

II. Approval of Minutes—Board Meeting on February 27, 2025

Minutes

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

Board of Managers Meeting

DATE February 27, 2025
TIME 1:10 PM
LOCATION Board Room of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
 (GHC 9-1-1) at 10220 Fairbanks N. Houston Rd., Houston, Texas 77064.

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members Russell Rau, Bill Anders, Mark Denman, and legal counsel Haley New were present. Board Member Vergil Ratliff and Shawn Thompson were absent. There were 35 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 of December 11, 2024, were approved with a motion by Board Member Denman, and seconded by Secretary Anders. The vote passed unanimously.
- III. Citizens Comments—There were no citizens wishing to appear before the Board.
- IV. Board Member Comments/ Updates – Board Member Denman provided an update on his recent visit to Washington, D.C., for 9-1-1 Goes to Washington (911GTW), describing it as one of the most productive meetings to date. He shared encouraging news regarding the bipartisan support for the reclassification bill, which is expected to pass in the Senate and proceed to the House for approval. With unanimous consent, the Senate will agree to advance the bill for 9-1-1 telecommunicator reclassification. While challenges remain, he expressed optimism about the progress being made. Board Member Denman highlighted the valuable contribution of Shelby Radford, an emergency telecommunicator, whose firsthand experience helped strengthen the bill's impact. He also noted the improvement in NENA's presentations this year, commending their preparedness and accuracy compared to the previous year. Mr. Hauck echoed Board Member Denman's sentiments, emphasizing that this year's conference felt more impactful than in previous years. He further addressed the 9-1-1 SAVES Act (H.R. 327), which seeks to reclassify 9-1-1 dispatchers as "Protective Service Occupations" rather than "Office and Administrative Support Occupations" under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Board Member Denman reported a productive discussion with Senator Ted Cruz, who confirmed his commitment to supporting the bill's passage in the House.
- V. PSAP Comments/ Updates – Tim Staten (9-1-1 Administrative Coordinator) with Harris County Sheriff Office (HCSO) introduced Major Jennifer Herndon (of Support Services Bureau) to the Board.

- VI. Executive Director Report— Executive Director Stan Heffernan addressed to the Board that there is some handouts for the Board on more accurate data than in the actual report. He reported that Mr. Hauck, Mr. Hayes, and himself attended the CSEC meeting on January 28th in Austin, where Texas 9-1-1 Alliance Chairman Patrick Corley presented on the need for sustainable funding. Mr. Heffernan also stated that he and Mr. Hayes participated in the 9-1-1 Goes to Austin to advance fee legislation efforts, which are progressing in both the House and Senate with hopes of securing a sponsor soon after committee chairs are appointed. Mr. Heffernan reported that the Texas 9-1-1 Alliance sponsored a 9-1-1 funding study conducted by Texas Tech University, which highlighted that Texas is one of only seven states with a wireless fee of \$0.50 or less, has not adjusted the fee since its introduction in 1997, and that most Texans support upgrading 9-1-1 services and would favor an increase in the wireless fee from \$0.50 to \$0.75.
- VII. Financial Report— Fiscal Officer Rick Corbitt provided a financial report for the year-end as of December 31, 2024, and January 2025. He confirmed both periods were completed and reported a strong financial cash position. GHC continued reallocating funds from investments to generate higher interest yields. Overtime expenses reflected full-year costs for PSAP partners, and the unaudited net cash position remained strong. For the annual financial report, receipts exceeded disbursements by \$32.4 million. Grant funds totaled \$14.9 million, with an additional \$27.45 million received from Proposition 8. Interest income also contributed positively. Mr. Corbitt outlined goals for 2025, including collaboration with Harris County’s grant department to explore additional funding opportunities. Efforts were also made to ensure 2024 expenses were properly recorded, with Accounts Payable working closely with division managers to process invoices promptly. Reviewing the balance sheet, he noted significant investment activity in January, with two major investments of \$10 million and \$15 million yielding just under \$4.5 million. He assured the Board that investments were staggered and structured to maintain liquidity. Despite a January hiring freeze, PSAPs remained staffed with overtime support. The first 2025 reporting period was on track, with receipts continuing to exceed disbursements. Looking ahead, Mr. Corbitt expressed confidence in GHC’s investments and interest income, with plans to continue securing favorable yields. He noted that the 2021 ARPA grant was nearly complete, with the final \$1.8 million submission planned for March or April 2025. Regarding telecom fees, he highlighted a continued \$1 million annual decline in wireline revenue but a corresponding increase in wireless and prepaid wireless fees. Funds were allocated through CSEC, with a recent transfer of \$3.3 million. He also reported on the 2024 golf tournament, which generated \$47,452, with a system in place for invoice approvals. A deposit for the 2025 tournament had been made, with funds totaling \$44,000. He assured the Board of ongoing financial oversight. Mr. Heffernan noted that wireless fees are population-based and distributed by CSEC. In response to Chairman Rau’s inquiry about tracking telecom fees for residents moving into GHC from out of state, Stan will follow up with the Board.
- VIII. 9-1-1 Division Report—9-1-1 Division Officer Roger Hauck provided a briefing on the EasyVista ticket data for November 2024 through January 2025, noting that the corrected data for January 2025 was included in a separate handout. He then reviewed the enterprise statistics, reporting that GHC handled just under 4.2 million calls and texts in 2024. Board Member Denman remarked that when he first joined the Board, landline usage was around 10%, whereas it has now declined to 3.9%. In response, Mr. Hauck stated that he did not anticipate it would increase again. Mr. Hauck continued his report by presenting the four-year 9-1-1 trend, highlighting a slight increase in VOIP sessions, likely due to businesses transitioning from landlines to VOIP, similar to GHC. Chairman Rau inquired about the impact on service fees, specifically whether VOIP generated a comparable fee to landlines. Mr. Hauck confirmed that VOIP fees followed the landline fee structure. Chairman Rau then

