

**MINUTES OF THE
9-1-1 BOARD OF MANAGERS'
REGULAR MEETING**

November 10, 2010

LOCATION: 9-1-1 Board Room
150 Hilbig Road, Conroe, Texas

ATTENDING: Jody Binnion, President
Paul Virgadamo, Vice President
Ann Carr, Treasurer
James Simon, Member
John Young, Ex-Officio Member
Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel
Gordon Lopez, Executive Director
Jeanne Frey, Database Manager
Russell Steffee, Systems Operations Manager
Terri Gill, Executive Assistant

GUESTS: Frank Marshall, Montgomery County Hospital District
Rick Erickson, The Woodlands Fire Department
Captain Peggy Frankhouser, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Lt. Joseph Sclider, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Deputy Chief Russell Reynolds, Conroe Police Department
Dianna Porche, AT&T

ABSENT: Ruben Garza, Secretary

Chief Jody Binnion, President, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., noting that Mr. James Simon was running late and Mr. Ruben Garza would be unable to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one requested to address the Board of Managers.

PRESENTATION BY GORDON LOPEZ AND RUSSELL STEFFEE OF EXPENSES RELEVANT TO A NEUTRAL 9-1-1 CALL-CENTER

Chief Binnion noted item one of the agenda, presentation by Gordon Lopez and Russell Steffee of expenses relevant to a neutral 9-1-1 call center.

Mr. Gordon Lopez requested a moment to clarify an item from the previous board meeting; where we were discussing the types of calls the sheriff's office has to answer and the length of time. Mr. Lopez made a comment about one call that lasted over fifteen minutes, and involved a transfer to EMS. The call-taker stayed on the line until the officers arrived. One thing he was trying to illustrate with this instance there are lengthy calls, and these can back up the sheriff's office as the call-taking proves. Often they have to stay on the call to clarify the situation and ensure proper response. Our onus is how NENA standards are going to be met from a 9-1-1 call-taking standpoint. Capt. Frankhouser added the call is available if anyone would like to listen to it, and it was handled properly.

Mr. Lopez noted the board had requested information as to costs for the District to run a neutral call-center. Mr. Russell Steffee put together some numbers and some ways to approach it. One approach has the District handling it while another has another agency taking over neutral 9-1-1 call-taking on a contracted basis. Mr. Lopez opened the floor to Mr. Steffee.

Mr. Steffee directed the board's attention to the hand-out he provided, which would demonstrate the costs entailed with moving to a neutral call-center or contracting with another agency. Page one of the hand-out provides an analysis for moving to a completely neutral scenario under the District's administration. Based on anticipated call volumes, each shift would require four call-takers and one supervisor. The District would hire an Operations Manager and a records clerk. The first year would require capital investments for voice recording equipment, console furniture, elevated flooring, network cabling, et cetera. The projected costs for the first year (2011) are \$1,113,158.55. The District budgeted \$1,285,530.00 for fiscal year 2011 for call-taking services with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and the Conroe Police Department. The first year's savings would be approximately \$172,000.00. In the subsequent years of 2012, 2013 and 2014, the savings would be in excess of \$300,000.00, as the capital expenditures would be met in 2011.

Page two of the hand-out describes the costs to provide neutral services for the calls originating in the county, the area served by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. Capital expenditures would be slightly less than for the full neutral, staffing requirements would be less. However, the first year's expenditures would exceed current budgeted funds by approximately \$15,000.00. Subsequent years, 2012, 2013 and 2014 realize savings of approximately \$125,000.00 per year.

On page three, the District would contract with another agency to answer 9-1-1 calls for wages only, no benefits or other personnel costs. The District would realize the greatest savings by having another agency perform the call-taking function. The first year's savings would approach \$500,000.00, and in 2014 would be nearly \$600,000.00.

Page four proposes contracting with another agency to answer 9-1-1 calls for the area served by the Sheriff's Office only. The cost savings for this proposed solution in the first year would be \$437,000.00, and by the fourth year would approach \$500,000.00.

Mr. Lopez pointed out that the amounts proposed for another agency are base negotiation rates only. The District's stance would be payment for services based on performance, NENA standards and volume of calls. Benefits would have to be paid by the contracted agency. We would pay wages only, to be negotiated annually.

Mr. Foerster asked why there is such a discrepancy between the proposed neutral site costs and what is actually paid to the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Lopez replied the biggest factor is wages. Mr. Foerster asked what starting wages are at the Sheriff's Office. Capt. Frankhouser replied the starting wage is \$26,000.00; however Dorothy is being paid \$43,000.00. Ms. Gill pointed out that Ms. Willis has been with the District for nearly 23 years. Capt. Frankhouser replied there are several people who have been with the Sheriff's Office for a very long time also. Additionally, there are training and certification requirements that must be met within the first year of employment.

Chief Binnion asked about turnover rates with the starting salary of \$26,000.00. Capt. Frankhouser replied they do, we recently lost three, but have kept a steady staff for over a year due to the economy. We have several applicants in process. Her biggest concern at this time is asking the Civil Service Board to increase the probationary period for a call-taker/dispatcher, extending the probationary period to one year. If her request is denied, she will ask them to separate the positions, call-taker and dispatcher, with dispatcher being a promotion. Mr. Paul Virgadamo noted the average the District is paying per position is over \$50,000.00. Capt. Frankhouser replied that is due to overtime and benefits. She is asking the county to increase the dispatcher's salary to 95% of mid-range.

Mr. Lopez observed the way we had forecast the figures takes into account the benefits and overtime. Capt. Frankhouser explained that in asking commissioners' court to approve the increase to 95%, the county would incur an additional \$46,000.00 in wages; the District would in turn incur an additional \$21,000.00 for the people the District funds. There will be an increase if the commissioners approve her request. Additionally, the request for six additional staff will go before commissioners' court, hopefully at the next meeting.

Mr. Foerster noted the proposed costs for the neutral does not include any charges to the District for the transition from the Sheriff's Office to the neutral call center, such as the cost of setting up cabling and furniture. Mr. Lopez asked if he means when another agency provides the services. Mr. Foerster indicated he is unclear as to whether we are using another agency or setting up upstairs. Mr. Lopez stated if the District were to establish a neutral it would likely be set up in the existing classroom, which accounts for the expense of the elevated flooring.

Mr. Foerster explained that on pages three and four there are no capital expenditures stated for contracting with another agency. Mr. Steffee replied another agency would have a voice recorder and console furniture; there would not be a need for the District to fund these items. Mr. Foerster stated it seems that a neutral agency would incur some additional costs besides just employees. Mr. Lopez explained it is all negotiable; the report includes base numbers, a starting point for the negotiations.

POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND REVISE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS

Chief Binnion noted item two of the agenda, discussion on policy sub-committee to review and revise interlocal agreements.

Mr. Lopez indicated all of the District's interlocal agreements need review and revision. One agency is moving out of the communications center; there are back-up center considerations that must be addressed; there is the potential that two agencies will merge together in one center; all of which impact the interlocal agreements. Mr. Lopez stated he is proposing the policy sub-committee begin the process of reviewing the interlocal agreements.

Chief Binnion asked who the members of the committee are. Ms. Gill replied Mr. Virgadamo and Mr. Simon make up the policy sub-committee.

Mr. Virgadamo asked which interlocals are impacted. Mr. Lopez replied all of them. The District has interlocal agreements with the City of Shenandoah, The Woodlands Fire Department, the City of Conroe, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and the Montgomery County Hospital District.

Chief Binnion noted for the record that Mr. James Simon had arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Chief of Staff Carr asked if the city and county attorneys should review the interlocal agreements. Mr. Foerster replied that ultimately they will. Chief Binnion noted they would not sign off on the agreements until they are reviewed. Mr. Lopez stated his take was for the sub-committee, legal counsel and the board to review and approve the suggested changes and then renegotiate with the other agencies.

INVESTMENT AUTHORITY AND SCOPE OF POLICY FY 2010/2011

Chief Binnion noted item three of the agenda, discuss and take action on Investment Authority and Scope of Policy FY 2010/2011.

Mr. Lopez noted the approval of the investment policy is an annual function of the board. Mr. Lopez had consulted with Ms. Linda Patterson of Patterson and Associates, who conducts the seminars. She reviewed the District's investment policy and recommended changes. Mr. Lopez requested that Mr. Robert Gunter of Gunter Consulting perform an in depth comparison of the District's policy with those of the City of Conroe, the

Galveston County Emergency Communication District and the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Network. Mr. Robert VanWassehnova conducted a final review of the revisions.

Chief Binnion asked why Bob Gunter was brought in on the project. Mr. Lopez stated he asked him to do a stare and compare between the District's policy and comparable policies.

Chief Binnion asked for questions. Mr. Foerster asked why, on page fourteen, the language about the policy conforming to existing law was removed, had Gordon gotten an answer on that? Mr. Lopez replied he did not have a chance yesterday. Mr. Virgadamo asked what reasoning accounted for the removal. Mr. Lopez stated it may have been repetitious from another place in the document. Chief of Staff Carr noted she likes it there before the signature lines, and would like it reinserted. Mr. Foerster stated it is implied in the general policy statement and the policy scope at the beginning of the document, it is implied unless expressly prohibited by law.

Mr. Lopez noted that Ms. Patterson charges about \$150 per hour and he would like to contract with her to review the District's current investments and make recommendations to improve the District's financial position. Mr. Foerster stated everyone is comfortable with TexPool. Chief of Staff Carr noted TexPool is right up there even with all investment houses, the safest place to be.

Mr. Foerster stated he is okay with the changes given the fact that the auditor has looked at it, and other eyes have looked at it.

Mr. Virgadamo made the motion to approve the investment policy with the addition of the amendment language. Chief of Staff Carr seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

PERSONNEL POLICIES WITH CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY THE POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

- A. 18.0 Travel and Subsistence**
- B. Longevity**

Chief Binnion noted item four of the agenda, discuss and take action on Personnel Policies with changes recommended by the policy sub-committee, A. 18.0 Travel and Subsistence and B. Longevity.

Mr. Virgadamo thought we had completed these a while back. Mr. Lopez agreed, Travel and Subsistence was reviewed by the policy sub-committee in May 2010, but with the budget and other items it was not placed on the agenda for the Board's approval. We are following the revised policy and using the GSA rates for per diem.

Mr. Lopez explained the policy sub-committee reviewed the Longevity Policy on February 10, 2010, and the policy was deferred to the budget workshops. The recommendation was that it be approved, and make the payments in December.

Mr. Virgadamo made the motion to approve items A and B as presented. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

2011 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE 2011 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Chief Binnion noted items five and six of the agenda, discuss and take action on the 2011 Board Meeting Schedule and on the 2011 Holiday Schedule.

Mr. Lopez explained the meeting schedule follows the current schedule, second Wednesdays in the odd months, and the holidays are those adopted by Montgomery County.

Mr. Virgadamo made the motion to approve the board meeting schedule and 2011 holidays as presented. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chief Binnion adjourned the regular meeting to a closed executive session at 9:50 a.m.

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING

Chief Binnion reconvened the regular meeting at 10: 24 a.m.

Chief Binnion noted item eight of the agenda, consider and take action, if necessary, on personnel matters, item A review Executive Director’s Contract. Chief of Staff Carr made the motion to call a special meeting on December 1, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the Executive Director’s Contract and take action. Mr. Virgadamo seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if action was needed on item B staff wage treatment. This was an information item, no action was required or taken.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chief Binnion noted item nine of the consent agenda, approval of meeting minutes for September 8 and October 12, 2010. Chief of Staff Carr made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Virgadamo seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Chief Binnion noted item ten of the consent agenda, approval of monthly financial statements for the periods ending August 31 and September 30, 2010. Mr. Virgadamo made the motion to approve the financial statements. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Chief Binnion noted item eleven of the consent agenda, approval of the quarterly financial statement for the period ending September 30, 2010. Chief of Staff Carr made the motion to approve the quarterly financial statement. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Chief Binnion noted item twelve of the consent agenda, other matters requiring attention but not immediate action, item A other 9-1-1 items. Mr. Lopez stated he had no items to discuss.

Chief Binnion requested a motion to adjourn. Chief of Staff Carr made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Attest:

Ruben Garza
Secretary

Jody Binnion
President



Montgomery County Emergency Communication District

P.O. Box 1830 Conroe, Texas 77305-1830 (936) 523-5911 FAX (936) 539-9111

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

November 10, 2010



Notice is hereby given to all interested members of the public, of a meeting of the Board of Managers of the above styled District, at **9:00 a.m., Wednesday, November 10, 2010**, at the **MCECD 9-1-1 Boardroom, 150 Hilbig Road, Conroe, Texas**. The purpose of the meeting is as follows:

Open Meeting.

Public Comments. Please sign in and limit comments to three (3) minutes.

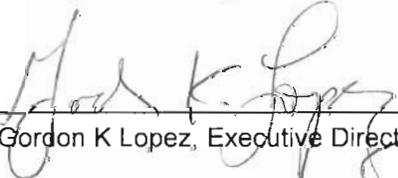
1. Presentation by Gordon Lopez and Russell Steffee of expenses relevant to a neutral 9-1-1 call-center.
2. Discussion on Policy Sub-Committee to review and revise interlocal agreements.
3. Discuss and take action on Investment Authority and Scope of Policy FY 2010/2011.
4. Discuss and take action on Personnel Policies with changes recommended by the Policy Sub-Committee.
 - A. 18.0 Travel and Subsistence
 - B. Longevity
5. Discuss and take action on the 2011 Board Meeting Schedule.
6. Discuss and take action on the 2011 Holiday Schedule.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

7. **The Board may meet in closed Executive Session as authorized per the Texas Open Meetings Act, pursuant to Texas Government Code: Chapter 551.074, personnel matters.**
 - A. Review Executive Director's Contract
 - B. Information on staff wage treatment
8. Reconvene into open session to consider and take action, if necessary, on personnel matters.
 - A. Executive Director's Contract
 - B. Staff wage treatment

CONSENT AGENDA

9. Approval of meeting minutes for September 8 and October 12, 2010.
10. Approval of monthly financial statements for the periods ending August 31, September 30, 2010.
11. Approval of quarterly financial statement for the period ending September 30, 2010.
12. Consider and discuss other matters requiring attention but not immediate action.
 - A. Other 9-1-1 items
13. Adjourn meeting.


Gordon K Lopez, Executive Director

Parking is available in front of the Law Enforcement Center. Please go to the Information Booth in the Center's main lobby and inform the attendant you are here for the 9-1-1 Board Meeting. You will be met at the access gate near the flagpoles. You may also call (936) 523-5911 from the gate located on Hilbig Road. The gate will be opened via remote.

The Montgomery County Emergency Communication District reserves the right to adjourn into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed above, as authorized by Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney); 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property); 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations); 551.074 (Personnel Matters); 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices); and 551.087 (Economic Development).