

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

REGULAR MEETING

May 20, 2015

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

BOARD ATTENDING

PRESENT: Vicky Rudy, Vice President
Ryan Gable, Secretary
Robert Hudson, Treasurer

James Simon, Member
John Young, Ex-Officio Member

ABSENT: Paul Virgadamo, President

Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel

IN ATTENDANCE: Chip VanSteenberg, Executive Director
Jeanne Frey, Operations Manager
Terri Gill, Executive Assistant

Andrea Wilson, Public Education Coordinator
Deputy Chief Jerry Bittner, The Woodlands Fire Department
Rick Erickson, The Woodlands Fire Department
Matt Walkup, Montgomery County Hospital District
Lt. David Park, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Diana Porche, AT&T

Ms. Vicky Rudy, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m., and noted Mr. Paul Virgadamo and Mr. Larry Foerster were unable to attend.

Public Comments

No one requested to address the Board.

The Woodlands Fire Department PSAP Improvement Project for the purchase of Motorola MCC7500 dispatch console

Ms. Rudy noted item one of the agenda, consider and take action on a request from The Woodlands Fire Department for their PSAP Improvement Project for the purchase of Motorola MCC7500 dispatch console.

Mr. Chip VanSteenberg, Executive Director, noted the program had been set up in the budget to fund improvements at each of the PSAPs, awarding up to \$75,000 per PSAP with a ten percent match requirement. The District has awarded projects with the Sheriff's Office and the Hospital District.

Deputy Chief Jerry Bittner thanked the Board for the grant opportunity. Deputy Chief Bittner explained the new console will be a fully-functioning workstation, equipped with radio, CAD and 9-1-1, in their back-up center at the Hospital District's facility, and will enhance the services provided by The Woodlands Fire Department.

Mr. James Simon made the motion to approve The Woodlands Fire Department PSAP Improvement Project. Constable Ryan Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Purchase of Equipment to Maximize Communication Network Diversification

Ms. Rudy noted item two of the agenda, consider and take action authorizing purchase of equipment to maximize communication network diversification.

Mr. VanSteenberg explained this equipment will allow the District to use both of its communication networks simultaneously, to minimize any disruption if a network goes down. The microwave system is in the final stages and when complete will be a redundant feature to the District's existing network of fiber optic cable. Typically with redundant networks, one will serve as the primary route and the other will sit unused until the primary route fails. It is a good plan, but we have experienced two problems with this arrangement and have another area of potential concern:

- Calls in progress have dropped while switching from one network to another
- The 9-1-1 call-taking system has logged off all users and rebooted the workstations when it detected a network failure
- The potential problem is that the back-up network may not be operational due to an unknown failure

The staff have researched and found a product that will mitigate these concerns. Talari Networks, Inc. manufactures devices that maximize the performance of redundant networks. One way they do this is by continuously monitoring all paths in both networks to look for breaks or congestion. Another way is to separate the data or voice stream into packets and send them across both networks. The Talari device at the other end will take the packets that arrive first, assemble them in the correct order and let them pass through, discarding the later arriving packets.

The obvious advantages for the Talari solution are as follows:

- Preemptive awareness of the status of both networks at all times
- Fewer dropped calls
- Fewer system log off/reboot cycles
- Faster delivery of data and voice

The Greater Harris County and Galveston County 9-1-1 Districts and AT&T have investigated this device and support its use.

Funds are available, as other budgeted network improvements have come in under estimates. The devices will be furnished by Presidio Networked Solutions under a pricing contract with the state's Department of Information Resources (DIR). The cost to install, monitor and maintain the Talari devices at all five PSAPs is \$88,952.95, which includes monitoring and support for three years.

Chief Robert Hudson asked for clarification of the ongoing costs for monitoring and support, \$10,000 per year after the initial three year period. Mr. VanSteenberg replied affirmatively, adding the district pays monitoring on several devices, but staff will investigate options to consolidate monitoring and perhaps bring some in-house.

Mr. Simon made the motion to authorize the purchase of equipment to maximize communication network diversification. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Interoperability Agreement with AT&T for self-hosted ALI

Ms. Rudy noted item three of the agenda, consider and take action approving an interoperability agreement with AT&T for self-hosted ALI.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the District contracts with AT&T to maintain a database of the Automatic Location Information (ALI) that is delivered with each 9-1-1 call. Staff are currently setting up systems that will bring this function in-house and save approximately \$100,000 per year. The board has previously approved an agreement with Greater Harris County 9-1-1 (GHC) as part of this process. GHC will host the database in two separate, secure locations.

Self-hosting a database is not widely done by an entity like MCECD, but it is gaining interest. Lubbock County 9-1-1 is transitioning at the same time and a few other entities have started the process. Since the ALI database is a critical piece of the 9-1-1 system, the legal staff at AT&T believe an interoperability agreement is needed to ensure a smooth transition.

We were the pioneers of this agreement and it was developed in cooperation with the legal representatives of the Texas 9-1-1 Alliance and will be used for most 9-1-1 entities that decide to self-host their ALI database. The agreement was also reviewed by the District's legal counsel, Mr. Larry Foerster. The agreement lays out the responsibilities of each party and no monies will change hands.

Constable Gable made the motion to approve an interoperability agreement with AT&T for self-hosted ALI. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Capital Plan Fiscal Year 2016 Proposed Budget

Ms. Rudy noted items four and five of the agenda, consider and take action approving the capital plan and consider and take action approving fiscal year 2016 proposed budget.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated he had not received all the information he needed to complete the proposed budget, and asks that these items be deferred.

Mr. VanSteenberg requested the Board appoint a budget review sub-committee, noting Mr. Virgadamo and Ms. Rudy had served in the past.

Mr. Simon made the motion to appoint a budget review sub-committee of Mr. Virgadamo and Ms. Rudy. Chief Hudson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Items four and five of the agenda, Capital Plan and Fiscal Year 2016 Proposed Budget were deferred.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Rudy noted item six of the agenda, Executive Director's report on items of community interest for which no action will be taken.

Mr. Chip VanSteenberg reported the Vesta 4 9-1-1 system upgrade is in progress, a major system upgrade. Three of the four PSAPs have been converted, with the Sheriff's Office cutting over on June 2nd.

The microwave network project is down to one item, routers. Negotiations are on-going for the monitoring and maintenance costs.

Mr. VanSteenberg asked Mrs. Andrea Wilson to report on legislative issues. Mrs. Wilson stated that as of Friday, any bills that had not moved out of committee, were not expected to progress. We were closely monitoring Senate Bill 2911 and House Bill 7. A major success was the passing of the direct dial to 9-1-1 legislation, Kari's Law, Senate Bill 788.

Mr. VanSteenberg announced that Mrs. Wilson will graduate on May 27th from Leadership Montgomery County.

After years of abuse, we have begun replacing the ceramic tile with luxury vinyl tile (LVT), and will complete the job in the next budget year.

Mrs. Wilson reported the Montgomery County Fire Chief's Association (MCFCA) has approved participation in the Safety House and trailer project, a joint venture of MCECD and MCFCA.

Chief Hudson announced administration and the fire crews have moved into the new fire station, and the dedication and open house will be May 30th at noon.

Mrs. Wilson reported she had applied for a grant with State Farm for the teen driving safety program and is optimistic the \$15,000 grant will be funded.

No action was taken.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Rudy noted items seven, eight, nine and ten of the consent agenda, noting the items may be taken separately or as a whole.

Chief Hudson made the motion to approve the consent agenda as a whole. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

*These minutes were approved at regularly scheduled board meeting on JULY 15, 2015.
If needed, an official, signed copy may be obtained at the MCECD office.*