

## II. Approval of Minutes—Board Meeting on July 24, 2024

# Minutes

*Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network*

### **Board of Managers Meeting**

**DATE** July 24, 2024  
**TIME** 1:05 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 Members Vergil Ratliff and Shawn Thompson were absent. There were 23 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 May 22 ,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.
- XI. Taken Out of Order: XI. Action: Resolution – Request for approval of a resolution congratulating 9-1-1 PSAP Coordinator Cheryl Breed on her retirement and commending her for over 38 years of dedicated services to 9-1-1 and emergency communications. Resolution was read by Sonya Clauson and plaque and signed resolution was given to Cheryl Breed.
- IV. Executive Director Report— Executive Director Stan Heffernan reported that there are no new updates at the federal level. However, GHC 9-1-1 received the second half of the proposition 8 funding from the state. As explained before this funding makes up for the \$.25 funding shortfall on the current \$.50 wireless fees. Future legislation would allow 9-1-1 entities to increase the wireless fee from \$.50 to \$.75. He highlighted recent organizational activities, including staff and Board participation in the NENA conference. He mentioned that Norma Vaulx attended a professional growth conference in Human Resources, which will aid in achieving her HR certification, a significant milestone for the organization. Regarding Hurricane Beryl, Mr. Heffernan assured the Board that GHC 9-1-1 was well-prepared before, during, and after the event, despite challenges in wireless cell communication due to widespread power outages. Chairman Rau inquired about the operational status of Public Safety

Answering Points (PSAPs) during the outages. Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Hauck confirmed that backup generators kept the PSAPs operational. A resolution will be presented at the next Board meeting to commend the PSAPs for their exceptional work during the hurricane.

- V. Financial Report— Fiscal Officer Richard Corbitt reported that Prop. 8 funding had been received and promptly invested in treasury bills and commercial paper, with \$25 million moved out of bank accounts. He presented the financial reports for the period ending June 30, 2024, noting a decrease in Houston Emergency Center (HEC) staffing from 52 to 48 positions out of 78 budgeted, which has led to increased overtime expenses. The Harris County Sheriff's Office is on track with their budget, within \$1,000 of the overall amount. Mr. Corbitt highlighted concerns about the year-to-date percentage of service fees being below 100.1%, attributing this to the fact that service fees and landline continue to outperform our budget. He clarified that "AHC" stands for "Actual Head Count," and Board Member Denman noted that HEC has not made progress in closing the staffing gap. Mr. Corbitt suggested moving \$10 million of the \$28 million available in the bank for investment purposes. More discussion on financials will be in the Budget Workshop later in the meeting.
- VI. 9-1-1 Division Report—9-1-1 Services Division Officer Roger Hauck provided an overview of the 911 services divisional activities, noting that everything appeared normal. He then shifted focus to the enterprise report, detailing call volume for May and June. Mr. Hauck observed a slight increase in May, which he suggested might be attributed to the storm. Chairman Rau noted a corresponding rise in 911 text messages. Board Member Denman pointed out a significant decrease in the overall number of sessions, calls, and texts combined, hypothesizing that this could indicate the effectiveness of public education efforts by GHC 911. Hauck concurred but also suggested that the decrease might be influenced by seasonal factors, such as going out of town for vacation. Board Member Denman emphasized the crucial role of public education provided by GHC 9-1-1. Mr. Hauck then presented call volume charts for the Houston Emergency Center (HEC), Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO), and Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FTBCSO). Chairman Rau and Secretary Anders raised questions about the statistics, specifically concerning the chart's representation of call response times. They pointed out that if call centers are indeed answering calls within 5 seconds, their SLAs should reflect a higher performance level. Mr. Hauck acknowledged the need for further investigation into these numbers but noted his concern that the chart might not fully account for queue times. Board Member Denman praised HCSO and FTBCSO for their impressive call response rates of 98% and 99%, respectively, given their size. Mr. Hauck concluded by presenting the Call Center SLA Statistics, highlighting that all centers are performing exceptionally well with an average SLA of 99.31%, which Board Member Denman commended.

PSAP Training Manager Mindi Bartee reviewed the events hosted by GHC 9-1-1 for May and June, noting that it was a particularly busy period. In May, the organization conducted two equipment courses, two CPR instructor recertification courses, and two "A Victim's Plea" courses. June included

a leadership webinar and a Major Center Workshop that concentrated on interoperability and contingency planning for the 9-1-1 system. Additionally, GHC 9-1-1 hosted an Award Luncheon in June, where nominees for the Texas APCO and NENA Conference were recognized. Ms. Barte reported positive feedback for the Award Luncheon, indicating that the recognition was well appreciated. Chairman Rau and Board Member Denman praised the efforts involved in organizing the Award Luncheon, with Board Member Denman highlighting the deserving nature of the attendees. Secretary Anders inquired about National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, to which Ms. Barte responded that most agencies complete this training via the NIMS online platform. Mr. Heffernan added that while operational staff had previously undergone NIMS training, he would review the status and potentially reestablish it. Chairman Rau then asked Legal Counsel Haley New about statutory requirements for board member training and whether there are any continuing education requirements. Ms. New indicated that she does not believe there are such requirements but agreed to investigate further.

Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson discussed the summer events, including "Coffee with a Cop" and various summer camps, and reviewed the distribution of educational materials as outlined in her provided list. She announced the launch of both the Telecommunicator Recruitment and General Public Awareness campaigns in May, with both continuing through August. Ms. Clauson detailed that the Telecommunicator Recruitment campaign is being promoted through social media and broadcast media, though its visibility may vary depending on regional targeting aligned with current job postings. She is monitoring these postings and coordinating with the marketing team to ensure that ads effectively reach both local communities and potential job seekers. The General Public Awareness campaign features commercials with the ongoing "Don't Call Us For That" theme, scheduled to air during news breaks and return segments. Another message in the campaign, "Know Your Phone," educates the public on how to add medical ID information to their phones, which can be accessed by 9-1-1 call takers. Chairman Rau sought clarification on whether all phones display this medical information automatically, which Ms. Clauson and Mr. Hauck confirmed. Mr. Hauck elaborated that the medical details appear on a separate screen for the call taker. Board Member Denman recalled an instance where someone mentioned seeing one of GHC 9-1-1's commercials, emphasizing the importance of campaign recall. He congratulated Ms. Clauson on her successful ad work. Ms. Clauson also reported that GHC 9-1-1's Facebook page has garnered over 14,000 regular followers, with posts generally achieving significantly higher engagement than average. Board Member Anders praised a specific Facebook post that highlighted alternate non-emergency phone numbers for citizens. Mr. Hauck confirmed that the message aimed to provide alternative options to reduce non-emergency calls to 9-1-1 and noted that some cities have portals where citizens can report issues, which will help to decrease the overall volume of calls. Ms. Clauson concluded by expressing gratitude to the GIS team for their assistance in adding each jurisdiction's portal to the emergency responder map on 911.org.

Mr. Hauck provided further updates on the Derecho storm that occurred on May 16th. He began by expressing gratitude to the support staff for their preparedness in handling the unexpected storm. Mr. Hauck then presented a chart illustrating the volume of calls received within a four-hour window across major sites, noting that over 13,460 calls were processed during the 7 p.m. hour alone. He proceeded to present individual charts for the major centers: HSCO, HEC, and FTBCSO. He highlighted that HEC processed over 11,000 calls during that 7 p.m. hour, marking a record number of 9-1-1. Mr. Hauck also detailed a surprise activation drill conducted on June 13th, during which an alert was sent to the staff via Informacast. This drill included vehicle inspections for readiness and various scenarios to ensure staff were well-versed in contingency plans. He commended the team for their excellent performance. Board Member Denman inquired about the frequency of these drills. Mr. Hauck explained that at least one drill is typically conducted before hurricane season and ongoing education continues throughout the season. Board Member Denman also asked if the staff was aware that this exercise was a drill, to which Mr. Hauck responded that there was no prior warning. Secretary Anders praised the staff for their participation in the drill and commended their dedication and commitment.

- VII. Operations Division (Ops) Report— Operations Division Officer Sam Mitchell began by presenting the ticket breakdown for the Operations division, noting that there were no unusual issues. He reported that in May, the facilities group completed an upgrade of the UPS lithium-ion batteries for 13 smaller sites. This work was accomplished within a five-day period. Mr. Mitchell acknowledged that while the team encountered some challenges, they were able to resolve them promptly. Chairman Rau inquired whether the UPS system provides power until a generator activates. Mr. Mitchell confirmed that the UPS will provide power during a utility outage until the generator is operational. Rau also asked about the battery runtime and reliability. Mr. Mitchell explained that the UPS provides approximately an hour and a half of power, depending on the load. Board Member Denman highlighted the improvement in battery lifespan, which has increased from 5 years to 10 years. Mr. Mitchell noted that the facilities team expects to complete upgrades for all PSAPs by the end of the first quarter of next year. Chairman Rau also questioned the sizes of the generators used by GHC 9-1-1, specifically if there is a large generator on its own trailer. Mr. Mitchell responded that they have several portable generators, including those that can be transported on trailers. Rau mentioned the availability of unused FEMA funds and suggested exploring opportunities to utilize these funds to enhance preparedness for future storms, such as acquiring a generator with a dedicated trailer and additional fuel capacity.
- VIII. Information Technology (IT) Division Report— IT Officer Mike Hayes discussed the ticket breakdown for both IT and GIS, noting that activity levels were normal, including for Cyber Security. He addressed the recent CrowdStrike outage, clarifying that GHC 9-1-1 was not affected. Mr. Hayes explained that while many industries push for third-party automation to improve efficiency, GHC 9-1-1 opts for a more manual approach. Although this requires more effort to maintain and update systems, it reduces the risk of disruptions caused by external vendors. Chairman Rau asked if the use of third-party tools for database maintenance could potentially impact the database and disrupt 9-1-1

services. Mr. Hayes confirmed that is correct. Mr. Heffernan added that the GHC 9-1-1 data centers are specifically designed to maintain the integrity of 9-1-1 calls. Chairman Rau emphasized that the decision to build data centers was driven not only by the need to manage data but also to ensure high accuracy levels. Chairman Rau inquired about the current database accuracy. Mr. Hayes referred to the GIS Routability Accuracy figures, which showed over 99% accuracy across three types of features: Agencies, Address Points, and Road Centerlines (RCLs). Board Member Denman asked about a spike shown in the Advanced Threat Trends chart on June 24th. Mr. Hayes acknowledged uncertainty about the specific event but suggested that the spike might appear more dramatic due to a zoomed-in view of the chart and recommended analyzing a longer trend for context. Chairman Rau revisited the CrowdStrike outage, asking Mr. Hayes about its potential cause. Mr. Hayes explained that the issue likely resulted from a recent update that required a reboot, which disrupted the windows operating system. He did not believe the problem was malicious but rather due to a poorly executed rollout plan that should have been implemented in stages rather than all at once.

- IX. Item: Discussion regarding the GHC 9-1-1 Golf Tournament – Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson informed the Board about the status of the golf tournament, reporting 16 teams registered out of a goal of 30, 66 golfers out of a target of 120, and 7-hole sponsors out of the desired 18.
- X. Action: 9-1-1 Day Resolution – Consideration and approval of a resolution designating September 11, 2024, as 9-1-1 Day in the territory served by GHC 9-1-1. Mindi Bartee presented the resolution, which was voted on and signed by the Board Members. The vote was moved by Secretary Anders and seconded by Board Member Denman, with the vote passing unanimously.

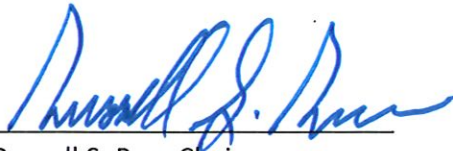
Break – 2:43 P.M.

Reconvened – 2:53 P.M.

- XII. Budget Workshop – Discussion of GHC 9-1-1 proposed budget for the year 2025. Mr. Corbitt presented the following: Ten-year projection budget 2025-2034, Summary Projected Receipts and Operational/Capital budget 2025, and the detailed Capital/Operational budget 2025. Mr. Corbitt covered several high-level key points. It was agreed that footnotes should be added to the ten-year plan to explain the context that the 9-1-1 wireless fee increase will not be guaranteed in the future, even if it presents a negative budgeted financial forecast. The term "surplus" will be removed from line 15. Budget footnotes should disclose the federal and state funds, and all footnotes should be perfected and sent to the Board for input before the next meeting. Additionally, provide the Board with information related to payroll positions and other expense reports incurred by the three call centers, reimbursed by GHC 9-1-1. The discussion also covered GHC 9-1-1's historical operations and an 8% increase in utilities. For the next meeting, an executive session regarding salaries will be added, along with an action item for the approval of GHC 9-1-1 2025 budget.

XIII. Announcements: The next Board of Managers Meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2024, with business casual attire welcomed during summer months. Additionally, mark your calendars for the Golf Tournament on Thursday, September 12, 2024, with a tee-time of 9:11 AM.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 P.M.



Russell S. Rau, Chairman



William B. Anders, Secretary