

II. Approval of Minutes—Board Meeting on July 22, 2025

Minutes

Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

Board of Managers Meeting

DATE July 22, 2025
TIME 1:03 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, Vergil Ratliff, Shawn Thompson and legal counsel Nicholas Santulli and Shannon Fleming were present. There were 25 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 28, 2025, were approved with a motion by Secretary Anders, and seconded by Board Member Denman. The vote passed unanimously.
- III. **Citizens Comments**— Director of Communications Rebecca Densmore from Emergency Services District (ESD) 100 requested to be added to the August 27, 2025, Board of Managers meeting agenda to present a formal proposal for additional financial support related to staffing. The request aimed to maintain a high level of quality service and meet growing demands effectively. The request was accepted, and Ms. Densmore will present at the next Board of Managers meeting.
- IV. **Board Member Comments/Updates** – Board Member Denman shared that he had recently received an emergency text message stating that Pennsylvania was experiencing a state-wide 9-1-1 outage. He expressed appreciation for the reliability and redundancy of GHC’s 9-1-1 system and hoped such a message would never be necessary locally. Executive Director Mr. Heffernan assured the Board that GHC’s systems are highly reliable, with staff working diligently to maintain that reliability, and noted that, unlike Pennsylvania, GHC’s 9-1-1 systems operate on a district level rather than as a state-wide solution.

Board Member Denman expressed appreciation to Board Member Thompson for AT&T’s \$5,000 Silent Hero sponsorship of the GHC Golf Tournament. He also commended Mrs. Mindi Bartee and the organization for the successful Awards Banquet held on June 18, 2025, at Pinstripes in Houston, Texas, praising the event’s organization and execution, and expressed hope that similar events would continue to honor telecommunications.

Board Member Ratliff expressed her condolences for the lives lost at Camp Mystic and for others who perished due to flash flooding in Kerr County. Board Member Thompson acknowledged Board Member Ratliff’s remarks,

extended her own condolences, and noted that AT&T had been and continued to be involved in the response to the event, while also reflecting on the moral difficulty of understanding why such tragedies occur.

Chairman Rau inquired about Reverse 9-1-1 capabilities, specifically whether alerts could target a particular geographic area and reach all cell phones within that area. Mr. Heffernan responded that while GHC does not manage these systems, targeted alerts are sent using polygon-shaped launches. It was noted that Harris County does not control Reverse 9-1-1 alerts, nor the associated data, and does not push these systems to the public. Director David Klozik clarified that the system is managed by Harris County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), not the Harris County Sheriff's Office, and that a request for the Sheriff's Office to have the same level of access had been denied. Board Member Thompson added that alerts are first sent to those in immediate danger, with normal calls being secondary, and that while county-wide launches are possible, the control is generally focused on the affected area. Chairman Rau requested additional information on how the system operates within Harris County. Mr. Heffernan confirmed he would provide further details at the next Board of Managers meeting and work with major centers to determine how the system could be utilized locally. Secretary Anders asked how Fort Bend County handles these systems, and Public Safety Communications Manager Meghan Rivas from the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office stated that, following Hurricane Harvey, their OEM assumed control of notifications, with the capability to send smaller targeted alerts, but not on the same scale as Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS).

V. **PSAP Comments/Updates** – No PSAP wished to present to the Board of Managers.

VI. **Executive Director Report** – Executive Director Mr. Heffernan presented the May and June 2025 dashboards to the Board of Managers, highlighting SLA performance across the 9-1-1 Services Division, Operations Division, and IT Division. He noted that the data reflected only Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3 incident tickets, excluding service request tickets.

Community Outreach Specialist Justena Kelly presented the Public Information and Education updates, beginning with Community Outreach. In May and June 2025, GHC supported 25 community events, providing public education materials, the Cell Phone Sally costume, and 9-1-1 booths. A monthly Public Education Outreach newsletter was launched in May to inform educators about available resources and upcoming events. GHC also announced the winners of its first-ever "What is an Emergency?" Coloring Contest and began coordinating call center tours and prize presentations for the winners. In the Digital Media Update, social media content featured topics such as heat safety, mental health awareness for 9-1-1 telecommunicators, general 9-1-1 education, system features like medical information and live streaming, "The Voice Behind the Call," texting 9-1-1, summer safety tips for children, the coloring contest winners, and hurricane preparedness. Nextdoor remained the largest audience platform, with Facebook followers increasing in May and June due to an ongoing campaign. YouTube impressions also spiked as a result of the campaign. In the Website section, the GHC Golf Tournament was added to the 911.org website, contributing to a slight increase in web traffic in May, followed by a slight decrease in June compared to the previous year.

In the Additional Items section, Mrs. Kelly reported on the new Public Service Announcement (PSA). On May 29, 2025, GHC 9-1-1 and the Houston Emergency Center partnered with Brand Ranch Media to film a PSA highlighting Next Generation 9-1-1 features, including Text-to-9-1-1 and the ability to share photos, videos, or

live streams during emergencies. Mrs. Mindi Bartee and Mr. Roderick Jackson served as actors in the PSA. The message encourages the public to confirm feature availability with their local police. The PSA will be shared on GHC's social media platforms, website, and potentially through local media outlets. The Board viewed the PSA during the meeting, which runs 1 minute and 40 seconds, with additional shorter versions, including one formatted for smartphones.

Mr. James Fogarty from Brand Ranch Media presented a report on the 2025 public awareness campaign results. The presentation began with the "Don't Call Us for That" advertisement. From June 1 to July 16, 2025, GHC 9-1-1 ran two successful media campaigns: the "Don't Call Us for That" public awareness initiative and a recruitment campaign targeting job seekers. Both campaigns achieved significant increases in website traffic, engagement, and ad impressions. Website users rose by 139%, with the Non-Emergency Resources page increasing 906% and the Job Openings page up 57%. The public awareness campaign aired across broadcast, cable, streaming TV, radio, Spotify, social media, and YouTube, using humor to discourage non-emergency calls and direct the public to proper resources. Streaming TV ads aired nearly 380,000 times, reaching over 128,000 households and generating 2,730 verified website users. YouTube views increased 1,934%, totaling 734,000 views and over 1.4 million impressions. Spotify reached more than 629,000 users with 813,000 non-skippable ad plays. Facebook and Instagram experienced a 260% increase in link clicks and over 1.3 million video views combined. The recruitment campaign used geographic targeting within 10 miles of open positions and keyword targeting via Google Search and YouTube to reach active job seekers. Google Ads generated 4,444 clicks from over 326,000 impressions, with targeting adjusted as positions were filled. Broadcast radio and TV spots aired in English and Spanish on major local stations to maximize reach. Overall, the campaigns delivered strong performance across digital and traditional media, increasing visibility and engagement.

Following Mr. Fogarty's presentation, Board Member Vergil inquired about retention rates at major centers. Mrs. Rivas with the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office reported approximately 80% retention, with three open positions and a pool of potential hires, while Mr. Klok with the Harris County Sheriff's Office noted that HR covers the entire Sheriff's Office, including the jail, but is currently fully staffed. Mr. Fogarty remarked that this information is valuable to Brand Ranch Media, as Ms. Kelly provides regular staffing updates, allowing their team to immediately re-target recruitment ads to areas of need, in contrast to previous untargeted campaigns. Chairman Rau and Board Member Ratliff commended the presentation, with Board Member Ratliff noting her appreciation for both the comedic and authentic aspects of the ads. Mr. Fogarty also addressed a previous question from Board Member Denman regarding advertising on Nextdoor, explaining that engagement metrics are misleading because impressions are counted when users view emails sent by the platform, rather than through active engagement. Board Member Denman suggested excluding these inflated numbers from campaign data and commended Brand Ranch Media's efforts to increase hiring, improve retention, and reduce unnecessary 9-1-1 calls, noting a decrease in such calls and expressing interest in determining whether the campaigns contributed to this trend.

Mr. Heffernan concluded the Executive Director section of the report by congratulating Ms. Norma Vault, Human Resources Manager, on attaining her Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) certification from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

- VII. **Fiscal Division Report**— Fiscal Division Officer Mr. Richard Corbitt presented the Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2025, beginning with the investment report for the same month, noting that GHC remains in a

strong financial position. He reported that invested fund yields remain around 4%, while potential Federal Reserve rate adjustments could impact treasury-based investments. Mr. Corbitt then reviewed the 2025 PSAP staffing report for major centers—Houston Emergency Center (HEC), Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO), and Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO)—for April through June, indicating stable staffing levels. In the main financial report, he noted that the 2021 APRA Grant is complete, and that the Public Education section is currently under budget, though upcoming Brand Ranch Media invoices are expected to align expenditures. He also highlighted the new FBCSO 9-1-1 call and training center, projecting increased numbers by year-end. Board Member Denman requested comparative pie charts with other agencies statewide and nationally, to which Mr. Corbitt agreed, noting the challenge of finding comparable agencies due to GHC’s unique structure. Mr. Heffernan confirmed that GHC would gather data, including salary comparisons, to create a comparative spreadsheet. Mr. Corbitt then concluded his report.

- VIII. **9-1-1 Services Division Report**—9-1-1 Services Division Officer Mr. Roger Hauck provided an overview of PSAP call statistics, noting a dip in call volume between May and June. He suggested a possible correlation with the ongoing “Don’t Call Us for That” campaign, which was viewed positively. Trend charts showed no unusual activity. At the major centers, Houston Emergency Center (HEC) reported a decrease in June call volume with a slight increase in service level, trending positively. Harris County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) and Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office (FBCSO) exhibited similar patterns with dips in call volume. Mr. Hauck explained that FBCSO’s switch to 12-hour shifts accounted for the zero reported in the “evening shifts” row. Other municipalities maintained strong SLA performance, averaging 97%. He noted a minor SLA decline for Village Fire, attributable to a low average call volume and a spike on June 18, which temporarily affected their average.

PSAP Training Manager Ms. Mindi Bartee provided a summary of the PSAP Training Updates. GHC hosted two 9-1-1 Equipment courses—one for HEC and another for municipalities—with a total of nine students across both courses. Additionally, two Professional Growth Courses were held: “Handling Suicidal and Despondent Callers” in May and “Lessons Learned from an Active Shooter Incident” in June. In the Additional Updates section, Ms. Bartee reported that the May Wellness Wednesday session had 30 participants and received excellent feedback, with the next session scheduled for June 30. In June, GHC hosted a PSAP Operations meeting where agencies discussed current and upcoming 9-1-1 features and participated in an MCU assembly activity aligned with hurricane preparedness. Finally, Ms. Bartee highlighted the Awards Luncheon at Pinstripes in Houston, which was attended by 48 participants and was well received.

Mr. Hauck reported an additional item in the 9-1-1 Services section, noting that the Friendswood Police Department temporarily relocated dispatch operations during renovations. GHC Facilities and 9-1-1 Services installed data and power at the temporary site, and call-taking positions were successfully transitioned on June 16, 2025. The department is scheduled to return to the renovated center on July 9, 2025.

Board Member Ratliff inquired whether HCSO and FBCSO have workout facilities for PSAP personnel. Ms. Rivas with FBCSO stated that employees can access a facility across the street during lunch hours and noted that the new facility under construction will include a workout area on the lower level. Mr. Klozik with HCSO confirmed they have a facility at their location, though funding has prevented its full completion. Chairman Rau asked about a facility at HEC, and Mr. Heffernan and Mr. Hauck confirmed that one exists.

- IX. **Operations Division (Ops) Report** – Operations Division Officer Mr. Samuel Mitchell summarized his section, beginning with facility updates. GHC facilities personnel completed UPS battery upgrades at seven sites, a project that took approximately four weeks. Operations also spent a week at the North Datacenter performing property maintenance, including fence upkeep, irrigation repairs, and interior updates. The next scheduled cleanup is planned for Fall 2025.

- X. **Information Technology (IT) Division Report**— Information Technology Division Officer Mr. Michael Hayes provided a summary of GIS activity for May and June 2025, noting no unusual findings. In email security metrics, six inbound malware incidents were detected in May and two in June. Internet Access Protection charts indicated zero malicious content for both months, reflecting strong performance. In the Managed Detection & Response section, Mr. Hayes explained that the IT department’s SLA percentages appeared low due to a recent security assessment audit; the service provider managing cybersecurity alerts detected the auditor’s activity, resulting in a high volume of tickets that were not closed, temporarily impacting SLA calculations. The audit is nearing completion, with a report in progress. Regarding Managed Endpoint Detection & Response, the 45 critical and high alerts for May were attributed to the auditor. Chairman Rau suggested scheduling an Executive Session to address the cybersecurity report.

- XI. **Action Item: 9-1-1 Day Resolution** – Consideration and approval of a resolution designating September 11, 2025, as 9-1-1 Day in the territory served by Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network. GHC 9-1-1, along with the State of Texas and NENA, will honor 9-1-1 telecommunicators on September 11, 2025, designated as 9-1-1 Day. A resolution declaring the day in Harris and Fort Bend Counties has been prepared for signature and will be shared with local officials and call centers to recognize emergency communications personnel. The resolution was read by Chairman Rau, motioned by Secretary Anders, and seconded by Board Member Denman. Vote passed unanimously.