asked about collection issues with various VOIP providers. Mr. Corbitt explained that while some telecom companies paid via ACH, the majority submitted small checks. Ms. Oropeza, Accounting Manager, confirmed that they process over 300 checks per month on average. Chairman Rau requested further discussion on the topic to enhance the Board's understanding and recommended adding an agenda item in a future Board report to address 9-1-1 service fee revenue from new VOIP providers registered through NENA. Mr. Hauck proceeded with the January 2025 data, noting consistency, and emphasizing that call volume had declined compared to previous years, largely due to GHC's public education efforts. Board Members commended Ms. Clauson for her contributions over the years. Shifting to PSAP call statistics, Mr. Hauck began with the Houston Emergency Center (HEC), commending its efforts to improve SLA percentages. Board Member Denman congratulated Mr. Jackson, Director of HEC, for his leadership in increasing SLA performance. Mr. Hauck also pointed out the addition of 3 new data rows—"Day Shift", "Evening Shift" and "Night Shift" agent averages—to provide a clearer picture of operations at the three major centers. Board Member Denman then inquired about staffing levels with Ms. Rivas, Public Safety Communications Manager for FBCSO, who reported that 15 telecommunicators were currently in training. She also noted that while there was a hiring freeze, four vacancies had been approved to be open for hire.

PSAP Training Manager Mindi Bartee reported that numerous training sessions took place in November and December 2024, including courses on new applications, leadership, and equipment. On January 29, 2025, GHC hosted its first Wellness Wednesday, successfully fostering open dialogue and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health in the profession. Mr. Hauck noted that funds from the Golf Tournament supported the event. In response to Board Member Denman's inquiry about any stigma or concerns, Ms. Bartee confirmed there were none and shared that attendees were already asking about future sessions. She expressed interest in working with the Golf Committee to plan additional Wellness Wednesday events.

Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson presented her final report covering November 2024 through January 2025, highlighting key public education and outreach efforts. Ms. Clauson, Justena Kelly, and Mr. Hauck attended the Greater Houston Area Fire Marshals Conference, providing information on 9-1-1 services. She reviewed the annual distribution of public education materials, noting October as the peak month and displaying a map of distribution areas. Digital media updates showcased increasing reach and impressions, with Nextdoor added to data tracking in September 2024. Website analytics showed significant engagement, particularly on the careers page. She informed the Board of the new Cellphone Sally costume, which is now an inflatable, more comfortable, and visually improved design. In response to Board Member Denman's inquiry about the next campaign, Ms. Clauson stated it would launch soon, incorporating new data and feedback for strategic improvements. Board Member Denman also requested that the next board report include a cost analysis per click for advertisements. This report marked Ms. Clauson's final presentation to the Board before her retirement.

