

Minutes  
Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network  
Board of Managers  
August 25, 2021

The August 25, 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, and legal counsel Tommy Ramsey, Harris County Assistant Attorney were present for the virtual Board meeting. Board Members Vergil Ratliff and Shawn Thompson were not present; 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." Board Member Denman stated his comments regarding the FBCSO funding request were not mentioned in the July 13, 2021 Special Board meeting minutes, and advised that the minutes be amended. Chairman Rau advised that the Special Board meeting minutes be revised and brought back for approval at the September 22, 2021 Board meeting. The minutes of the Board meeting on June 23, 2021 were approved with a motion by Board Member Denman and seconded by Board Secretary Anders.

Agenda Item 3—"Citizens Appearances." Director of Public Safety and Homeland Security, City of Houston, George Buenik stated that the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) was awarded an opportunity to participate in a Regional Resiliency Assessment Program (RRAP) in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. HEC will work with Protective Security Advisors (PSA) that will help identify primary and supporting assets of the 9-1-1 network infrastructure, physical security and cybersecurity. Mr. Buenik mentioned that the PSAs would conduct interviews and gap analysis, and hopes that their results/findings would help guide strategic development and funding in the future. Mr. Buenik will keep the Board updated on this matter as more information becomes available.

Mr. Buenik proceeded with an update on the gate crashed incident that occurred at the HEC, noting that the gate has been fixed. Since the incident, HEC Director, Robert Mock has received funding to install a lockdown security system to secure the building during an emergency. Regarding the electrical issue that HEC

experienced, it did not affect their 9-1-1 call service; however, HPD and HFD dispatching were affected. The City hired a private consultant that provided assessments. The City will be upgrading and replacing multiple systems to rectify the issues and insure that their redundancy systems work properly. Lastly, Mr. Buenik reported about an article released on August 19, 2021 by the Houston Chronicle, headlining “Inside an agonizing three-hour wait for 9-1-1 response to carbon monoxide poisoning in Texas.” The article pertained to an incident regarding response to a 9-1-1 call for service during the 2021 Texas winter storm. Mr. Buenik stated that the incident had nothing to do with call-taking performance during the winter storm, the 9-1-1 system remained operational. HFD Chief Pena is conducting an investigation on HFD staff’s handling of the incident. Chairman Rau thanked Mr. Buenik for the updates. Chairman Rau expressed the importance of grants, especially for GHC 9-1-1, and asked if the City of Houston has a person in charge of their grants program. Mr. Buenik explained that as the Director of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the PSA responsible for the Houston region reached out to him and encouraged HEC to apply for the RRAP. He added that the 9-1-1 system and its emergency operations fall in place with cybersecurity, and the security of critical infrastructure. It is a regional project not only involving HEC, but includes the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network. Mr. Buenik assured Mr. Rau that he would work closely with Mr. Mock and GHC 9-1-1 Executive Director, Stan Heffernan.

Agenda Item 4—“Financial Report.” Chief Financial Officer Tino Fonseca provided a brief overview of the monthly financial report totals ending July 31, 2021 as follows:

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|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Cash and cash equivalents     | \$ 14.0 million |
| • Invested funds for Operations | \$ 10.0 million |
| • Liabilities                   | \$ 7.8 million  |
| • Receipts                      | \$ 26.4 million |
| • Disbursements                 | \$ 22.1 million |

Mr. Fonseca highlighted that the overtime expenses for the City of Houston is \$163,997 over budget. Chairman Rau asked how much will the City of Houston go over budget for the year. Mr. Fonseca projected that based on year-to-date expenses the City of Houston will go over budget \$700,000. Board Secretary Anders asked if the overtime expenses relate to COVID-19 staff shortages. Mr. Mock added that HEC has been experiencing staffing issues due to COVID illness or the need to care for family members. Mr. Mock stated HEC is expected to see overtime go over the budget. Board Member Storemski mentioned that according to Mr. Buenik, a contributing factor is that the City of Houston has a difficult hiring process for filling vacancy positions in which vacancies have to be submitted and approved by the

Mayor's Chief of Staff which is a cost saving measure. HEC collects a huge number of applications to submit and then hold a training class, an ongoing issue, in addition to the Covid-19 related absences. Mr. Mock informed that the hiring process takes about two to three months and the training three months to complete. Mr. Fonseca concluded his report with a brief overview of the remaining budget balance report, Receipts and Disbursements report, the 9-1-1 service fee revenue, and cash expenditures trend-line charts.

Board Secretary Anders inquired about Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) Covid-19 impact on overtime. HCSO Director of Communications, Kathi Yost stated that HCSO is also experiencing short staffing due to COVID-19 cases, and they are having to backfill those positions with overtime. She advised that HCSO temporarily went into a hiring freeze, but they worked with budget management and HR; now the freeze has been lifted and they are hiring again. Ms. Yost added that it has been a challenge for all dispatch centers hiring and retaining applicants due to the stressful nature of handling 9-1-1 calls. It has become a topic of discussion in the PSAP working and operations group. Ms. Yost stated that this has been an issue in the industry and across the country. Board Secretary Anders asked how HCSO is handling employees who have been exposed to COVID. Ms. Yost stated that employees who are symptomatic have to remain off work until they provide a negative test, per the HCSO medical policy.

Agenda Item 5—"Executive Director Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Legislative/Regulatory and Administrative Matters." Executive Director, Stan Heffernan reported on the following FCC updates; on August 11, 2021, the FCC tested the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system. Subscribers, who opted in, received the test alerts. On August 6, 2021, the FCC released an online mapping tool that shows broadband coverage in the US allowing Americans to make voice calls and have data services from a specific address. Next, Mr. Heffernan briefly updated on HB 2911 "NG 9-1-1 Service Fund" he mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 staff has defined areas of funding that could qualify and has provided them to the legislative team. GHC 9-1-1 will continue to keep the Board updated on this matter. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Fonseca if there is an estimated fund value for GHC 9-1-1. Mr. Fonseca stated that GHC 9-1-1 could potentially receive funding of \$20 million over two years 2023 and 2024. He noted that "NG 9-1-1 Service Fund" is not included in the five-year budget plan and will not be included until it is definite, that GHC 9-1-1 will have access to the funds.

Mr. Heffernan reported that on August 3, 2021, due to the rise of COVID-19 cases in the area, the administrative and GIS staff returned to remote work, and are only coming to the office as needed. The red/blue team assignments were re-implemented

for staff. Chairman Rau added that he would like to see GHC 9-1-1 staff vaccination numbers up from where they are. Chairman Rau requested that Mr. Ramsey and Mr. Heffernan look into a vaccination incentive program for the staff. Board Member Denman asked what the GHC 9-1-1 staff vaccination rate was. Mr. Heffernan answered 70% of staff have been vaccinated. Chairman Rau expressed his concern regarding the executive order from Governor Abbott prohibiting government mandates on COVID vaccines, and the effects that the order can have on employee healthcare cost and staffing shortages due to illness. Mr. Heffernan continued with an update on the NENA 2021 conference; stating that it was a great conference with good attendance—two board members and four GHC 9-1-1 staff members attended. Lastly, Mr. Heffernan reported on the Originating Service Provider (OSP) transition to NG9-1-1, noting on August 5, 2021 GHC 9-1-1 took the final step towards NG9-1-1 implementation. Mr. Heffernan announced that the first wireless provider T-Mobile migrated away from the old legacy tandem and to the NG9-1-1 router, another huge milestone. GHC 9-1-1 will continue to migrate wireline and wireless providers in the next months, and be completely transitioned away from the legacy tandem by early next year.

Agenda Item 6—“Operations Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Operational Matters.” Mr. Heffernan reported that there were no internal/external P1 service issue tickets during the month of July, 2021. Mr. Heffernan provided an overview of the network utilization graphs, PSAP 9-1-1 call sessions and trending charts. He proceeded to report on the call statistics provided by Houston Emergency Center (HEC) and Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO). He noted a slight decrease in HEC call volume for the month of July, 2021, which was likely due to the staffing issues as discussed earlier by Mr. Mock. Mr. Heffernan addressed an inquiry regarding the statistic for Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) on the HCSO call statistic report. Mr. Heffernan mentioned that GHC 9-1-1 system is capable of receiving photos and videos. PSAPs and SSAPs can opt-in to receive the MMS service. Ms. Yost explained how the MMS process is handled at HCSO. The pictures and videos are sent by the caller, through a secured link provided by the call-taker. She noted that HCSO has policies and procedures to protect the call-taker from receiving traumatic content. The content is attached to the HCSO CAD system and sent down stream to responders. Board Secretary Anders asked what would happened if a virus is sent through the MMS link by a caller. GHC 9-1-1 Service Officer Roger Hauck said that the information comes from a third party application for texting providers, which does not have any impact on the call-taking system. Chairman Rau asked what the process was when a caller sends picture or video. Mr. Hauck stated that first, it goes through the carrier provider network, then into the 9-1-1 system. Ms. Yost added that the size limitation for videos is set by the carrier, and is currently around one minute. Mr. Heffernan added that GHC 9-1-1 continues

to work with the PSAP Ops group to make sure they have time to create proper call-taking protocols and procedures. Ms. Yost stated that HCSO call-takers are excited to utilize the MMS service and look forward to the advances that the NG9-1-1 has to offer. In regards to Board Secretary Anders concerns about virus threats, the texting solution insures that no virus can get through the 9-1-1 system from utilizing the MMS service.

Next, Mr. Heffernan briefly provided an overview on the following; 9-1-1 call Service Level Agreement (SLA) report for all PSAPs/SSAPs, the GHC 9-1-1 training report, the GIS/database report and the Network Operations Center (NOC) monthly case-load report. Mr. Heffernan reported that ESD 11 and ESD 100 are on schedule for an A.M. cutover on September 1, 2021, and Texas Emergency Call Center (TECC) for an A.M. cutover on September 2, 2021. Chairman Rau asked if everything went well with the new SSAPs in terms of their facilities. Mr. Hauck stated that currently everything is on track with TECC and ESD100. ESD11 is also on track, but experienced some delays in equipment delivery dates. In the event that something happens, GHC 9-1-1 has a contingency plan and SSAPs are prepared to utilize it, if necessary. Mr. Heffernan stated that GHC 9-1-1 will notify the Board when the new SSAPs cutover. Board Secretary Anders stated that the City of Pearland will transferred their service over to East Harris County Communications Center (EHCCOM), and is expected to cutover on September 1, 2021. Lastly, Mr. Heffernan provided more information on the OSP Migration to NG9-1-1 Service. Chairman Rau asked what service provider would be next to migrate to the NG9-1-1 service. GHC 9-1-1 Information Technology Officer, Mike Hayes said that according to Motorola Telecommunication's schedule, AT&T wireless is next.

Agenda Item 7—"Public Information/Education Report—Transmittal and Discussion of Public Education Outreach Efforts." Public Information Officer Sonya Clauson reported that the City of Houston Office of New Americans created a brochure on services available to residents, such as 3-1-1, 2-1-1, and 9-1-1. They worked with GHC 9-1-1 and HEC on the information about 9-1-1. Ms. Clauson mentioned that once the brochure printed, GHC 9-1-1 would help with distribution. She added that the City is also in the process of developing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) that will include the information in the brochure. Board Member Denman asked if the brochure would be available in Spanish. Ms. Clauson stated yes. Next, Ms. Clauson provided an overview of the 2021 public awareness media campaign. The broadcast radio, TV, and Over the Top (OTT) ended in July, 2021. Streaming Radio; Pandora and Spotify ended in August, 2021. Ms. Clauson reported that the 9-1-1 billboards will end in December, 2021. After the term is up, the billboards may stay at their current location or be moved to another location, noting that there could be some additional digital billboards.

Ms. Clauson presented charts on the social media trends and digital marketing trends from July, 2021. Ms. Clauson concluded her report with snapshots of the GHC 9-1-1 social media messages that focused on weather preparedness messages, GHC 9-1-1 training site and courses, 9-1-1 emergency profile sign-ups, and 9-1-1 educational messages.

Action: Agenda Item 8—"Consideration for Adoption of a Resolution Designing September 11, 2021 as 9-1-1 Day in the Territory Served by GHC 9-1-1." Ms. Clauson presented the resolution declaring September 11, 2021 as 9-1-1 Day in Harris County and Fort Bend Counties. Each year GHC 9-1-1 honors 9-1-1 telecommunicators and dispatchers for their service to emergency communications on September 11, 2021. Ms. Clauson stated that the resolution would be distributed to all 9-1-1 call centers, so they can post it in their departments and encourage the jurisdictions to recognize 9-1-1 staff. She mentioned that is now also a day of remembrance of the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, known as 9/11, and recognition of public safety personnel for their service on that tragic day. Board Secretary Anders motioned to approve the request. Board Member Denman seconded the motion. Motion passed. GHC 9-1-1 Office Manager Daveda Hughes asked the Board's permission to insert their e-signatures in the resolution. All Board Members agreed.

Action: Agenda Item 9—"Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (FBCSO) Funding Request—Discussion and Consideration for Approval of the FBCSO Funding Request." Mr. Fonseca stated that at the July 13, 2021 Special Board meeting, FBCSO presented their funding request for additional 9-1-1 call taking staff. The Board directed GHC 9-1-1 staff to work with FBCSO on a recommendation for the Board to discuss and consider. Chairman Rau stated that regarding GHC 9-1-1's enabling legislation that is in place in regards to HCSO and HEC, should there be an interlocal agreement/MOU between GHC 9-1-1 and FBCSO outline the policies and procedures on the funds. Mr. Fonseca stated yes, the Board could approve the budget based on a contingent agreement. Mr. Fonseca added that an interlocal agreement with FBCSO can be brought back to the Board, as there is one for HCSO and HEC. Chairman Rau requested that GHC 9-1-1 staff create an interlocal agreement/MOU for FBCSO that would be similar to what is currently in place with HCSO and HEC to present at a future Board meeting for discussion and approval. Board Secretary Anders made the motion to approve GHC 9-1-1 staff recommendations and guidelines as a condition to fund FBCSO. Board member Denman seconded to the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Agenda Item 10—"GHC 9-1-1 Salary Study—Discussion and Consideration for Approval to Authorize the Executive Director to Contract with

Public Sector Personnel Consultants to Update the GHC 9-1-1 Staff Compensation Plan.” Mr. Heffernan stated that the existing GHC 9-1-1 compensation plan is based on 2016 data collected by Public Sector Personnel Consultants (PSPC). Staff is requesting to contract PSPC to update the compensation plan to reflect the current labor market data. Board Member Denman suggested that staff obtain details and documents on what the consultant truly surveys. Next, Mr. Heffernan, mentioned that all GHC 9-1-1 job descriptions (including technical and operational) and job codes related to different technical positions have been updated. Board Secretary Anders inquired about the \$1,500 fee for each on-site meetings or presentations requested by the Board. Mr. Heffernan stated that the on-site meetings are upon request and the consultants would meet with the leadership team to go over certain materials, which have been done in the past. Board Member Denman asked for clarification regarding the second point listed in the PSPC “major tasks and deliverables” list. Mr. Fonseca explained that PSPC would ask GHC 9-1-1 for assistance on who to include in the survey for comparison on similar business’/agencies and positions (state and local), including private and public. Board Secretary Anders asked if PSPC would survey out of state. Mr. Fonseca stated that they would focus on conducting the survey locally. Chairman Rau asked if PSPC would be comparing GHC 9-1-1 salaries to private or public sectors or a combination of both. Mr. Fonseca mentioned that most technical positions are more on the market sector, which they do a hybrid. Chairman Rau stated that as a public entity he hopes that PSPC conducts a reasonable and comparable salary survey. Board Member Denman made the motion to approve and authorize staff to contract PSPC to update the GHC 9-1-1 compensation plan. Board Secretary Anders seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11—“Transmittal and Discussion of Proposed Budget for Year 2022.” Mr. Fonseca stated that the proposed draft budget presentation is to gather the Board’s input, before final approval is requested at the September 22, 2021 Board meeting. No official Board action will be required. However, Mr. Fonseca said that the salary budget in the current draft does not include merit increases. He would need the Board’s direction regarding the annual percentage amount for merit payroll increases for 2022. Board Member Storemski requested that Mr. Fonseca separate the salaries and benefits and list them as two separate line items, as done with HCSO and HEC. Chairman Rau requested that Mr. Fonseca provide a history on merit increases. Mr. Fonseca stated he would provide that information to the Board. Board Member Storemski added, because a percentage amount of money is approved by the Board, and it is at the discretion of the Executive Director on how to distribute the money to GHC 9-1-1 staff, it is important to separate salaries and benefits. Mr. Fonseca proceeded to review the details outlined in the proposed budget: I. Five year projection 2022-2026; II. Summary Projected Receipts and Operational/Capital

Budget 2022; III. Operational and Capital budget 2022; IV Graph for 2022 Budget; V. Exhibits. Mr. Fonseca noted that FBCSO funding request was included in the draft budget. Mr. Fonseca highlighted that there's a projected 10% fee increase for wireline for year 2023 in the five-year plan. There was a brief discussion about the five-year projection decreases on the service fees, operational/capital budget, and the ending capital fund. Mr. Fonseca added that the wireless fee legislation is not included in GHC 9-1-1's five-year projection budget. Regarding the history of merit increases, Chairman Rau asked Mr. Fonseca to provide numbers on what other local governments are doing in regards to merit increases. Mr. Fonseca stated that he would provide that information to the Board as soon as he reaches out and obtains the information. Mr. Fonseca continued with an overview of the five-year plan, he pointed out that column six "exhibit and reference# for more detail" references additional detail in the exhibits in the budget package. Board Member Storemski inquired about the salaries and benefits line item, his concern was about the percent of salary increases approved by the Board would be the salary not including the benefit. Mr. Fonseca explained and stated he would get with Mr. Storemski and provide detail on the salaries and benefits.

Next, Mr. Fonseca introduced HEC Director Robert Mock who presented HEC's 2022 proposed budget. Mr. Mock explained HEC's budget requests in detail and highlighted that the City Council approved a 3% salary increase each year for the next three years. Mr. Mock concluded his presentation, then answered a few questions regarding HEC's proposed incentive plan. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Fonseca if HEC's proposed incentive plan is included in the GHC 9-1-1 proposed budget for 2022. Mr. Fonseca stated yes, HEC's total request of \$17.8 million is included. Without any further questions, Mr. Mock closed his presentation.

Mr. Fonseca mentioned that he emailed, to all Board Members, the breakdown of the salary and benefits increase options and calculation. Mr. Fonseca explained that if the Board approves a 1% salary increase, GHC 9-1-1 staff would get a pot totaling approximately \$41,303 in salary increases, including \$9,381 in benefit costs including payroll taxes and retirement, a total of \$50,684.

Next, HCSO 9-1-1 Coordinator, Tim Staten presented HCSO's 2022 proposed budget. He highlighted that HCSO's audio/video project is to go out for bid soon, and explained that the project will allow call-takers to have heads-up display in call statistics, interactive radar, and traffic map. Mr. Staten mentioned that the creation of Holistic Assistance Responder Team (H.A.R.T) will be housed under Harris County Public Health and is set to launch in 2022. Chairman Rau asked Mr. Fonseca if the HCSO request was included in the GHC 9-1-1 proposed budget. Mr. Fonseca stated yes. Board Secretary Anders asked if there is a salary increase for HCSO. Ms.



Yost stated yes, HCSO was working with human resources doing a base salary overhaul and doing a nationwide salary survey. Chairman Rau asked if HCSO would have a salary increase across the board, like HEC. Ms. Yost stated that HCSO is preparing to request a 4% salary increase across the board at the Harris County Commissioners budget cycle presentation, the fiscal budget runs from March thru February, and budget requests are due in October, 2021. Chairman Rau asked if HCSO salary increase gets approved by Harris County Commissioners Court, is it then adjusted in the GHC 9-1-1 proposed budget. Mr. Fonseca stated that HCSO's salary increase request is included in the proposed budget and is funded on a reimbursement basis.

Next, Mr. Fonseca mentioned that at the July 13, 2021 Special Board meeting, FBCSO was given the option to come back and present their funding request at this meeting. Mr. Fonseca reported that FBCSO staff funding request was for 28 staff positions. Due to FBCSO's call volume, GHC 9-1-1 recommends funding 15 staff positions, totaling \$1.1 million for one year. Chairman Rau asked if FBCSO accepted GHC 9-1-1's recommendation. Mr. Fonseca stated that he discussed the recommendation with FBCSO Public Safety Communications Manager, Meghan Rivas, and advised her that FBCSO could present their appeal at the August 25, 2021 Board meeting, but he has not heard back from FBCSO.

Mr. Fonseca continued with the remainder of the budget documents, he highlighted that Exhibit H, row 16 "operational budget" did not include FBCSO's funding request, and the final budget impact in row 19 "Ending capital fund-December 31." Mr. Fonseca concluded the proposed budget presentation. Chairman Rau thanked HEC and HCSO for presenting their budget requests; he also thanked Mr. Fonseca for doing a fantastic budget presentation. Chairman Rau advised GHC 9-1-1 staff to get with FBCSO to make sure that they are ok with GHC 9-1-1's recommendation of funding 15 staff positions. Board Members suggested a 3% for the merit increases for the 2022 Budget. Chairman Rau noted that the suggested amount was not a final decision, until the GHC 9-1-1 budget for 2022 is presented for approval at the September, 2021 Board meeting.

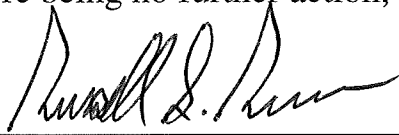
Chairman Rau announced that the next meeting of the Board of Managers is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22, 2021 and the focus of the meeting is the approval of the GHC 9-1-1 budget. He added that it is unknown if the Board meeting would be in-person or the Zoom platform and asked Mr. Ramsey for guidance on that decision.

Board Member Denman reported that he attended a memorial service for Mike Hayes who passed away on August 8, 2021. Mr. Hayes worked for the City of

Webster as s Lead Telecommunications Operator and the City of Nassau Bay EMS. Mr. Hayes was very dedicated to emergency communications and public safety.

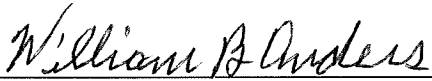
Regarding the Board meeting next month, Board Secretary Anders mentioned that a minimum of three Board Members had to attend in-person and two Board Members could join by video conference with a monitor greater than 27' inches, if anyone was reluctant to attend. Mr. Ramsey stated that Board Secretary Anders was correct. Mr. Ramsey mentioned that he would provide the Board a summary of requirements for video conferencing.

There being no further action, the meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.



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Russell S. Rau, Chairman



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William B. Anders, Secretary