes. Mr. Garcia stated that low earning interest rates are currently common in all local government entities and are limited to how the funds are invested to comply with the Public Funds Invested Act (PFIA). There being no further questions, Mr. Garcia concluded the audit report.

Agenda Item 4—“Financial Report.” Chief Financial Officer Tino Fonseca provided a brief overview of the monthly financial report totals ending May 31, 2021 as follows:

- Cash and cash equivalents \$ 12.3 million
- Invested funds for Operations \$ 10.0 million
- Liabilities \$ 7.9 million
- Receipts \$ 19.1 million
- Disbursements \$ 16.6 million

Next, Mr. Fonseca provided a brief overview of the remaining budget balance report, Receipts and Disbursements report, the 9-1-1 service fee revenue, and cash expenditures trend-line charts. Chairman Rau inquired about the meeting dates that will take place in preparation for the GHC 9-1-1 2022 budget. Mr. Fonseca stated that the draft budget would be presented at the August, 2021 Board meeting to gather the Board’s input before final approval is requested at the September, 2021 Board meeting. Mr. Fonseca added that last year (2020), Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO) Emergency Communications Division requested funding from GHC 9-1-1 for 9-1-1 call-taking positions, but then delayed it for this year. Mr. Fonseca stated that yesterday he received an email from FBCSO expressing their interest to present their request to the Board. Mr. Fonseca stated that he will forward the email to the Board. Board Secretary Anders expressed the importance on implementing criteria, and limitations on future funding requests from PSAPs. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Ramsey if he would look into whether there was a statute that would prohibit or limit GHC 9-1-1 to address FBCSO funding request. Mr. Ramsey stated he would look into it. The Board agreed to schedule an in-person Special Board meeting in July, 2021 to discuss the FBCSO presentation and for the Board to provide direction to GHC 9-1-1 staff on how to handle the FBCSO request.

Agenda Item 5—“Executive Director Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Legislative/Regulatory and Administrative Matters.” Executive Director, Stan Heffernan provided an update on the FCC Z-axis. The FCC extended the deadline to April 3, 2022 for providers to comply with the Z-axis location accuracy metric of +/- 3 meters to identify indoor wireless 9-1-1 calls. Mr. Heffernan highlighted that the FCC fined the three major providers 100k for missing the original date. He mentioned that 90 days after the April 3, 2022 providers must report progress on dispatchable location and submit biannual status reports beginning June 15, 2022. Mr. Heffernan stated that GHC 9-1-1 is testing the Z-axis data and when the data becomes useful, GHC 9-1-1 will make it available to the PSAPs/SSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points/Secondary Answering Points).

Next, Mr. Heffernan briefly updated on the 9-1-1 key issues, he highlighted that HB 2911 was passed on June 16, 2021. Mr. Heffernan reported that HB 2911 created the “NG 9-1-1 Service Fund”, to be funded by anticipated federal funds from the state’s portion of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, which may be used only for the purpose of supporting deployment and reliable operation of NG 9-1-1 including the costs of equipment, operations, and administration. Mr. Heffernan mentioned that when and if the funds become available, GHC 9-1-1 and all other 9-1-1 entities can receive funding for two years 2023 and 2024. Board Member Storemski asked what the process is for GHC 9-1-1 to receive the funds. Mr. Heffernan stated that first, the Comptroller will work with the 9-1-1 entities to define the amount needed in order to set up the NG 9-1-1 Service Fund account if the funding becomes available.

Mr. Heffernan stated that the red/blue team assignments will discontinue and full staff will return back to the office on June 28, 2021. Lastly, Mr. Heffernan provided an update on Cyber Security; he reported that during COVID-19 the staff did a good job working remotely. Now that the staff will return back to the office, GHC 9-1-1 will continue to challenge the staff to practice and protect systems from threats. Mr. Heffernan added that there will be an executive session during a future Board meeting to discuss security sensitive updates.

Agenda Item 6—“Operations Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Operational Matters.” Mr. Heffernan reported that there were no internal/external P1 service issue tickets during the month of May, 2021. Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the network utilization graphs, PSAP 9-1-1 call sessions and trending charts, noting that the wireless 9-1-1 calls are very close to 90% of the total call volume. He proceeded to report on the call statistics provided by Houston Emergency Center (HEC) and Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO). Mr. Heffernan stated that HEC omitted the average speed of answer and the average duration data of 9-1-1 text messages for the month of May, 2021, because it’s currently under review. GHC 9-1-1 is working on identifying the issues on how text to 911 data is collected by the texting aggregator. GHC 9-1-1 staff will provide more information on this matter as soon as it becomes available. Mr. Heffernan reminded

everyone that texting to 9-1-1 is a slower process than a voice call. GHC 9-1-1 will continue to test and work with the two major centers to make sure that there is an accurate number to track. Board Member Denman asked Mr. Heffernan if he can look into what other 9-1-1 entities responding time is for 9-1-1 text sessions. Mr. Heffernan stated that GHC 9-1-1 will check with other 9-1-1 entities about their response time. Next, Mr. Heffernan continued with an update on the 9-1-1 call Service Level Agreement (SLA) report for all PSAPs/SSAPs, he mentioned that all call centers performed very well for the month of May, 2021. Mr. Heffernan proceeded with the training report; GHC 9-1-1 started providing a monthly training newsletter to the PSAP Managers for distribution to their call-takers as a way to review all aspects of 9-1-1 equipment training. Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the GIS/database report and the Network Operations Center (NOC) monthly case-load report he pointed out that there was a rise in incident tickets due to a maintenance window that was performed in May, 2021. Next, he reported that GHC 9-1-1 has set up contingency SSAPs for Texas Emergency Communication Center (TECC), ESD100 and ESD11 utilizing the Mobile Contingency Units/Laptops (MCU) at their designated locations in the event that Cypress Creek EMS is unable to maintain its operations until the set date of September 1, 2021. Lastly, Mr. Heffernan reported that at the October, 2019 Board meeting, the Board approved a request for GHC 9-1-1 staff to install twenty-five 9-1-1 call-taking positions, using repurposed equipment, at the High School for Law and Justice (HSLJ). The call-taking positions are being used to train students on 9-1-1 call taking and to prepare them for a career as 9-1-1 Telecommunicators in the PSAPs. Mr. Heffernan introduced Dr. Valgene Holmes, Practicum Coordinator at HSLJ, who was present to provide an update about the training program. Dr. Holmes thanked the Board and the GHC 9-1-1 staff for the installment of the 9-1-1 call-taking positions at the HSLJ, he stated that at the time the equipment deployment was completed, their training program was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He mentioned that this summer 30 students have completed the training program and went to work at the HEC. Mr. Holmes thanked GHC 9-1-1 Training Specialist, Mindi Bartee for her assistance in providing training instructions for his training program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agenda Item 7—"Public Information/Education Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Public Education Outreach Efforts." Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson reported that requests for 9-1-1 public education materials are starting to pick-up. GHC 9-1-1 has been reminding jurisdictions about the available 9-1-1 public education materials through social media and via e-mail. Ms. Clauson added that education materials were distributed to Pasadena Police Department for the Strawberry Festival on May 18, 2021. Ms. Clauson mentioned that she did some in-person presentations about 9-1-1 and GHC 9-1-1 Sign-up services. Next, Ms. Clauson reported that GHC 9-1-1 has been working with the Texas 9-1-1 Public Educators to update the children's public education materials including the 9-1-1 mascot, Cell Phone Sally, and the new Cell Phone Sally activity book on how to call 9-1-1 with a wireless phone and also 9-1-1 text service. Ms. Clauson proceeded with

an update on the 2021 media campaign. She stated that the proper use of 9-1-1 messages were advertised during TV news commercials, radio and billboards. Ms. Clauson added that she did an interview with radio company Audacity, which owns various local radio stations; that interview was released on Sunday, June 20, 2021 and also available on the Audacity website. Ms. Clauson concluded her report with snapshots of the GHC 9-1-1 social media messages and mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 added four additional digital 9-1-1 hurricane preparedness messages to the 2021 media campaign.

Agenda Item 9 Action and Recognition—“GHC 9-1-1 Employee Retirement—Recognition of the Retirement of Dan Darnell, Facilities Manager and Transmittal of a Resolution to Recognize Mr. Darnell’s Years of Service.” Chairman Rau presented a resolution for adoption acknowledging Dan’s career. Mr. Darnell thanked the GHC 9-1-1 staff and the Board for their support, leadership, and insights, and forever thankful for a great historic career he has had.

Agenda Item 10—“Announcements”. Chairman Rau announced that the next meeting of the Board of Managers is scheduled for Wednesday, August 25, 2021 and the NENA 2021 Conference & Expo is scheduled for July 25 – 29, 2021 in Columbus, OH. Ms. Hughes will contact the Board to schedule a date and time for the virtual Special Board meeting.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

Russell S. Rau, Chairman

William B. Anders, Secretary