Between November and December 2024, GHC 9-1-1 participated in key initiatives to enhance emergency response, technology, and workforce development. This included collaboration with Houston ISD Police and the Houston Emergency Center to improve 9-1-1 call coordination, a demonstration of new call applications for the Harris County Sheriff's Office, and support for 9-1-1 Telecommunicator recruitment. Additionally, GHC hosted its final quarterly PSAP Operations meeting to discuss upcoming enhancements for 2025 and recognized Senator Huffman's efforts in securing state funding for 9-1-1 districts.

- IX. Operations Division (Ops) Report— Executive Director Stan Heffernan presented the Operations Division report on behalf of Operations Division Officer Samuel Mitchell, who was absent. He briefly reviewed ticketing data, confirming that all metrics appeared normal. He also provided facilities update, noting that in December 2024,

the facilities division completed capacitor and fan replacements at the GHC site. This concluded the Operations report.

- X. Information Technology (IT) Division Report— IT Division Officer Mike Hayes reported that ticket data, GIS activity, and cybersecurity systems remained at normal levels from November 2024 to January 2025. Board Member Denman commended the strength of GHC 9-1-1's cybersecurity systems, noting that despite ongoing cyber threats, no attackers had successfully breached the network. Mr. Hayes stated that one malicious detection and four alerts were identified and immediately quarantined. Regarding Salt Typhoon, a Chinese cyber-espionage group that had compromised U.S. telecom networks, he confirmed that GHC 9-1-1 detected no related threats. Additionally, he provided an update on out-of-area (OOA) 911 call transfers, which are tracked monthly per board policy for agencies contracting services outside the GHC service area. Secretary Anders praised the organization's cybersecurity efforts and inquired about information-sharing with HEC and HCSO, to which Mr. Hayes responded that coordination would occur if needed, but GHC 9-1-1 already ensures their protection and handles any detected threats. This concluded the information Technology report.
- XI. Action Item: Resolution Recognizing Public Safety Telecommunicator Week. Chairman Rau read the resolution. Here is a summary of the resolution. The Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network has designated April 13–19, 2025, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week to honor over 1,200 telecommunicators and dispatchers in Harris and Fort Bend Counties. These professionals play a critical role as the link between citizens and emergency services, ensuring rapid response to police, fire, and medical emergencies. Their behind-the-scenes efforts, expertise, and ongoing training contribute significantly to public safety and the protection of lives and property. This recognition aligns with state and national observances.

The resolution was read by Chairman Rau, motioned by Secretary Anders, and seconded by Board Member Denman, passing unanimously.

- XII. Action Item: Resolution Recognizing GHC 9-1-1 Employee Retirement – Recognition of the Retirement of Sonya Clauson, Public Information Officer, and Transmittal of a Resolution for Adoption Recognizing Her Service. The Board recognized the retirement of Sonya Clauson, Public Information Officer, and adopted a resolution honoring her 32 years of service to Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network (GHC 9-1-1). As one of the organization's earliest employees, Ms. Clauson played a key role in advancing public communication strategies throughout the evolution of 9-1-1 services. Having worked with all four of GHC 9-1-1's Executive Directors, her contributions left a lasting impact on the organization.

The resolution was read by Chairman Rau, motioned by Secretary Anders, and seconded by Board Member Denman, passing unanimously.

Following the resolution, Ms. Clauson shared a story illustrating the critical role of 9-1-1 education. She recounted a tragic incident where a family, unaware of the limitations of their new VoIP phone service, was unable to reach 9-1-1 during a home invasion. This event underscored the importance of public education on emergency communication, leading to significant outreach efforts by GHC 9-1-1 and its partners. She reminded everyone that regardless of their role, they contribute to saving lives by supporting 9-1-1 operations. Secretary Anders expressed bittersweet sentiments about her departure, stating his pride in her achievements. Board Member Denman and Chairman Rau echoed their appreciation and admiration for her service.

XIII. Announcements: The next Board of Managers Meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2025. Upcoming conferences include Public Safety Conference in McAllen, Texas, from April 2-5, 2025; and the National NENA Conference in Long Beach, California, from June 21-26, 2025.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 PM.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary