

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
January 27, 2021

The January 27, 2021 meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened virtually at 1:02 p.m. via the Zoom videoconference service. GHC 9-1-1 is located at 10220 Fairbanks N. Houston Rd., Houston, Texas 77064.

Board Members Bill Anders, Mark Denman, Russell Rau, Dennis Storemski, Vergil Ratliff, Shawn Thompson, and legal counsel Tommy Ramsey, Harris County Assistant Attorney, were present for the virtual Board meeting; 30 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 December 9, 2020 and the Special Board meeting on December 11, 2020 were approved with a motion by Board Member Storemski and seconded by Board Member Denman. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Agenda Item 4—“Financial Report.” Chief Financial Officer Tino Fonseca presented the investment report for the fourth quarter ending December 31, 2020. He reported that the average yield for the investments was 0.084%.

Mr. Fonseca continued with a brief overview of the overtime expenses and the monthly financial report totals ending December 31, 2020 as follows:

- Cash and cash equivalents \$ 9.8 million
- Invested funds for Operations \$10.0 million
- Liabilities \$ 6.4 million
- Receipts \$ 46.0 million
- Disbursements \$ 43.5 million

Mr. Fonseca continued with the remaining budget balances. He highlighted that the network and connectivity services was \$3.1 million under budget due to partial suspension of NG 9-1-1 router service payments. He stated that the funds were rolled over to the 2021 budget for the NG 9-1-1 project. (At 1:13 p.m. legal counsel Tommy

Ramsey joined the meeting) Mr. Fonseca proceeded with the receipts and disbursements reports, and the 9-1-1 service fee revenue by type and cash expenditures. He presented the financial highlights for years 2016-2020. He mentioned that in the past five years the 9-1-1 call volume trend line was declining. Mr. Heffernan stated there could be many factors causing the decrease in call volume, one example being PSAP service level (SLA) stats are improving, and with a new feature of the 9-1-1 equipment, call-takers are not having to do as many callbacks.

Agenda Item 5—“Executive Director Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Legislative/Regulatory and Administrative Matters.” Executive Director Lavergne Schwender briefly reported on the FCC review team. As mentioned at the last Board meeting, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and FCC Commissioner Michael O’Rielly are both stepping down. President-elect Joe Biden’s transition team has announced the FCC review team, which includes some recognizable names. Next, Ms. Schwender reported that SolarWinds’ (a major US information technology firm) software was breached by foreign hackers, which affected U.S. telecom companies, all five branches of the U.S military, the departments of State, Justice and Commerce, the National Security Agency, and the Executive Office of the President. She stated that GHC 9-1-1 does not use SolarWinds and was not impacted. Lastly, Ms. Schwender gave a brief update on the Nashville bombing, noting that the explosion affected both internet and wireless service to 9-1-1. Ms. Schwender mentioned that the Tennessee Emergency Communications Board will conduct a study about the single points of failure in the telecommunications infrastructure. Mr. Heffernan added that when GHC 9-1-1 fully transitions to the new NG9-1-1, the new system will help protect GHC 9-1-1 systems from a single point of failure caused by unforeseeable events. Without any further questions, Ms. Schwender concluded her report.

Chairman Rau thanked GHC 9-1-1 Government Liaison Anya McInnis for all her hard work on the 9-1-1 fee legislation, and everyone else who attended the Harris County Mayors and Councils Association (HCMCA) meeting. Mr. Rau also thanked the GHC 9-1-1 staff for sending the 9-1-1 fee Resolution to the mayors.

Ms. McInnis reported that at the HCMCA meeting, she and Mr. Heffernan and informed the mayors and council members in attendance about GHC 9-1-1’s goal and purpose for the 9-1-1 fee legislation, she let them know that a draft resolution in support of the 9-1-1 fee legislation was sent to all the mayors. Ms. McInnis reported that the 87th Texas Legislative session convened on January 12, 2021. She mentioned that she will soon be meeting with Speaker of the House Dave Phelan and other representatives from 9-1-1 entities to speak to them about GHC 9-1-1’s fee effort. Ms. McInnis mentioned that the Alliance’s legislative consultant Shayne Woodard, Tarrant County 9-1-1 District’s legislative consultant Bill Paxton, and herself have had positive discussions with key legislators regarding the 9-1-1 fee legislation effort. Ms. McInnis

added that she has reached out to Harris County Government Affairs and Bill Kelly with the City of Houston, to set up a meeting and update them on our legislative effort, so they can inform their legislative teams, which may be helpful in negotiations with wireless carriers. Ms. McInnis reported that due to COVID-19, legislative sessions and committee hearings have been purposely slowed due to safety concerns. Board Member Denman asked Ms. McInnis how was GHC 9-1-1 tracking the cities who have signed the 9-1-1 fee Resolution. Ms. McInnis replied that in the letter that was sent with the resolution, it advised the cities to send GHC 9-1-1 a copy of the adopted resolution. Office Manager Daveda Hughes stated that she was keeping a log of the cities that have adopt and sent a copy of their resolution to GHC 9-1-1. Ms. McInnis said that the 9-1-1 fee resolution would be on the HCMCA's agenda for approval at their February, 2021. Board Member Denman stated he would follow up with HCMCA, and stated he would reach out to the mayors the he knows. Chairman Rau asked Ms. McInnis if GHC 9-1-1 should approach other organizations for support. Ms. McInnis stated that GHC 9-1-1 can seek the support of any organization, especially those in the public safety field. She recommended waiting until the bill has a number to avoid any confusion. Ms. McInnis added that there will be two bill numbers for the State-wide flat fee bill and the GHC 9-1-1 stand-alone bill. After no further questions Ms. McInnis concluded her report.

Agenda Item 6—"Operations Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Operational Matters." Chief Operations Officer Stan Heffernan reported that there were no internal/external P1 service issue tickets during the month of December, 2020. He provided a brief overview of the network utilization graphs, noting that the bandwidth continues to increase, but is still below the threshold limit. Mr. Heffernan proceeded with the 9-1-1 call session charts, highlighting that the class of service for 9-1-1 wireless is near 90 percent. He noted that the decrease in call volume, and the decrease in legacy landline and an increase in VOIP for the year 2020. Chairman Rau asked how the two types of calls—wireless and VOIP—can be distinguished if there's a switch during a call that's in progress. Information Technology Officer, Mike Hayes stated it depends on the carrier and its Wi-Fi calling connectivity—GHC 9-1-1 will look into it. Mr. Heffernan presented the call statistics for Houston Emergency Center (HEC) and Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO). He continued with the 9-1-1 call Service Level Agreement (SLA) report for all PSAPs/SSAPs, stating that all call centers are doing a great job performing above 90%. Mr. Heffernan proceeded with the training report, highlighted that the self-paced training tutorials haves begun, and a detailed report on the new Learning Management System (LMS) will be presented to the Board at a future meeting. Next, Mr. Heffernan gave a brief review of the December, 2020 GIS/database service requests/tasks, and the Network Operations Center (NOC) monthly case load and response reports. Lastly, Mr. Heffernan provided an update on the air handler upgrade. Mr. Heffernan stated that since the COVID-19 outbreak, GHC 9-1-1 has upgraded the UV-C light system at both Bass and Huntsville data centers.

Board Secretary Anders commented that 35 years ago (January 26, 1986) the 9-1-1 system was officially cut-over by GHC 9-1-1. He congratulated the GHC 9-1-1 staff for meeting and overcoming the challenges of the 9-1-1 communications and technology.

Regarding the air handlers, Chairman Rau mentioned that researchers from University of Houston along with Monzer Hourani, CEO of Medistar, a Houston-based medical real estate development firm, have developed a technology for cleaning air in buildings using heat, which they've found is effective in wiping out the COVID-19 and other viruses. Mr. Heffernan said that the staff would look into it.

Agenda Item 7—"Public Information/Education Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Public Education Outreach Efforts." Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson, wished everyone a happy 35th anniversary (since cutover). She congratulated GHC 9-1-1 staff members and 9-1-1 call centers for all their hard work throughout the years. Ms. Clauson reported that due to COVID-19, there were many cancellations of community events, causing a decrease in requests for public education materials for the year 2020. Next, she presented a map on the public education materials distributed throughout the GHC 9-1-1 territory, and a chart with the number of requests for materials compared to previous years. She added that the information would be shared with PSAPs at the next PSAP group meeting, and would remind them about the education materials GHC 9-1-1 offers to its jurisdictions. GHC 9-1-1 is working on new forms of education and community outreach using social media and online events, as well as creating new material that would be available on 911.org. Next, Ms. Clauson reported on the idea of exploring a new logo for GHC 9-1-1. After Board Members provided their input regarding a new GHC 9-1-1 logo, it was decided that it is not necessary to create a new GHC 9-1-1 logo and the idea was shelved for the time being. Ms. Clauson continued with an update on the GHC 9-1-1 social media pages. She stated that during the month of December, 2020 GHC 9-1-1 social media pages focused on how to reach 9-1-1 emergency services, shared 9-1-1 public safety messages from other 9-1-1 districts and local area public safety agencies, and COVID-19 messages. Ms. Clauson mentioned, that will provide a summary report of the GHC 9-1-1 2020 media campaign at the next Board meeting. Ms. Clauson stated the 35th anniversary was shared on the GHC 9-1-1 social media pages.

Agenda Item 8—"Retirement of Executive Director—Transmittal and Discussion of the Notice of Retirement of Lavergne Schwender, Executive Director of GHC 9-1-1." Ms. Schwender announced that she is retiring as of May 31, 2021. Ms. Schwender stated she is grateful to have worked for GHC 9-1-1, after many years of association as legal counsel for the Network, then serving as its Executive Director. Ms. Schwender added that she was thankful for the GHC 9-1-1 staff; she could not have stayed around

as long without them. Board Members congratulated Ms. Schwender and wished her a happy retirement.

Chairman Rau invited Mr. Ramsey to join the Board for the virtual Executive Session.

Agenda Item 10—The Board agreed to take item 10 out of order “Announcements—Next Board Meeting.” Chairman Rau announced that the next meeting of the Board of Managers is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2021, virtually via Zoom.

Agenda Item 9—“Executive Session.” The Board went into virtual Executive Session at 2:25 p.m., pursuant to Section 551.074(a)(1) Texas Government Code for the purpose of discussing personnel matters concerning the Executive Director position.

The Board returned from the virtual Executive Session at 2:50 p.m. There were no recommendations for action. Chairman Rau asked Office Manager Daveda Hughes to send him the Executive Session minutes form for his signature.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

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Russell S. Rau

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Russell S. Rau, Chairman

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William B. Anders

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William B. Anders, Secretary