

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

**REGULAR MEETING**

**September 20, 2017**

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

**BOARD ATTENDING**

PRESENT: Paul Virgadamo, President  
Vicky Rudy, Vice President  
Ryan Gable, Secretary  
Robert Hudson, Treasurer  
James Simon, Member  
John Young, Ex-Officio Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel  
Chip VanSteenberg, Executive Director  
Jeanne Frey, Operations Manager  
Roberto Gutierrez, Systems Manager  
Robert Brewer, Systems Tech  
Andrea Wilson, Public Education Coordinator  
Terri Gill, Executive Assistant  
Sarah Cottar, Montgomery County Hospital District  
Shawn Trainor, Montgomery County Hospital District  
Captain Randy Eaves, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Mr. Paul Virgadamo, President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Public Comments**

No one requested to address the Board.

**Acknowledging the reappointments of Mr. Paul Virgadamo by the Cities and Towns of Montgomery County, Mr. James Simon by the Montgomery County Commissioners Court, and Chief Robert Hudson by the fire departments**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item one of the agenda, consider and take action acknowledging the reappointments of Mr. Paul Virgadamo by the Cities and Towns of Montgomery County, Mr. James Simon by the Montgomery County Commissioners Court, and Chief Robert Hudson by the fire departments.

Ms. Vicky Rudy made the motion to acknowledge the reappointments of Mr. Virgadamo, Mr. Simon and Chief Hudson. Constable Ryan Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

**Election of Officers**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item two of the agenda, consider and take action, if necessary, on election of officers.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were any discussion, being none, requested a motion.

Mr. James Simon made the motion to continue with the current slate of officers: Paul Virgadamo, President, Vicky Rudy, Vice President, Ryan Gable, Secretary, Robert Hudson, Treasurer. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office for their PSAP Improvement Project**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item three of the agenda, consider and take action on a request from The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office for their PSAP improvement project.

Mr. VanSteenberg noted this is the fourth of the four PSAPs to request an improvement project for this year. The main part of this project, the video wall, has been pushed back due to Hurricane Harvey.

The request has a couple of special considerations:

1. Approve the request but move the funding to the next budget year;
2. The sheriff's office is also requesting a treadmill workstation that the district buy directly;
3. The district will pay 100% of the cost of the treadmill.

The total amount for the MCSO request is approximately \$73,390 to be spent in fiscal year 2018.

Constable Gable made the motion to approve The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office PSAP participation project. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Fiscal Year 2018 Proposed Budget**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item four of the agenda, consider and take action on the fiscal year 2018 proposed budget.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the board approved a proposed budget for the fiscal year 2018 budget at its meeting on July 19, 2017. Section 772.309(b) of the Texas Health and safety Code requires MCECD to submit a "draft" of the proposed budget to the county and the cities in the county for review and offer them the opportunity to submit comments. The budget was distributed to Montgomery County and the cities in the county. MCECD staff attended several city council meetings and commissioner's court to present the budget and answer questions.

Approvals were received from the following entities:

1. Montgomery County Commissioners Court
2. City of Magnolia
3. City of Oak Ridge North
4. City of Willis
5. City of Stagecoach
6. City of Shenandoah
7. City of Montgomery
8. City of Conroe
9. City of Panorama Village
10. City of Splendora

Ms. Rudy made the motion to approve the fiscal year 2018 budget. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Compensation Policy for Fiscal Year 2018**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item five of the agenda, consider and take action on the compensation policy for fiscal year

2018.

Mr. VanSteenberg explained the budget does include money for pay increases, generally based on merit. The proposed percentage of pay increase has not changed, the scale remains the same for fiscal year 2018:

Less than 3 – 0%, 3.0 to 3.4 – 2.5%, 3.5 to 3.9 – 3%, and 4.0 or higher – 3.5%

Mr. VanSteenberg noted the salary ranges are updated automatically based on the change of the Consumer Price Index.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were any questions, being none, requested a motion.

Ms. Rudy made the motion to approve the compensation policy for fiscal year 2018. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) Plan Year 2018**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item six of the agenda, consider and take action on the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) plan year 2018.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the Board of Managers must annually specify two provisions for MCECD's retirement plan with TCERS. The first decision is to determine the rate of increase, if any, to the benefit payments for retirees. TCERS allows three options for retiree benefits:

- No increase,
- A cost of living adjustment (COLA) based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), or
- A flat rate COLA

Since 2013 the Board has adopted a 70% CPI-based COLA annually.

The district is required to adopt a contribution rate of 17.79% if the COLA is selected, or 17.39% without COLA.

Following a brief discussion, the board members agreed the district would not adopt an increase to the required contribution rate.

Ms. Rudy made the motion to approve the minimum rate required of 17.79% with COLA for Texas County and District Retirement System plan year 2018. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

### **Renewal Agreement with Rave Mobile Safety for Rave Alert and Smart911 for the term October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item seven of the agenda, consider and take action on renewal agreement with Rave Mobile Safety for Rave Alert and Smart911 for the term October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated this is the second renewal with Rave Mobile Safety, the annual price remains the same, \$121,750.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were any questions, being none, requested a motion.

Ms. Rudy made the motion to approve the renewal agreement with Rave Mobile Safety. Chief Hudson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

## **Resolution Authorizing Procedures for PSAP Improvement Participation Program for FY 2018**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item eight of the agenda, consider and take action on a resolution authorizing procedures for PSAP improvement participation program for fiscal year 2018.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the budget for the current fiscal year includes funding to continue the PSAP Improvement Participation Program for the third year. Under this program, the district supports efforts to upgrade PSAP equipment and/or operations. The resolution establishes the program guidelines for fiscal year 2018 and sets the deadlines for submission.

According to the proposed guidelines, a PSAP submits a request for funding with a description of the proposed improvement. The submissions are then vetted by the staff and presented to the board for review and final approval. To demonstrate the PSAP's commitment to the improvement, staff suggests the PSAP be required to match MCECD's funds by paying 10% of the cost. As budgeted, the district will offer a maximum of \$110,000 per PSAP in fiscal year 2018, up from \$100,000 last year.

The staff also recommend carrying forward unused allocations from the current year and allowing those PSAPs to request that additional funding. The district will roll forward \$49,000 for the City of Conroe and \$100,000 for the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. Conroe planned and requested to use the additional funding in fiscal year 2018 for a larger project. With the election of a new sheriff and resignations/retirements of persons in the PSAP's chain of command, MCSO has been busy implementing new programs, policies and procedures. Their planned project will not be completed by the end of fiscal year 2017.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were any questions, being none, requested a motion.

Mr. Simon made the motion to approve the resolution authorizing procedures for the PSAP participation program for fiscal year 2018. Chief Hudson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

## **Resolution Revising Procedures for Call-takers Certification Pay**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item nine of the agenda, consider and take action on a resolution revising procedures for call-takes certification pay.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated in 2014 the Board adopted a resolution implementing a program of financial incentives for telecommunicators who pursue training and continuing education. The original idea behind the program was to encourage PSAPs to offer incentives and then reimburse them after the fact.

Management at one of the PSAPs has requested the option for the District to pay the incentive to directly to the call-takers. The incentive will have more impact if paid all at once toward the end of the year rather than spread out in smaller increments on each paycheck.

The staff has investigated the matter with a consulting accountant who found no objections. The district will issue the proper tax form to each recipient and the federal government. The recipient will be responsible for paying any taxes due.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were any questions, being none, requested a motion.

Constable Gable made the motion to approve the resolution revising procedures for call-takers certification pay. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Virgadamo noted item ten of the agenda, executive director's report on items of community interest for which no action will be taken.

Mr. VanSteenberg reported on the district's preparations for Hurricane Harvey. The IT staff were out two days before the storm, pushing out additional workstations and SIP phones. The maximum number of 9-1-1 workstations and phones were available, a great job by the district's IT department. They ran our connector cable out to the county's generator in case we lost our generator. Due to concerns with response during the event, Mr. Roberto Gutierrez and Mr. Robert Brewer were onsite, at least one tech was on duty 24-hours a day. We had minor problems here and there, a scare with the 9-1-1 trunks, we lost 25% of them early in the event.

The call volume:

- MCSO had a 48% increase in calls during the Friday to Thursday event, compared to the previous Friday to Thursday
- The Woodlands Fire Department, had an amazing statistic, with a 1445% increase in calls. They received 88 calls in the six days prior to the storm, versus 1,051 calls during the event.

Mrs. Andrea Wilson shared that an additional 3,784 profiles were created with Smart911 during Harvey. The sheriff's office had 63 profiles pop, while the Conroe Police Department had 22. Each agency performed multiple chat sessions with callers.

Mr. VanSteenberg added the district was running an incentive promotion in August to encourage the use of the chat feature of Smart911. The chat feature allows call-takers to initiate a text message session with callers who have hung up the phone. Mrs. Wilson explained she is still in the process of determining the actual number of chat sessions for the contest.

Text to 9-1-1 was to have gone live on September 12<sup>th</sup>, however, there was an issue with IP addresses, which has been resolved. The needed equipment has been installed, and Text to 9-1-1 should go live in a few weeks.

The four additional Command Posts arrived and are being programmed now.

Mrs. Wilson reported the four agencies had six telecommunicators impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Texas APCO and Texas NENA joined forces to sponsor a fund-raiser, selling t-shirts. These funds will go directly to telecommunicators in the impacted areas. They also sponsored the Public Safety Assistance Center, located in The Woodlands. The center accepted donations of cleaning supplies, clothing, food, et cetera. The center was initially opened to benefit telecommunicators, and recently opened to all law enforcement and first responders.

The six telecommunicators and our partner agencies have been submitted to APCO/NENA for the adopt a PSAP and telecommunicator programs.

## **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Virgadamo noted items eleven through fifteen of the consent agenda, noting the items may be taken separately or as a whole.

Ms. Rudy made the motion to approve the consent agenda in its entirety. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

*These minutes were approved at regularly scheduled board meeting on November 15, 2017.  
If needed, an official, signed copy may be obtained at the MCECD office.*