

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
September 27, 2023

The September 27, 2023, meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened at 1:07 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, Vergil Ratliff, Mark Denman, and legal counsel Haley New were present. There were 30 people in attendance.

- I. Call to Order: The U.S. and Texas pledges of allegiance were recited.
- II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the Board meeting on August 23, 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.
- IV. Executive Director Report: State and Federal updates—Ms. Anya McInnis, Public Affairs Liaison, advised that the reimbursement period for the American Rescue Act Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds has been extend to 2028. She provided information on Texas Proposition 8 (Prop 8)—Creation of Broadband Infrastructure Fund Amendment, which would include additional funding to expand broadband ac the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 services statewide. This constitution amendment will be on the ballot in the November, 2023 state-wide election. If Prop 8 is passed, House Bill (HB) 9—Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund will be effective January 1, 2024. These funds, from the State’s surplus, would be administered by the State Comptroller and allocated to 9-1-1 entities in the state, on a one-time basis. Ms. McInnis mentioned the Texas Broadband Now coalition’s efforts to inform the public and Texas government about the importance of broadband access for all Texas citizens.
- X. Taken out of order—Action: Resolution to support Voter education efforts and public awareness of Texas Proposition 8, the creation of the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund Amendment. Ms. McInnis advised that 9-1-1 entities across the state are being asked to consider adopting a resolution to educate the public. The Board inquired about the plans for the resolution; how it would be utilized, if the resolution would be provided to municipalities in the GHC 9-1-1 area, and where could it be shared. Executive Director Stan Heffernan said there was a version of the resolution that would be provided to

municipalities to consider for adoption. Ms. McInnis stated that awareness messages could be shared on GHC 9-1-1's social media sites. Legal Counsel Haley New advised, as written, the language of the resolution was a concern. Government entities can share information to educate and make voters aware of such causes, but there cannot be persuasive language that suggests passage or defeat. There was an in-depth discussion on alternative wording or platforms for sharing the resolution. Board Member Denman moved that the Board approve the resolution contingent upon legal counsel revising the language to meet the requirements of public awareness of the proposition. Board Member Ratliff seconded the motion. In discussion, Chairman Rau expressed his concern of contingently signing without knowing the modified language. Chairman Rau made a substitute motion—requested that legal counsel and staff step out of the meeting to modify the language of the resolution and bring it back for consideration of approval. Board Member Denman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1:42 P.M. Ms. Haley New and Ms. Anya McInnis temporarily left the meeting.

Executive Director Stan Heffernan provided a brief update on the organizational activity for the month of September, 2023. He thanked Fiscal Officer Rick Corbitt, the staff, and the major centers representatives for working together to balance the proposed budget for 2024.

V. Financial Report: Fiscal Officer Richard Corbitt presented the monthly financial update for the period ending September 30, 2023 as follows:

Mr. Corbitt reviewed overtime expenses for major centers, and the remaining budget balance, highlighting that interest rates on investments continue to be strong. He reported that one more ARPA reimbursement request will be submitted before year's end, and the year-to-day percentages for budgeted to actual were starting to even out.

VI. 9-1-1 Services Division Report: 9-1-1 Services Officer Roger Hauck reviewed the incidents and service requests tickets managed by the Services division, the ticket breakdown by priority, and the PSAP 9-1-1 call sessions totals/percentage charts. There were no priority 1 (P1) tickets during the month of August. The PSAP 9-1-1 call trend charts, PSAP call statistics, the PSAP SLAs and training reports were provided. The Board expressed that they were pleased to see service levels at the HEC were improving. Board Member Denman acknowledged the high attendance for the professional growth course,

Let's Dish, hosted by GHC 9-1-1. Regarding training, Chairman Rau asked how do PSAPs in the GHC 9-1-1 area interface with The Harris Center (The Center) for Mental Health and IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities), and what training exists for call-takers. Mr. Hauck advised that a direct connect option to the Center's call center is programmed in the 9-1-1 system. There was further discussion on how calls from PSAPs are presented to the Center, and the funding source for The Center. Board Member Denman mentioned that the most recent Harris County Mayors' and Counsels' (HCMCA) meeting was held at The Harris Center. PSAP Information Officer Mindi Barteo said GHC 9-1-1 has hosted mental health training classes. She spoke with The Centers director at the HCMCA meeting and will be working with the Center on more training opportunities. Director Robert Mock, HEC, advised that there have been counselors, employed by the Harris Center, onsite at the HEC 24/7 for approximately five years.

Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson provided an update on education outreach efforts, the public awareness campaign, and reviewed the new graphs showing digital media activity.

Mr. Hauck concluded the 9-1-1 Services report with an update on a new application, Smart Transcription, a language translation feature, which is now available through the 9-1-1 system. Translation is currently available for Spanish, with support for Chinese, Hindi, Mandarin, and Vietnamese being developed.

- VII. Operations Division (Ops) Report: Operations Officer Sam Mitchell reviewed the service and incident tickets managed by the Ops division. He reported that facilities had started the UPS upgrade at Bass; project should be completed in 6-8 weeks.
- VIII. Information Technology (IT) Division Report: Service and incident tickets managed by the IT division, the monthly GIS requests/tasks, and the cyber system security updates were provided. IT Officer Mike Hayes reported that GHC 9-1-1 staff had a follow-up meeting with HCSO and Chambers County to discuss a buffer system for NG9-1-1 call routing on Galveston Bay, which would aid in shortening response times for calls from the shoreline, extended piers or from watercraft in the water.
- IX. Action: Independent Audit Services: Consideration for approval of recommendation to contract with Belt Harris Pechacek, LLLP to provide audit services for a period of five years (2024-2028) and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract. Board Member Denman made a motion to approve; Board Secretary Anders seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
2:31 P.M. – Chairman Rau paused the meeting for a 5-minute break.
2:37 P.M. – Meeting called back to order.

XI. Budget Workshop—Transmittal, discussion, and possible action to approve proposed budget for Year 2024. Chief Financial Officer Rick Corbitt stated, as requested by the Board, staff and the major centers worked together and made reductions to the proposed budget to get a budget that was sustainable. He provided the five-year projection, divided into two components, the Operations Fund, which shows the sustainable receipts and designated operating reserve for four months; and the Capital Fund, which includes funds received from the ARPA grant and a designated capital reserved for one year. Chairman Rau asked for clarity of the 'Total Available Sources' and 'Ending Capital Fund' amounts. Mr. Corbitt explained that on both the Operations and Capital Funds, the Total Available Sources was the beginning balance plus project receipts total, and Ending Capital Fund on December 31 will be the beginning balance January 1. Combined, these two funds equal the five-year projection total. There was a lengthy discussion on ways to balance the budget and the cuts that have been made thus far. Mr. Corbitt reviewed the percentage options in the operational budget for salary increases. The Board agreed to include a four percent increase across the board. Board Member Denman made a motion to approve the budget as written with a four percent COLA increase and a footnote explanation of moving capital funds into operations to balance the budget. Board Member Ratliff seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2:43 P.M. – Legal Counsel Haley New and Ms. McInnis return to the meeting.

- X. Taken out of order—Action: Resolution – Texas Proposition 8: The language of the resolution was modified to read— The Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network approves the release of educational materials to provide information related Texas Proposition No. 8 in the upcoming November statewide constitution amendment elections, and increase public awareness regarding the inclusion within the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund of dedicated funding for statewide implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 services and the corresponding effects on the 911 public safety system in the State of Texas. Board Secretary Anders motion to approve the resolution as revised. Board Member Denman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- XI. Announcements: Next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2023.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary