

Minutes
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Board of Managers
March 24, 2021

The March 24, 2021 meeting of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1) convened virtually at 1:03 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 and legal counsel Tommy Ramsey, Harris County Assistant Attorney, were present for the virtual Board meeting. Board Member Shawn Thompson did not attend; 28 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 February 24, 2021 and the special Board meeting on March 10, 2021 were approved with a motion by Board Secretary Anders and seconded by Board Member Ratliff. 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 provided a brief overview of the monthly financial report and the overtime expenses ending February 28, 2021 as follows:

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| • Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 11.9 million |
| • Invested funds for Operations | \$ 10.0 million |
| • Liabilities | \$ 8.1 million |
| • Revenue | \$ 8.0 million |
| • Expenses | \$ 4.0 million |

Mr. Fonseca provided the revenue and expense comparison report for February 2020 and February 2021. He noted that the pie chart percentages in the Receipts and Disbursements report were corrected and sent to the Board. Next, Mr. Fonseca reported on the 9-1-1 service fee revenue by type and cash expenditures charts. Board Member Denman inquired about the projected revenue for the year ending 2021. Mr. Fonseca stated \$44 million. Mr. Fonseca mentioned he contacted Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FBCSO) regarding their presentation request and recommended that they present not later than May 2021 to allow the Board time for consideration during GHC 9-1-1's annual budget process. Board Member Denman added that he would like to see the year-to-date budget comparison report at the next Board meeting. Mr. Fonseca stated he will go back to reporting the YTD budget comparison format and will coordinate with Mr. Denman to ensure the report provides the information he needs.

At this time, Chairman Rau went off-line due to a power outage at his location. Board Secretary Anders proceeded to chair the meeting.

Agenda Item 5—“Executive Director Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Legislative/Regulatory and Administrative Matters.” Executive Director Lavergne Schwender reported that Jessica Rosenworcel has been appointed as the acting Chairwoman for the FCC. Ms. Schwender mentioned that later in the meeting, GHC 9-1-1 Government Liaison Anya McInnis would provide an update on the proposed reliability and sustainability legislation.

Agenda Item 6—“Operations Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Operational Matters.” Chief Operations Officer Stan Heffernan provided an update on GHC 9-1-1’s contingency activation during winter storm Uri, on February 14, 2021. Mr. Heffernan reported that all 9-1-1 call centers and GHC 9-1-1 staff did a great job during the winter storm event. He stated that there were a few challenges for the operations staff, with the staff being on a red/blue team schedule due to COVID-19. Mr. Heffernan thanked the GHC 9-1-1 staff for stepping up when needed, highlighting one example—the GIS/Database team helping the administrative team with front-desk phone coverage, when they all lost power. He reported that there were many issues on the telephone provider side due to power outages. Mr. Heffernan presented a snapshot of the wireless network outages. He stated that the GHC 9-1-1 system and its contingencies, performed as designed with minimal impact. Mr. Heffernan reported that there were three NOC P1 service tickets during Uri; noting that all service tickets were related to power company failures. The service ticket resolution time was lengthy, but the GHC 9-1-1 contingency time was immediate. Mr. Heffernan advised, the 9-1-1 system remained operational throughout the entire winter event. Board Member Denman expressed the importance of communicating to the public about the reliability and effectiveness of the 9-1-1 system during the winter storm. He recommended honoring the 9-1-1 call-takers and GHC 9-1-1 staff for their exceptional job. Board Secretary Anders suggested creating a resolution thanking everyone for their service. Public Information Officer, Sonya Clauson mentioned that 9-1-1 telecommunicator week is in April, providing an opportunity to thank everyone. Board Member Denman added, it was important that officials knew about the performance of the 9-1-1 system, to support GHC 9-1-1’s legislation efforts for the 9-1-1 fee increase. Ms. Clauson stated that GHC 9-1-1 would draft two separate resolutions to recognize 9-1-1 telecommunicators and staff for their efforts during Uri.

At this time, Chairman Rau reconnected and proceeded to chair the meeting.

Next, Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the network utilization graphs, noting that the spike in the chart from January to February, 2021 is due to winter storm Uri. Mr. Heffernan presented the call center stats during Uri, he stated that February 16, 2021 was the highest peak in call volume, a 208.46% increase. Mr. Heffernan briefly reported on the 9-1-1 call session charts, the 9-1-1 trending charts, and the call statistics provided by Houston Emergency Center (HEC) and Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO). Mr. Heffernan reviewed the 9-1-1 call Service Level Agreement (SLA) report for all PSAPs/SSAPs, noting that all call centers were performing well, except for one call center which performed below the 90%. He said that GHC 9-1-1 had also run reports, omitting the worst day of the winter storm, to see the effect it had on call stats. Mr.

Heffernan reported that in the month of February, 2021 GHC 9-1-1 safely provided an in-person 9-1-1 call-taking equipment training course at the GHC 9-1-1 headquarters. A professional growth class for PSAP telecommunicators and supervisors was provided via the Zoom platform; 25 people attended. An online, self-paced course for the GHC 9-1-1 Analytics reporting tool was assigned to PSAP/SSAP managers, supervisors and GHC 9-1-1 NOC personnel—there were 108 registrations for this course. Next, Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the GIS/database report. Chairman Rau inquired about the availability of accessing GHC 9-1-1's training classes online. Mr. Heffernan stated GHC 9-1-1 is implementing a new training management tool, and he deferred to 9-1-1 Service Officer Roger Hauck. Mr. Hauck answered that the new management tool will allow students to view recorded classes. Board Member Ratliff asked if students viewing the recorded classes would receive TCOLE credit. Mr. Hauck explained that GHC 9-1-1 is still working with TCOLE regarding how the credit can be earned. Next, Mr. Heffernan reported on the Network Operations Center (NOC) monthly case-load report, noting an increase in service requests for the month of February, 2021 due to power issues caused by winter storm Uri. Chairman Rau asked if the GHC 9-1-1 facility experienced any power issues. Mr. Heffernan stated only minor issues and an external pipe burst at the backup datacenter—none of the 9-1-1 systems were affected.

Lastly, Chairman Rau asked the staff if executive session item 9B, security matters, was needed. Mr. Heffernan stated no, the item was placed on agenda in case the Board wanted to go into details on a security sensitive matters relating to contingencies for Uri.

Agenda Item 7—"Public Information/Education Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Public Education Outreach Efforts." Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson reported that GHC 9-1-1 continues to educate the public virtually. In the month of February, 2021 GHC 9-1-1 distributed 9-1-1 printed materials for a few CPR courses in the community. The Greater Houston Faith Ministries received printed materials to distribute to 5,000 Meals-on-Wheels participants. Ms. Clauson mentioned again that the month of April is 9-1-1 education month, and also includes telecommunicator appreciation week, April 11-17, 2021. She stated that social media efforts will focus on 9-1-1 educational messages and recognition of telecommunicators.

Next, Ms. Clauson reported that prior to winter storm Uri, she met with Harris County Area Public Information Officers and the Joint Information Center (JIC) to discuss 9-1-1 preparedness messages. Ms. Clauson stated that during Uri, a news release was send out, which included traditional reminders on when to call 9-1-1, to help reduce the overload of non-emergency calls. Harris County and the City of Houston also sent phone alerts about when to call 9-1-1. Ms. Clauson mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 was active on social media and provided real-time updates on Twitter by sharing 9-1-1 partner agency messages. She stated that a second news release was sent with information on who to contact regarding power outages and water issues. Ms. Clauson provided examples of Uri messages shared on Facebook and Twitter. Lastly, she provided an update on the GHC 9-1-1 social media pages, noting that GHC 9-1-1 did a Facebook "boost" post—a paid Facebook tool to increase the reach of a particular post. She added that the Uri messages were also shared to the GHC 9-1-1 Twitter page, and the account received much higher

views that it normally does. Ms. Clauson mentioned that 9-1-1 call center reps stated that the 9-1-1 messages helped reduce the non-emergency calls to their center.

Ms. McInnis provided a summary on the two House Bills (HB) that have been filed—HB 2248 filed by Representative Senfronia Thompson, a local GHC 9-1-1 fee bill that will allow the Board of Managers to set the local wireless fee, and HB 2911 filed by Representative James White, Chair of the Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee. HB 2911 is a state-wide bill to increase the 9-1-1 fee, with the carve-out provision for GHC 9-1-1, if HB 2248 passes. If HB 2248 does not pass, then HB 2911 would apply to GHC 9-1-1. Ms. McInnis stated that Chairman White's intent is to present both bills in the legislative committee hearing on Thursday, April 1, 2021. Next, Ms. McInnis thanked Office Manager Daveda Hughes for assisting with the efforts of sending out the 9-1-1 fee resolutions to the city mayors, council members, county judges, and police/fire chiefs associations. Ms. McInnis mentioned that she received a letter from Harris County in support of the 9-1-1 fee bill, in which she will present to the legislative committee. Ms. McInnis asked Ms. Hughes if she could reach out to the cities who have adopted the 9-1-1 fee resolution, and see if they are willing to provide a support letter or a copy of the adopted resolution to Chairman White prior to the hearing date. Ms. McInnis also requested an updated list of the cities who have adopted the resolution. Chairman Rau stated he would coordinate with Ms. McInnis regarding the hearing, and reach out to Chairman White. Ms. McInnis mentioned that the Chief of Staff for Representative Sam Harless, who is also a member of the Homeland Security and Public Safety committee, was Ron Hickman, former Harris County Sheriff, and it would be a good idea to reach out to him. Ms. McInnis encouraged the Board and staff to reach out to any connections they might have for support of the fee legislation. There were no further discussion; Ms. McInnis concluded her report.

Chairman Rau went offline due to a power outage a second time. Board Secretary Anders proceeded to the announcements.

Agenda item 10—"Announcements". Next Board—April 28, 2021, NENA Conference and Expo, July 25-29, 2021. Chairman Rau reconnected and inquired about the dates for the virtual 9-1-1 Goes to Washington. Ms. Clauson stated that the event was scheduled for Tuesday, April 13, 2021 and it was a one-day virtual event. She will notify the Board once registration information becomes available.

Next, Chairman Rau advised that executive session item 9A, relating to the Executive Director Position be brought back at the next Board meeting. Chairman Rau stated that there is nothing to be done for agenda item 8, appointment of an Executive Director, at the current time. Chairman Rau opened the floor for any further discussion.

Chairman Rau asked the Board and staff about their thoughts regarding in-person meetings. Mr. Rau also inquired about what the status is on staff going to the office. Mr. Heffernan stated that the staff continues to follow the red/blue schedule and only reporting to the office as needed. GHC 9-1-1 staff have been working on options for in-person Board meetings, and are prepared to accommodate when the Board decides to resume in-person meetings. Board Member Denman

stated as soon as possible and when it's deemed safe, while not violating state requirements. Chairman Rau inquired about the status of staff that have gotten the COVID-19 vaccinations. Mr. Heffernan mentioned that there is no official tracking list, but many of the Operations staff are qualified for the vaccine under the first-responder designation. Mr. Fonseca stated that about 34% of the staff have been vaccinated. Chairman Rau asked if GHC 9-1-1 has the ability to require staff to get vaccinated. Mr. Ramsey stated it would depend on the latest CDC guidelines, and he would verify if this was permissible. Mr. Fonseca commented that GHC 9-1-1 had consulted with Harris County HR expert Lina Garcia, who at the time advised that GHC 9-1-1 cannot require staff to take the vaccine; but can ask, but cannot require, the employee to report their vaccination status. Mr. Fonseca mentioned he sent an email to staff with helpful information on how to register for the vaccine. Chairman Rau expressed his support of the vaccine, and would like to see GHC 9-1-1 encourage staff to get vaccinated or perhaps offer a financial incentive as long as it is not violating any governmental restrictions. There was a brief discussion, then Chairman Rau requested COVID-19 vaccination incentive be on the agenda for the April Board meeting, and seek legal guidance from Mr. Ramsey.

Board Member Ratliff mentioned that she has friend, Dr. Kathy Flanagan, who's a part of the health task force for the City of Houston, who could provide updates, data, or make suggestions to the staff on holding in-person gatherings. Chairman Rau said it was a great resource and staff could reach out to Board Member Ratliff and Dr. Flanagan, to can discuss plans and obtain guidance for an in-person Board meeting. Mr. Heffernan stated plans for in-person meetings would be discussed at the next Board meeting. Board Member Denman suggested May for the first in-person Board meeting. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Ramsey to provide an update on the Governors COVID-19 disaster declaration. Mr. Ramsey advised that the Governor's COVID-19 suspension provision of the Texas Open Meeting Act that allows virtual meetings is in effect until terminated by the Governor, or until the state disaster declaration is lifted or expired. Mr. Ramsey added that GHC 9-1-1 can have a hybrid Board meeting as done in December, 2020. Chairman Rau stated, like Board Member Denman, he would like for Board meetings to get back to normal, but in a safe manner. Mr. Heffernan noted there could be some technology challenges with a hybrid meeting, but an effort will be made to safely accommodate everyone.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary