

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
July 26, 2023

The July 26, 2023, 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 at 10220 Fairbanks N. Houston Rd., Houston, Texas 77064.

Board Members Bill Anders, Russell Rau, Mark Denman, and legal counsels Haley New and Nick Santulli, Harris County Assistant Attorneys, were present. There were 28 people in attendance.

- I. Call to Order: The U.S. and Texas pledges of allegiance were recited.
 - II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Board meeting on May 24, 2023, were approved with a motion by Board Member Denman, and second by Board Secretary Anders. Motion passed unanimously.
 - III. Citizens Comments: There were no citizens wishing to appear before the Board.
 - X. Taken out of order—Audited Financial Statements: Transmittal and Discussion of the Audited Financial Statement for Year Ending December 31, 2022.” Ms. Laura Lynch, with the accounting firm Whitley Penn, advised that an unmodified opinion of the audit was issued, which is the highest level of assurance that could be given. It indicates that GHC 9-1-1’s financial statements are materially correct. She explained the procedures that were performed to obtain that opinion; the plan, scope and timing of the audit, and noted there were no significant risks identified. The accounting policies and estimates were reviewed; the largest estimate in the financial statements relates to the Pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). There was a brief discussion on the retirement program, review of the investments, and the recommendation to improve the maintaining of human resource (HR) files. Fiscal Officer, Rick Corbitt, commented that he was approaching one year with GHC 9-1-1, and this was his first audit; he thanked the Auditor’s for their assistance throughout the process and helping him to understand governmental auditing.
- Chairman Rau introduced the new legal counsel, Ms. Haley New, Harris County Attorney’s Office. He explained the make-up of the Board of Managers; five voting members and one non-voting member (appointed by AT&T formerly Southwestern Bell) and gave the history of how the appointments were determined.

IV. Executive Director Report: Ms. Anya McInnis gave an update on the 88th Legislative Session. Two bills of interest to 9-1-1 that passed: HB 3290, initiated by the 9-1-1 Alliance—extends the deadline to spend ARPA funds, and includes a provision for new additional State funding, from the surplus funds, to be allocated the way that the wireless fees are distributed. HB 9 passed, not as originally written—it includes the appropriation of surplus to the Broadband Fund, with a portion for NextGen 9-1-1. The Broadband Fund is established by passing a constitution amendment, which will be voted on during the November 2023 elections. There was discussion on whether GHC 9-1-1 is allowed to use public information funds in support of amendment and its impact on the delivery of 9-1-1 calls. Legal Counsel Nick Santulli advised that public information could be provided, but public funds cannot be used for political advertising, such as any communication that supports or opposes a measure before voters.

Executive Director Stan Heffernan gave an overview of the organizational activity for incidents and service requests (SR) tickets for the month of June. Data charts/graphs showing total number of incidents/SR, distribution by division, priority level of tickets by division, type of tickets received daily, the percentage of all inbound calls and tickets handled for the month. Mr. Heffernan reviewed the new format on the board report; staff from each division will give updates for their area. He discussed the new configuration of board room and seating arrangement for officers, managers, and other staff members for board meetings, going forward. He mentioned that a new AV system is scheduled to be installed soon.

V. Financial Report: Fiscal Officer Richard Corbitt provided the investment report, noting that the average yield was 5.14% for the quarter ending June 30, 2023. He added that GHC 9-1-1 had received the first deposit of ARPA grant funds. The monthly financial totals ending June 30, 2023, were as follows:

• Cash and cash equivalents	\$20.0 million
• Invested funds for Operations	\$10.0 million
• Liabilities	\$12.1 million
• Receipts	\$24.1 million
• Disbursements	\$23.6 million

He reported the overtime expenses for Houston Emergency Center (HEC) and Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO). Mr. Corbitt reviewed the remaining budget balance sheet, noting that interest income continues to have favorable variance due to higher interest rates. He highlighted that the total amounts for receipts and disbursements were about even, thus, expenditures will need to be watched closely during the budget process. Mr. Corbitt advised that he would be submitting another reimbursement from ARPA funds on

August 1, 2023. Then, requests will be submitted on a quarterly basis throughout the extension period, which gives an opportunity to recoup the amount that GHC 9-1-1 was allotted. He concluded with an overview of the receipts and disbursements graphs. There was an in-depth discussion about the amount GHC 9-1-1 was approved for in ARPA funds, the time frame allotted to request the approved amount, what expenditures can the funds be requested for, and how the funds are quantified in the budget. There was a brief discussion on the cap for residential/business wireline fees.

- VI. 9-1-1 Services Division Report: Roger Hauck, 9-1-1 Services Officer, provided an overview of the divisional activity for the month of June—the number and types of service requests that were handled, their priority level classification, and scheduling of internal/external maintenance and upgrades of systems, which are performed at off-peak times or overnight. He reviewed the 9-1-1 call sessions charts and the PSAP call volume reports, noting the increase in 9-1-1 calls. Board Member Denman mentioned the year-to-date percentage totals for HCSO and FBCSO need to be revised. Mr. Hauck pointed out in the Call Center SLA report, that Hedwig Village was at 100%. Board Secretary Anders inquired if there was a way to verify if telephone companies (telcos) had diversified routing for landline calls. Mr. Hauck advised that there is diversification in cell phones calls, and the challenge is with wireline. A letter is sent to the telcos annually, stating GHC 9-1-1's expectations on diversity and diversified routing for 9-1-1 calls. Go forward, a request for acknowledgment will also be requested.

The training updates for May and June were provided. Board Member Denman suggested that data comparison of training be included in the report. Mindi Bartee, PSAP Information Officer, explained the difference between Self-paced and Online training. Chairman Rau requested to see a demonstration of the self-paced and online courses. Staff will setup a technology demonstration for a future Board meeting.

Sonya Clauson, Public Information Officer, gave an update on the outreach events and distribution of educational materials during May and June. The summer public awareness campaign titled "Don't Call Us For That", consists of series of commercials running on TV, radio, social media, and streaming outlets. Additional messages, to assist in reducing non-emergency and accidental calls to 9-1-1, are also being promoted on social media. The efforts for local telecommunicator recruitment continue through social media, cable networks, streaming platforms, and a digital marketing campaign. The GHC 9-1-1 social media platforms, YouTube and Facebook, continues to have significant increase in post reach. There was a brief discussion on the impact of the recruitment campaign and current staffing levels at the major call centers. Houston Emergency Center reps advise that they've seen an increase in applicants since the campaign started.

Mr. Hauck concluded the 9-1-1 Services report with updates on an issue with the SOS feature on Android smart phones that caused an increase in abandon and short calls. Android has taken measures to correct, and those type of calls have begun to decrease. The capital replacement of 385 the 9-1-1 call-taking computers and contingency laptops at all the PSAPs, GHC 9-1-1 training rooms and labs, which began in May 2023 was completed in early July 2023.

- VII. Operations Division Report: Sam Mitchell, Operations Officer, gave an overview of the total service tickets completed by the Ops division, and the breakdown per group. The interim UPS project at the HEC is scheduled to be completed by August 4, 2023. Staff from the support divisions have been doing nightly maintenance windows to help ensure that the transitions go smoothly (the entire call floor has been transitioned to the interim system). An update on the Public Power Pool (P3) trends was provided; the contract was renewed through 2025. GHC 9-1-1 has seen significant savings since joining the pool. Mr. Mitchell mentioned the recent retirement of Robert Chatman, NOC Technician (night shift), after 20+ years of dedicated service to GHC 9-1-1.
- VIII. Information Technology (IT) Division Report: Mike Hayes, IT Officer, gave an overview of the divisional activity for the IT division; explained the monthly service requests and types of tasks handled by the GIS group; provided graphs showing the email security metrics, internet access protection, and the number and types of events analyzed by management detection and response (MDR) provider. He reported that a microwave dish, on one of the GHC 9-1-1 microwave towers, was knocked out of alignment by high winds during a storm on June 21, 2023. There are systems in place to alert staff when there are issues with the microwave dishes/towers. Then, staff can triage the situation, determine the problem and notify the repair service. GHC 9-1-1 staff and multiple agencies from counties along the Galveston Bay water boundary, including the local Coast Guard, had a joint brainstorming meeting to discuss first responders for call routing in a NG9-1-1 environment. A second meeting is scheduled with municipalities, in the GHC 9-1-1 territory, that borders the water boundary.
- IX. Action: Consideration and Approval of a Resolution Designating September 11, 2023 as 9-1-1 Day in the Territory Served by GHC 9-1-1: Board Secretary Anders made a motion to approve the resolution; Board Member Denman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- XI. Announcements: Next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 23, 2023.

Board Member Denman followed up with legal counsel on whether GHC 9-1-1 can use public funds or funds raised through a charitable event to reward telecommunicators who are honored by the state-level public safety associations, Texas Emergency Number Association (TENA) and Texas Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). There was an in-depth discussion of the topics, with counsel recommending gifting smaller items with a minimum monetary value to insure it is within the parameters of Gift of Public Funds. Counsel will do more research, and work with Ms. Clauson to determine if there are other options to enhance what GHC 9-1-1 currently does to recognize honorees.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary