

**MINUTES OF THE
9-1-1 BOARD OF MANAGERS' MEETING**

March 16, 2009

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

ATTENDING: John Chancellor, President
Charlie Ray, Vice President
Jerry Bittner, Secretary
James Simon, Member
Alfonso Martinez, Ex-Officio Member
Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel
Gordon Lopez, Executive Director
Jeanne Frey, Database Manager
Chiu-Wen Ray, GIS Manager
Russell Steffee, Systems Ops Manager
Terri Gill, Executive Assistant
Margaret Keen, GIS Analyst
Tom Franey, GIS Analyst
Ty Dolney, GIS Analyst
Roberto Gutierrez, Systems Tech

GUESTS: Robert M. Gunter
Joan Gunter
Sonya Clauson, Greater Harris County 9-1-1
Dianna Porche, AT&T
Chief Jody Binnion, Porter VFD
Assistant Chief Carter Johnson, Porter VFD
Lt. David Park, MCSO

ABSENT: Ann Carr, Treasurer

Chief Charlie Ray, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m., noting that Chief of Staff Ann Carr was not able to attend and Chief John Chancellor was running late.

Chief Ray requested the Board address item two, discuss and take action on Authorizing Users and Policy and Procedure for Use of CodeRED, as the first item of business.

Items:

- **AUTHORIZING USERS AND POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR USE OF CODERED**
- **REVIEW AND DISCUSS CODERED AND WEATHER WARNING PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Please note: Both CodeRED items listed on the agenda were discussed as one item, with action as noted below.

Mr. Gordon Lopez, Executive Director, noted there had been some changes after the original CodeRED information had been sent out. The District has launched the Weather Warning Alert via CodeRED. A radio station, 99.7 (K-Star) is doing a good job of announcing the Weather Warning Alert application. K-Star is running an announcement five times a day, 25 times a week. The District received a very good deal from the station getting 50 free announcements. The announcement was played for those present at the board meeting. Mr. Lopez reported that 400 plus people had signed up for the Weather Warning in the first week. Mr. Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel, requested that Mr. Lopez send the radio script to him and the board members so they might share it with the Cities (in the county), city attorneys and others to help get the information out. Mr. Lopez reported the announcement had also been sent to local newspapers as a news item in the Courier, Chronicle and El Sol.

Mr. Lopez announced that there are some recent changes that will positively impact the contract with CodeRED. Thanks to Jeanne's (Ms. Jeanne Frey, Database Manager) efforts, the District received some concessions from CodeRED that may impact the way the protocol was originally written. Basically, the District was paying \$42,500 annually for the Weather Warning with the remaining CodeRED alert package priced at \$95,000 annually. Jeanne worked closely with CodeRED representatives and they agreed to roll the two products together for one contract price of \$95,000. Secondly, they are offering to send out one free alert to everybody in the county letting them know the CodeRED system is set up for early weather warning. There are 186,000 records in the database. Going forward they are also proposing that the price will never go over \$120,000 annually for the full package. This impacts the way we wrote the protocol, since we included an option to charge jurisdictions \$0.10 per call. With the price reduction this may no longer be necessary. Mr. Lopez stated he would like the five agencies involved, MCECD and the four dispatch centers (MCSO, MCHD, CPD, WFD) to share the cost of providing CodeRED service which amounts to a little under \$20,000 per agency annually to maintain it.

Mr. Lopez asked if everyone had a chance to review the protocol? Chief Ray replied he had not. Mr. Foerster stated he had, and thought it was fine. Mr. Lopez stated he would touch on the highlights, exempting the \$0.10 charge. Mr. Lopez stated each of the four dispatch centers know their constituents better than anybody else. Onsite response agencies within the jurisdictions who agree to participate ought to coordinate with the dispatch centers as to whether a CodeRED alert is required or not. At the dispatch centers there should be somebody in charge who can launch the code. If you spread out the authorization across all the jurisdictions, you are liable to eventually dilute alert efforts, and citizens will stop paying attention. We have written the protocol in such a way that the executives of any authorized agency need to make the determination whether they want to be woken up in the middle of the night to issue the alert or they can delegate to the operations supervisor at the communications (dispatch) center that responsibility. The concern was the command and control aspect of it as to who is going to issue alerts. We felt that spreading it among the four dispatch points was the best way. Secondly, if somebody wants to have centralized control; which was the reason for pointing out how consolidated commands in the military work by rotating commands every three years: in this smaller venue, if the agencies wanted to, they could rotate the authority for launching CodeRED every other year. Mr. Lopez stated the District had received input from Randy McDaniel, as well as Chief Chancellor and their input was taken into account in the new protocol as presented.

Mr. Foerster requested a walk through of the process, if Panorama Village had a hazmat event; if the police chief or mayor of a city has a problem and wants to alert everybody. How does the process work? Mr. Lopez stated if the problem is called in to 9-1-1 we know it is handled by a pertinent dispatch center and secondly the agency on site would know which center to contact for issuing an alert. If needed one additional aspect we looked into was to use the video conferencing circuit at each communication center so

that the dispatch (supervisors) could communicate with each other during an alert crisis. The way the alert would work; the onsite agency would call the dispatch center which would have an alert code they will use to get into the CodeRED system and launch an alert. At that point a polygon is drawn by CodeRED on the map based on information provided by the onsite agency. The polygon outlines the geographical area that is impacted and the application then searches the 9-1-1 tabular database for phone numbers to be called within the map coordinates and it starts dialing instantaneously. Chief Ray stated that more specifically, in this scenario, the jurisdiction's police chief would probably contact the SO (Sheriff's Office) dispatch point since that is who dispatches for them. Whoever the Sheriff appoints as the coordinator for the alert system would make the ultimate decision to do it. Mr. Foerster asked that even if the (jurisdiction's police) chief says he has an emergency that requires a CodeRED alert if that decision could be overridden by someone at the Sheriff's Department. Lt. David Park remarked that you want to refrain from giving the authority to launch CodeRED to every jurisdiction out there. Mr. Foerster asked if training will be provided for fire and police chiefs. Mr. Lopez's reply **was that the District will set up training for all the agencies in participating jurisdictions.** Mr. Lopez stated that basically what it does is centralize it in such a way that you don't dilute the authority across the county, but by the same token, you provide a certain amount of autonomy for each of the four agencies that are responsible for making the decision to launch the CodeRED alert.

**Please Note: Chief John Chancellor arrived at 9:22 a.m.

Mr. Foerster asked how the unincorporated areas of the county will be identified, is there a grid? Ms. Jeanne Frey replied that pre-defined polygons can be created, down to the subdivision level, proactive preprogramming.

Mr. Lopez stated that based on the contract cost reduction, it would be unlikely that the District would have to charge the participating jurisdictions \$0.10 per call.

Deputy Chief Jerry Bittner inquired whether the Office of Emergency Management should be included as an agency with the authority to launch an alert. Lt. Park replied affirmatively. Mr. Lopez asked if the OEM would be in a position to overrule a crisis alert by the other four agencies. Chief Ray replied it would be the Sheriff. Lt. Park stated it would be the Chief, being emergency management coordinator for the county.

Mr. Lopez stated he had touched on everything, and the protocol will require some changes due to the message received on Friday from CodeRED concerning the contract changes. The new contract will lower the amount of minutes available from 380,000 to 275,000 which is not a substantial reduction. Should we go over the limit, CodeRED will sell the District blocks of minutes.

Mr. Lopez stated that once the protocol is approved, we will follow forward with announcing the alert system to the public.

Deputy Chief Bittner asked for clarification on rotating command and control or would the dispatch agency have control? Mr. Lopez replied that the question at one time was whether there would be a central authority in the county that would launch it at all times, or whether, in fact, the individual agencies would launch it. The first question concerned the outlying areas and onsite response agencies and whether they launch it but it was already decided that dilutes the (alert) effort. That narrows it down to one centralized control or control spread across the entities that are more in a position to go ahead and decide, with the onsite agency, whether the alert is needed or not. It was decided to split the baby four ways. In this case, go ahead and authorize the communication centers' dispatch supervisors, to make that decision with the onsite people,

since they in fact know their constituencies (better). We threw in the option of a somewhat centralized control, if that's still necessary, by rotating the control across the four major agencies. For all intents and purposes, they all get a shot in the barrel, as to how they want to manage the CodeRED system. If that is not a requirement at this point we will take it out of the protocol. It was a choice on the options page (of the protocol) only and was not written into the protocol itself. Chief Chancellor stated the only time that might be an issue is if more than one entity was trying to use the system at the same time. Mr. Lopez indicated that is the reason for bringing up and using the video conference circuits we have in place for joint decision making. The best bet is to exercise the conference system if we are going to keep it not just for alerts, but for meetings, etc. also. **Use of the conference network can be written into the protocol.**

Chiefs Chancellor and Ray stated they do **not agree with command and control unless it is a countywide declared emergency, and then it reverts to the OEM. Mr. Lopez stated we can write that in, as a last resort, for declared emergencies.** Lt. Park asked for clarification: fire comm would have the authority to launch, or Montgomery PD if they call (and request an alert) and it is launched without authority from anybody else, is that what you are saying? Chief Chancellor stated yes, if it meets the protocol. If they (jurisdictions) misuse it, then we charge them. That needs to be spelled out. Mr. Lopez asked if it is a **requirement to keep the charge in the protocol in case of misuse?** The board replied affirmatively, \$0.10 per call for misuse of the alert system.

Chief Chancellor requested a motion approving the CodeRED protocol with the changes. Deputy Chief Bittner made the motion to accept the protocol with the changes that were outlined. Mr. James Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

HONOR AND ACKNOWLEDGE ROBERT GUNTER'S YEARS OF SERVICE

Chief Chancellor recited from the award presented to Mr. Robert M. Gunter,

"The Board of Managers for the Montgomery County Emergency Communication District hereby commends Robert M. Gunter in recognition of his commitment, enthusiasm, perseverance and tireless efforts over the years, and thanks him for his dedication to providing the finest 9-1-1 system available to our citizens during his tenure as Executive Director. He testifies to the fact that, 9-1-1 it's not a job, it's a calling. June 15, 1998 to October 1, 2008."

Mr. Gunter expressed his thanks and that he will miss everyone.

Chief Chancellor, "I want to personally say that I appreciate your years of service and the things that you did for the county, not only 9-1-1, but the other activities that you got involved with in Montgomery County. Montgomery County is better for your service and I appreciate it very much."

Chief Ray, "I would like to say that I appreciate yours and Joan's friendships over the years and I have enjoyed working with you since I've been on the board here, it has been a pleasure to be around you and work with you and use your knowledge to carry out the functions we need to here on the board. Going to miss you, I'll see you around. It has been nice to have you here and I appreciate your friendship."

Mr. Simon, "Bob, I haven't known you very long, but I want to tell you right now, your wife cooks great."

Deputy Chief Bittner, "Bob, thank you for all you did, your insight on the leadership related to the secondary operation I think was valuable, that was shown in the disaster we had last year. Thank you."

Mr. Gunter, "Well, I am still your consultant until October first, so if you need anything call Gordon."

Mr. Foerster, "I would like to add something, if I may. I may have served with 9-1-1 longer than anyone in this room, at least to my recollection, and I've got to see the work that Bob did, from the perspective of an attorney that remembers when we all met, we had a three room facility down in the basement in the Sheriff's Department, and the plan was to do something that I think was really unheard of in the state, at least for a jurisdiction our size, and that was to have our own communications building. And there was a hell of a lot of work that went into that, in terms of developing the site lease, entering into the interlocal agreements with the Sheriff's Department, the county, the hospital district. And later with the back-up emergency communications facility, I don't know of anybody, I participated in it, but Bob led the charge, and we are here in this building today in large measure because of Bob's vision, his commitment, and his expertise, to make this thing happen, and that's not to take away from anyone else who participated in it, cause it was a team effort. But I don't think it would have happened, and happened as quickly and as smoothly, and we had some hiccups, with the general contractor and so forth, and with the previous Sheriff that got mad, I'll never forget, Guy Williams called me one day irritated that the look of the building didn't match his sheriff's department building. Through no fault of Bob, but just the way things played out with the contractor. There were a lot of headaches that went into putting this building together, from the time that Bob visioned it, along with the board, until it was finalized. I for just really appreciate what Bob has done for the county and for the 9-1-1 and for all the emergency agencies in the county for ten plus years."

Mr. Lopez, "Larry just encapsulated some of the things I was going to touch on, by what you achieved here Bob. Bob's had a lot of bounces across his careers, right, started out with AT&T, actually Mountain Bell. Bob and I were born thirty miles from each other, grew up thirty miles from each other up in New Mexico. Just encapsulating a little bit, he worked with Bell, Mountain Bell, later AT&T, worked all the regions of New Mexico as a lineman, then as a manager, moved off to Denver, was running training centers and office up in Denver, bounced over to the east coast for a while running training centers for AT&T, and then after his Bell career he moved on to 9-1-1 state agency for New Mexico, and of course he was enticed away from the land of enchantment to come down here and improve this district. I want to say that I'm honored to follow you in these shoes, Bob. You've left me a staff that's extremely well educated and trained. I was at a fire chief's association meeting the other day and several of the chiefs walked up to me and told me how much they appreciated the mapping efforts that the staff does and the database efforts. You produced a preeminent group here that rivals anything in the state, including the bigger districts. It's appreciated and the staff is outstanding, and of course I can't complain about the facilities either. As they say in our home state and in Texas also, Buena Suerte y que Dios Te Bendige, in other words, good luck and God bless you, Bob. Thank you."

Ms. Chiu-Wen Ray, "I would like to say a little bit on behalf of the staff. I've been with 9-1-1 eight years, and before that I was with the city at that time I already knew Bob; we (would) go to meetings together. And I want to say because of his leadership we can serve the whole county as we are doing now, but also he is a very kind and caring person, (which carries down) to every single staff (member). He cares about every individual one. We (were) really very happy to work with him and we appreciate his kindness and we will never forget about him."

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public addressed the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chief Chancellor noted items four, five and six of the Consent Agenda. Chief Ray requested a moment to review the minutes and financial statements.

Chief Ray asked whose membership is being paid for the Conroe Noon Lions Club? Mr. Lopez replied membership is paid for Jeanne, Russ and himself.

Chief Ray noted that on the December monthly financial report, there were no expenditures out of the general operating. Is that right? Ms. Terri Gill explained that the three accounts listed first on the report are the Texpool funds, while the last is the checking account at the Bank of America, and that is where payments are made from. Mr. Lopez noted that in the budget for 2009 the interest earned on the Texpool accounts was expected to decrease by 10%, and the way it's looking at this point, it is decreasing quite a bit more. Mr. Lopez distributed a table that demonstrates the decline. Mr. Lopez stated comparing the first two months of 2009 with the two previous years; it has taken quite a dip.

Chief Ray and Deputy Chief Bittner inquired as to the \$930,000 operating reserve. Deputy Chief Bittner stated these are NG9-1-1 funds. Chief Ray stated these monies have not been spent. Mr. Lopez replied the District is in the process of spending that, we have just issued an RFI that was distributed and we are now receiving input from the vendors with estimated pricing by April 10th for the network element¹. Basically, IP is the protocol that will be used. Positron has Viper CPE, and Plant has equipment that is fully IP compliant and should be able to receive most of the communications venues they are talking about, including video. Mr. Lopez stated a small interest group, the TDD/TTY (hearing impaired) community has a lot of clout. They are into texting, and are using video relay services. Some mandates have already gone out (from the FCC) for 9-1-1 centers to be able to handle video relay services and texting type relay services for the hearing impaired. Deputy Chief Bittner asked how the data will be pushed to the agencies. Mr. Lopez replied that NENA and APCO are working together, at least on the CAD side to figure out how they are going to get that data stream through. This is the first step, laying the foundation (for NG9-1-1).

Mrs. Sonya Clauson, Public Relations Director for the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Network, stated that NENA, Greater Harris County and others across Texas are working very hard on different NENA operations committees. It is kind of like Phase II wireless or 311 or 211: we didn't want it to happen but it was inevitable that it was going to be here, so now they are trying to prepare for the operational procedures. We are going to get text messages one day. How do we handle them and the videos and is every one of them going to be real or not? How do you decipher which text messages or videos are valid? The fact is also, that you are going to have all generations of call-takers working in your centers. It was a big enough learning curve to learn how to use windows and now they are going to have to understand text messages. We (9-1-1 Representatives) just came back from the (NENA) operations conference, and there are various committees working on all these operational issues. Sonya is on the training (subcommittee) side (analyzing) how to prepare call-takers for those different things that are coming around the corner. We're not excited about it but the biggest thing right now is to make sure the public knows that you can't do it yet. Mr. Lopez stated it is like Telematics, it's already here. It's getting it on the call-takers screen that is the problem. It's been proven it can be done. It can be done now on legacy networks but it just depends on how much the manufacturer wants to work with the NENA standards. One thing that came out in the conference as Mr. Lopez referenced, is that one of the agricultural groups have approached NENA about handling Telematics

¹ The Operating Reserve fund is in fact a reserve recommended by the District's CPA to be maintained solely for the District's Administrative and Operating expenses in case all other funds are expended or for emergencies. NG9-1-1 funding does not come out of this fund.

in order to put it on tractors, farm equipment, etc. . John Deere already has it on some tractors, and Caterpillar has it on their equipment. For fleets, agricultural fleets (in particular), they have devices now, smaller than a cigarette lighter, that you just plug into the vehicle (for Telematics).

One thing that is already being handled in Europe is IP calls above 10,000 feet in an aircraft. Right now your cell phone can only go up to 10,000 feet, but IP-type, broadband-type cell phones can broadcast above 10,000 feet. The airlines in Europe have allowed that and now, the concern has popped up here; if the FAA approves it, what if somebody dials 9-1-1 above 10,000 feet. Where is that call going to go? Is the call-taker supposed to report that call to NORAD? The FAA? Those are the kinds of things that are already here. It hasn't really caught us by surprise. We knew it was coming but it's becoming widespread. Deputy Chief Bittner stated, "And we still put fires out with water." Mr. Lopez stated: "These are the kinds of things that are popping up at the conferences and I do try to keep you aware, via email of things popping up, both policy-wise and also technology-wise, as they come across."

Mr. Simon made the motion to approve these items in their entirety. Chief Ray seconded the motion.

Deputy Chief Bittner asked if he could present an item for discussion. Mr. Foerster stated he had sent an email last week, if you wanted to discuss something it needed to be on the agenda. You may bring up an item to be on the agenda for the next meeting. **Deputy Chief Bittner requested that the report produced by Pendleton Partners be a discussion, and possibly action, item on the next meeting agenda.** Mr. Lopez stated he had not seen the position report. Deputy Chief Bittner asked if the report becomes a part of the District record. Mr. Foerster replied that once received the report must be reviewed and accepted, if he has the report by the next meeting the board can take whatever action it needs.

Chief Chancellor noted that the transportation committee of the legislature is hearing all eleven or twelve cell phone bills regarding driving while texting or using a cell phone tomorrow. At least one bill will make it to the floor for a vote.

Chief Ray asked if the District buys a lot of flowers. Mr. Lopez replied negatively, we had sent flowers to one of our longtime cleaning people who was in the hospital. We thought it would be nice for her to know she was being kept in our thoughts.

The motion carried with all in favor.

There were no invoices requiring approval.

OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION AND NOT IMMEDIATE ACTION

A. Present Progress on Interlocal Agreements

Mr. Lopez reported he had met with the city administrator for the City of Shenandoah, and there are no plans for that building within the next three years minimum and out to five years possibly as far as constructing a new building and moving. This puts us way beyond the time frame of the interlocal agreement. As far as the other interlocal agreements; we are working out the calculations for sizing centers based on call volume at this point so those have not been completed yet. We're also reviewing square footage and such for the center. Our fuel prices have increased considerably for utilities, so we're looking at what we can do as far as the agreements we have, and as far as the other centers are concerned. **Probably expect something in front of you (the board) within the next month.**

B. Items Impacting 9-1-1 from recent conference and Alliance Meeting, specifically Femtocells and Telematics.

Please refer to the top of page 6.

C. 2010 Serial Photography (Orthophotography) Project

Chief Chancellor asked what Orthophotography is? Mr. Lopez replied it is the aerial photography (project). Ms. Ray stated we (have) participated with H-GAC for the past ten years. They do the fly over the surrounding counties every other year. This is a reminder that they (will) fly next year. We have been successful having local entities participate with us as well. Please be aware and put in your budget, we need your continued support.

D. TCDRS Projected Rate for 2010, and the TCDRS Web Conference Highlights and Slideshow.

Materials were presented for review, no discussion was tendered.

Chief Chancellor requested a motion to adjourn. Deputy Chief Bittner made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Attest:

Joseph J. Bittner
Secretary

John R. Chancellor
President