

**MINUTES OF THE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**March 26, 2014**

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

**BOARD ATTENDING**

PRESENT: Paul Virgadamo, President  
Vicky Rudy, Vice President  
James Simon, Secretary  
Tommy Gage, Member

ABSENT: Robert Hudson, Treasurer  
John Young, Ex-Officio Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel  
Robert VanWassehnova, CPA  
Chip VanSteenberg, Executive Director  
Jeanne Frey, Operations Manager  
Roberto Gutierrez, Systems Manager  
Robert Brewer, Systems Technician  
Regina Payne, Database Coordinator  
Jeffrey Losek, GIS Data Specialist  
Terri Gill, Executive Assistant  
Rick Erickson, Woodlands Fire Department  
Matt Walkup, Montgomery County Hospital District  
Capt. Peggy Frankhouser, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office  
Lt. Allison Allen, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Ms. Vicky Rudy, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., noting Chief Robert Hudson and Mr. John Young were unable to attend and Mr. Paul Virgadamo would be late.

**Public Comments**

No one requested to address the Board.

**Annual Audit Fiscal Year 2013 conducted by VanWassehnova and Associates**

Ms. Rudy noted item one of the agenda, consider and take action, if necessary, on Annual Audit Fiscal Year 2013 conducted by VanWassehnova and Associates.

Mr. Chip VanSteenberg stated Robert VanWassehnova and Associates had conducted the audit for Fiscal Year 2013.

Mr. Robert VanWassehnova noted he would hit some of the highlights, which included an increase in net position of nearly \$400,000. Mr. VanWassehnova noted, on page 22 of the financial report, the summary of the status of the retirement plan, the actuarial valuation, holding steady at 80%.

Ms. Rudy inquired about the GASB requirements. Mr. VanWassehnova stated the new rule is not in effect yet and the report may change but the computations will remain the same based on actuarial studies.

Mr. VanWassehnova added the documentation and controls are good and it is a pleasure to work with this group.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the district's cash position is up by almost \$200,000, but the revenue did drop a bit due to a settlement as a result of a Supreme Court case. The district participates in the Texas County and District Retirement System, whose investment return assumption is 8%, which is high and may be the reason why the funding percentage is not higher.

Mr. James Simon made the motion to approve the Annual Audit Fiscal Year 2013 conducted by VanWassehnova and Associates. Sheriff Tommy Gage seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Offering SMS Text Messaging to Partner Agencies**

Ms. Rudy noted item two of the agenda, consider and take action offering SMS text messaging to partner agencies.

(Mr. Paul Virgadamo arrived at 12:15 p.m.)

Mr. VanSteenberg stated text messaging is the most talked about subject when 9-1-1 agencies get together. The four largest wireless carriers made a voluntary agreement with NENA and APCO to provide text messaging to their customers starting May 15<sup>th</sup> of this year. A PSAP must notify the carrier they are ready to accept text messages, the carrier then has six months to start delivering text messages. There are three different methods of delivering text messages, each with strengths and weaknesses.

The MCECD staff believes it is best to allow 9-1-1 agencies that are anxious to begin accepting text messages to take the lead. The PSAPs in Montgomery County can then have an opportunity to see the systems work. The local PSAP community has discussed and followed the pending regulations.

The staff asked the Board to go on record stating MCECD is ready to facilitate text messaging when the partner agencies are ready to accept them. The PSAPs are more cautious due to the possible implications. Captain Peggy Frankhouser stated a public education campaign is needed, and there are multiple implications which make them reluctant to deploy. Mr. VanSteenberg added good information will be available once the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Network deploys the service and their public education campaign.

Mr. James Simon summed up, "What you are really wanting to do is push it forward while taking a back seat?" Mr. VanSteenberg replied affirmatively.

Mr. Simon made the motion to approve the offering of SMS text messaging to the partner agencies. Sheriff Gage seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Program for Testing Wireless Location Accuracy**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item three of the agenda, consider and take action authorizing a program for testing wireless location accuracy.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the district has not been proactive on the issue of wireless location accuracy. Two things: First when a cell phone call is made, is it routing to the correct PSAP based on upon the location of the cell tower and the information related to that cell tower? Second, is the location of the caller being accurately reported? FCC regulations require a GPS enabled handset is accurate within 50 meters and if not GPS enabled the location must be accurate within 300 meters.

There are over 300 cell towers in Montgomery County and each site has three faces for 360° coverage, which adds up to more than one thousand potential points for testing. There are currently two routing protocols in place for wireless phone calls and a third is being added. Wireless calls originating in the City of Conroe go to Conroe PD while all others route to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. The third protocol being added is for wireless calls originating in The Woodlands.

The staff requested authorization to hire summer help to complete the testing, and if any discrepancies are found the carrier will be notified.

Mr. Simon made the motion to authorize a program for testing wireless location accuracy. Ms. Rudy seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Update on Planned Projects**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item four of the agenda, consider and discuss an update on planned projects.

#### **A. Microwave Network**

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the microwave network will connect all sites that house 9-1-1 systems provided and maintained by the district. The parameters of the project have changed and staff is working with the vendor to get a quote to present to the Board.

#### **B. Call Processing and reporting systems**

Mr. VanSteenberg stated this year's budget includes \$825,000 to upgrade the back room equipment (servers, switches, routers, etc.) at each PSAP, which is a precursor to upgrading each 9-1-1 workstation throughout the county. Staff estimated the cost to upgrade the workstations would be an additional \$1.5 million. After discussions with AT&T and Cassidian, we now propose to replace the whole system as one project. AT&T submitted a quote for the project totaling nearly \$1.2 million. The staff plans to present the quote to the board for consideration at the May meeting.

As part of this project, the staff will recommend replacing the current reporting system (Aurora) with a program provided by ECaTS. ECaTS provides a user-interface that is easier to navigate and can be accessed from anywhere by using an internet connection. The estimate for ECaTS is \$20,000 for installation and \$35,000 per year for three years.

#### **C. Self-hosting ALI Database**

Mr. VanSteenberg stated AT&T provides access to the Automatic Location Information (ALI) database for MCECD's calls. The staff estimates the district can save \$100,000 per year by self-hosting its own database. This is a complex project with several steps. The first step was to obtain certification from the Public Utility Commission as a certified telephone utility. The PUC acted on our application in late January and granted our request. The staff is in the process of massaging our database to improve accuracy and reliability. Once the database is ready, the District will need to contract with DataMaster to facilitate the self-hosting and sign an interlocal agreement with Great Harris County 9-1-1 to use their servers and facilities.

#### **D. Relocate Host B**

Mr. VanSteenberg noted the 9-1-1 network runs a redundant system. Several years ago there were not a lot of options for the location of Host B. Now there are several facilities that could adequately house Host B. The staff is reviewing options and will move Host B upon completion of the review.

No action was taken.

### **Update on The Woodlands Study for Conversion to Primary PSAP**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item five on the agenda, consider and discuss an update on The Woodlands study for conversion to primary PSAP.

Mr. VanSteenberg reported The Woodlands had commissioned 9-1-1 Insight to study the costs and implications of becoming a primary PSAP. They have decided not to pursue becoming a primary PSAP at this time, due to numerous obstacles.

No action was taken.

### **Various Plans to Reduce Expenses**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item six of the agenda, consider and discuss various plans to reduce expenses.

Mr. VanSteenberg noted some of these were reviewed in the planned projects. The district has several projects that are expected to result in an annual reduction of operating costs of \$337,000, which is 8% of the district's annual operating budget.

No action was taken.

### **Executive Director's Report on Items of Community Interest for Which No Action will be Taken**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item seven of the agenda, Executive Director's report on items of community interest for which no action will be taken.

Mr. VanSteenberg introduced the newest member of the district's staff, Mr. Jeffrey Losek, the district's GIS Data Specialist.

Mr. VanSteenberg reported on the district's newest public education campaign, two large digital electronic billboards on I-45 and FM 1488, which broadcast, in a rotation, the district's current public service message. We are broadcasting every other month, in the odd numbered months.

April 26<sup>th</sup> the staff will be very busy with Kidz Fest in Conroe, the Sawmill Festival in East Montgomery County and Healthy Kids in Oak Ridge North.

The district's website has been updated with Board photos and bios and a staff photo.

No action was taken.

### **Closed Executive Session**

Mr. Virgadamo recessed the open meeting to closed Executive Session at 12:40p.m. The Board may meet in closed Executive Session as authorized per the Texas Open Meetings Act, to consider personnel matters pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.074.

### **Reconvene Open Meeting**

Mr. Virgadamo reconvened the open meeting at 1:06 p.m.

Mr. Virgadamo noted item nine of the agenda, take action, if needed, on matters involving the executive director.

Ms. Rudy made the motion to authorize a 5% increase to the Executive Director's salary effective April 1, 2014. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Paul Virgadamo noted items ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen of the consent agenda; stating these may be taken separately or as a whole.

Mr. Simon made the motion to approve items ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen of the consent agenda. Ms. Rudy seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Virgadamo requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Simon made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Rudy seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

These minutes were approved at regularly scheduled board meeting on MAY 14, 2014.

If needed, an official, signed copy may be obtained at the MCECD office.