- XII. **Taken out-of-order: Item – GHC 9-1-1 Annual Golf Tournament Committee Discussion.** During the Board Meeting, golf committee member Mr. Pat Pollen made outreach calls to secure sponsorships and donations for the Golf Tournament, resulting in an extensive list of contributors offering rounds of golf, donated items, dinner reservations, team sign-ups, and more. Board Member Denman congratulated Board Member Thompson on AT&T’s \$5,000 Silent Hero sponsorship.

- XIII. **Taken out-of-order: Announcements** – The next Board of Managers Meeting was scheduled for August 27, 2025, and save the date for the Golf Tournament being held September 18, 2025 at the Golf Club of Houston.

Break at 2:42 PM

Reconvened meetings at 2:52 PM

XIV. Item: Budget Workshop – Discussion of proposed budget for the year 2026.

The 2026 Budget sheet was presented on the projectors, with Mr. Heffernan beginning the discussion by reviewing the 10-year projection. He noted that Proposition 8 funds were intended to cover the .25 cents needed from service fees, which should sustain operations until 2029–2030. He clarified that this would be a high-level discussion, with no action expected. Chairman Rau asked when financial trouble might arise, and Mr. Heffernan responded that challenges were anticipated around 2029–2030, further noting that some smaller entities were already considering service cuts next year due to lack of funding. Chairman Rau expressed concern that the Texas Legislature has refused to increase 9-1-1 service fees, warning that in the future GHC may need to reduce services, potentially requiring entities like the City of Houston to fund salaries locally. He emphasized the importance of pursuing other opportunities, stating that GHC cannot wait on the Legislature and must find its own solutions. He also noted that since the Texas Legislature does not meet again until 2027, that session will be GHC’s final opportunity to pursue service fee increase legislation before 2029. Chairman Rau proposed creating a Board subcommittee dedicated to legislative efforts. Mr. Corbitt then informed the Board that he was attending classes on obtaining government grants, which Chairman Rau commended, adding that even pass-through grants benefiting member governments would be valuable.

Continuing the budget discussion, Mr. Corbitt reported that \$70 million was expected to be in the bank by year-end, including \$20.3 million in ARPA funds and \$28.4 million in state broadband funding, with additional interest earnings. He noted wireless fee revenue is projected to grow 2.5% annually due to population increases, while wireline revenue is projected to decline 1.5% annually over the next 4–5 years. Chairman Rau requested that the budget account for all HEC staff positions, even if vacancies remain. Mr. Corbitt noted that the sheet reflected a 3% increase in the operational budget over the coming years. Chairman Rau requested that Board Members to send any budget requests to Mr. Corbitt via email. He also posed a specific question for the next workshop regarding how much revenue a five-cent increase on mobile phones would generate, along with a request for a line-item overview of increases and decreases in GHC’s budget.

The budget discussion continued with salary adjustments, including a 4% staff increase. The GHC budget increase also includes the addition of a new social media listening tool, which Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Heffernan explained will support public education and enhance situational awareness. A significant line item was Network Connectivity, with Mr. Hauck explaining the implementation of the new Vesta NXT platform, which includes both hardware and software upgrades for all PSAPs and represents the next evolution of 9-1-1 telecommunicators. These upgrades, which occur approximately every seven years, will enhance resiliency and contingencies.

Mr. Corbitt highlighted operational updates, including the addition of health insurance costs from HCSO, resulting in a \$1.9 million increase compared to the 2025 budget. Reviewing the major PSAPs in detail (HEC, HCSO, and FBCSO), Mr. Corbitt explained that HEC has a 4% increase for salary raises, and HCSO’s 26.2% increase reflected not only health insurance but also the addition of three new civil service-protected “EDC Watch Commander” positions. Chairman Rau commented that this is a great step at having a civil service operated cell center. FBCSO’s 17.9% increase was attributed to a significant salary increases for supervisor positions to make this position more desirable, and by doing so, was able to fill all 4 GHC supervisor positions. In response to a


question from Board Member Ratliff, Ms. Rivas clarified that bilingual and trainer pay are not yet in place at FBCSO but are currently under development.

Mr. Corbitt concluded his summary of the remaining budget comparison details sheet, and Chairman Rau reminded the Board to email any further questions or requests ahead of the next Board meeting.

There being no further action, the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell S. Rau", written over a horizontal line.

Russell S. Rau, Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William B. Anders", written over a horizontal line.

William B. Anders, Secretary