

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
September 28, 2022

The September 28, 2022 meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened at 1:06 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, Dennis Storemski, Mark Denman, Russell Rau, Shawn Thompson, and legal counsel Philip Berzins, Harris County Assistant Attorney, were present for the meeting. Board Member Vergil Ratliff did not attend the meeting. 21 people were in attendance.

Agenda Item 1—“Call to Order.” The U.S. and Texas pledges of allegiance were recited.

Agenda Item 2—“Approval of Minutes”: The minutes of the Board meeting on August 24, 2022 were approved with a motion by Board Secretary Anders and seconded by Board Member Storemski. Board Members Anders, Rau, and Storemski voted in favor. Board Member Denman abstained. Motion carries.

Agenda Item 3—“Citizens Appearances.” There were no citizens wishing to appear before the Board.

Agenda Item 4—“Financial Report.” Fiscal Officer Richard Corbitt reported the monthly financial report totals ending August 31, 2022 as follows:

- Cash and cash equivalents \$ 23.5 million
- Invested funds for Operations \$ 12.0 million
- Liabilities \$ 14.2 million
- Receipts \$ 31.2 million
- Disbursements \$ 19.2 million

Mr. Corbitt continued to report the overtime expenses for the City of Houston and Harris County for January 1, 2022 through August 31, 2022. Next, Mr. Corbitt provided an overview of the remaining budget balance report, noting that the salaries is under budget due to vacancies. Mr. Corbitt added that currently GHC 9-1-1 have contractors working to fill those vacant positions. Chairman Rau asked if GHC 9-1-1 contract workers are paid from a separate budget line item. Mr. Corbitt explained that contractors are paid from the “general maintenance and contracts” line item. Chairman Rau and Board Member Storemski advised that GHC 9-1-1 contract workers and service contracts be categorized separately. Mr. Corbitt proceeded to present the Receipts and Disbursements report.

Chairman Rau asked would the NG9-1-1 grant funds be placed in the financial report. Mr. Corbitt explained that the funds will be inserted in line item “other” and reflected in the pie chart. Lastly, Mr. Corbitt reported on the 9-1-1 service fee revenue and cash expenditures trend-line report.

Agenda Item 5—“Executive Director Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Legislative/Regulatory and Administrative Matters.” Executive Director, Stan Heffernan provided an update on the NG9-1-1 funding, he stated that the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) supports federal funding for NG9-1-1 implementation, but GHC 9-1-1 and other 9-1-1 entities in the state prefer to solve this issue at the state level. Mr. Heffernan reported that GHC 9-1-1 staff is working on sub-projects that will qualify for reimbursement, once the reimbursement is received it will be included in the financial report. Mr. Heffernan mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 staff continues to work with border 9-1-1 agencies so that any misroutes or out of district 9-1-1 calls can be transferred on the 9-1-1 system. Mr. Heffernan provided an update on GHC 9-1-1 staffing, he stated that the departments are doing well filling the vacant positions, and thanked the fiscal team for a great job.

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 August, 2022. Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the network utilization charts, the PSAP 9-1-1 call sessions report, the PSAP 9-1-1 trending charts, and the call volume statistics provided by Houston Emergency Center (HEC), Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO), and Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO). Board Member Denman noted HEC’s and FBCSO decrease in call volume. Mr. Heffernan stated that GHC 9-1-1 is working with different data sets to determine the decrease in call volume. Chairman Rau stated that GHC 9-1-1’s goal is to help HEC with staffing, but salaries are a key factor in hiring and retention. Mr. George Buenik, Director of Public Safety and Homeland Security, City of Houston (City), mentioned that the City’s Human Resources have been working hard on hiring; and HEC’s Director Robert Mock worked with HR to increase salaries and added incentives (bonuses) for retention. Mr. Buenik mentioned that GHC 9-1-1’s social media telecommunicator recruitment messages are a great support for HEC. Board Member Denman asked if it’s a national issue, and perhaps a benchmark could be done to see what other 9-1-1 call centers are doing differently. There was a short discussion among Board Members about the neutral system, hiring practices, and salaries.

Mr. Heffernan concluded the Operations update with an overview of the 9-1-1 calls Service Level Agreement (SLA) and training reports, and the monthly GIS service requests/tasks.

Agenda Item 7—“Public Information/Education Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Public Education Outreach Efforts.” Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson presented a list of the agencies that hosted 9-1-1 community events in the month of August, 2022. Next, Ms. Clauson provided a summary of the GHC 9-1-1 2022 media campaign. She mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 is also working on other awareness campaigns such as when to contact 9-1-1 and telecommunicator recruitment. Ms. Clauson concluded her report with snippets of GHC 9-1-1’s social media posts, noting that GHC 9-1-1 social media has gained followers throughout the last two years. Chairman Rau asked about the distribution of 9-1-1 materials in schools. Ms. Clauson stated that 9-1-1 materials are distributed in schools and requested by agencies like the HCSO community engagement department. The materials are 9-1-1 tip cards, cell phone Sally class room kits, emergency sign-up profile information, and text to 9-1-1. Board Member Storemski emphasized that GHC 9-1-1 should not spend money advertising, “9-1-1 is for Emergencies Only.” People will call 9-1-1 whether it’s life threatening or not. It is an emergency in the mind of the person who is calling 9-1-1. Chairman Rau stated that it is difficult to define a true emergency depending on the situation that the person is in. Board Secretary Anders expressed the importance of continuing to educate the public on 9-1-1 emergencies. Ms. Clauson added that people call 9-1-1 instead of city services because it is easy number to dial. GHC 9-1-1 is working on educating the public in that area.

Action Item 8—“GHC 9-1-1 Budget—Discussion and Consideration for Approval of the Order Adopting Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network’s Operating and Capital Budget Including the Adoption of the Service Fee Rates for the Year 2023.” Mr. Corbitt highlighted the two changes made to the budget in the “Salaries and Benefits” and “total Public Education” line items. Board Member Denman motioned to approve the budget as proposed with the changes made. Board Secretary Anders seconded the motion. Board Members Anders, Denman, and Rau voted in favor. Board Member Storemski voted against. Motion carries.

Item 9—“Announcement—Next Board Meeting, Save-the-Dates.” Chairman Rau advised of the following: 1) the next meeting of the Board of Managers of GHC 9-1-1 is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2022; 2) 9-1-1 Goes to Washington, February 26 – March 1, 2023, Arlington, VA. Board Secretary Anders added that the month of October is breast cancer awareness and the week of October 9 – 15, 2022 is fire prevention week. Education materials will be distributed to the fire departments hosting events.

There being no further action, the meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Russell S. Rau, Chairman

William B. Anders, Secretary