

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Public Hearing and Meeting Minutes October 18, 2023 – 2:00 p.m. CDT

East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office
8900 Jimmy Wedell Drive, Building B
Baton Rouge, LA 70807

The East Baton Rouge Communications District Board of Commissioners met at the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office on the 10th day of October 2023 for a duly noticed regular (rescheduled) public meeting.

The meeting was convened by Chairman Gautreaux.

Commissioner Kimble gave the Invocation.

Commissioner Waites led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman called roll:

Present: Chairman Sid Gautreaux, Commissioner Darnell Waites, Fire Chief Stephen Branscum (designated by Commissioner Wade Evans), Commissioner Michael Kimble, Commissioner Michael Denicola, and Amber Guidry (designated by Commissioner David McDavid), and Commissioner Myron Daniels.

Absent: None

The Chairman found that a quorum existed.

Others Present at Meeting Included The Following:

Director Jim Verlander, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Joe Thompson (EBRPCD), Brenda Welch (EBRPCD), Todd Campbell (EBRPCD), Fire Chief Dan Kimble (ZFD), Fire Chief Gerry Tarleton (SGFD), Eric Romero (CPIS), Tammy Armand (CPIS), Ricky Klug (EBRSO), Chief Keith Pease (Baker FD) and Kenny Loup (BRPD).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Waites moved to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2023 regular meeting. Commissioner Denicola seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Status

Scott Lazarone, CPA presented the financial report.

Mr. Lazarone presented and went over the District's August 31, 2023 financial statements. As of August 31, 2023 the District had a cash balance of approximately \$10.8 million. Revenues are in line with the 2023 budget at approximately 66% of projected revenues. Expenditures are in line with the budget, except that contract labor and contractual services are under budget.

Discussion of 2024 Draft Budget

The Board was provided with a draft of the District's proposed 2024 budget and Mr. Lazarone explained the draft budget and the proposed adjustments from the 2023 general fund budget: 2024 interest income is increased by \$230,000; 2024 revenues are increased by \$1.5 million to reflect the recently approved surcharge increase; 2024 salaries are increased for new personnel and to provide a 5% raise to current employees; employee benefits increased incident to the salary increase; contract services are increased for 2024 due to increased personnel costs under the IGA, payments to other PSAPs, Insurance, GIS software, upgrades and repairs to current facilities.

Ricky Klug (EBRSO) asked about the \$100,000 additional funds for upgrades/repairs and whether there are plans on what to use this money for. Director Verlander stated that there are such plans in connection with the 2024 budget.

In response to questions by Commissioner Waites, Director Verlander explained that these funds are for upgrades related to 911 and not for general building maintenance. Mr. Lazarone explained that the total funds for maintenance and upgrade to furniture and equipment and infrastructure total approximately \$250,000 and this item will be recurring over the next 5 years, which will eventually total approximately \$1.5 million. Mr. Lazarone stated that it should be up to the operational people, and not the Board, to determine the specifics of how that money is spent.

Kenny Loupe stated that there are blurry lines as to what the district should pay for and what the individual agencies are responsible for. He asked that those be clarified.

Commissioner Waites suggested that there may be more flexibility if the funds are put in Capital Outlay instead of the general fund.

Commissioner Denicola asked whether this means that if a console needs replacing the district can replace it. Director Verlander responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Kimble asked about the contract employee expenditures and whether Todd Campbell was the district's only contract employee. Mr. Lazarone responded that Mr. Campbell was a salaried employee and not a contract employee. The contract employee was an individual who worked on GIS who will become a regular employee under the proposed 2024 budget. This is why the contract employees item goes to \$00.00 in the proposed 2024 budget.

Commissioner Kimble questioned the increase in the 2024 salary items. Mr. Lazarone and Director Verlander explained that this increase includes: the 2 new employees and promotion previously approved by the board; making the GIS contract employee a regular employee; a new public records employee to assist the communications chief; and, an applications specialist. The applications specialist will be able to respond immediately and assist with computer problems.

Commissioner Daniels asked how many total employees the district will have. The district has 5.5 employees currently. If the 2024 budget is approved the total number of employees will be 9.5 employees.

Mr. Lazarone also went through the proposed 2024 capital project budget. The only new project for next year is the CAD project (back-up etc.). Mr. Lazarone also went over the proposed RMS budget.

911 Phone System Upgrade

Joe Thompson reported on this item.

NGA is still in town and working on migrating over.

There is an issue with the 7 trunks that are coming into the ATM building. They are different than the other trunks and were installed more than 25 years ago. NGA is working around them to ensure there are no failures.

Working on changing ANI/ALI over and the recording server.

Commissioner Denicola asked about the delays in migrating EMS over to NGA 911. Mr. Thompson explained some of the problems with the trunks that are causing this delay. He explained that NGA is trying to make sure there are no issues in the migration. Commissioner Denicola asked whether Livingston was having issues. Mr.

Thompson explained that there have been a couple of small issues and the cause of those issues.

Commissioner Denicola asked whether problems in Livingston will affect the district. Mr. Thompson explained that it is extremely unlikely although there might be a way that it is theoretically possible. Mr. Thompson also explained how AWS has different regional systems and this should be beneficial.

Jennifer Kimble stated that recently 911 calls were rolled to BRFD and St. George and it may be an NGA or Intrado issue. Commissioner Kimble asked if calls are being dropped. Ms. Kimble reported that there were some call transfers that were problematic. Mr. Thompson stated that he would investigate the problem. Commissioner Kimble asked that the District proceed with the migration to NGA911 with caution.

Commissioner Daniels asked about the smaller agencies already being on NGA911 and not the larger agencies. He stated that he hopes that the district would not migrate EMS (which answers 90% of 911 calls) over to NGA911 until the problems are ironed out.

Director Verlander and Mr. Thompson assured the board that the migration is not being rushed but it is being done carefully and methodically.

North Tower

Commissioner Kimble moved to add the north tower as an item to the agenda, Commissioner Waites seconded the motion and it unanimously passed.

Mr. Olinde reported to the board that the geotechnical analysis of the tower site is proceeding.

NEW BUSINESS:

Other Recent Developments

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Report on Operations/Legal Updates

The Board was provided with a proposed Addendum to Director Verlander's employment contract. Mr. Olinde explained the addendum and the need for it. Commissioner Waites moved to approve the addendum. Commissioner Daniels seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Commissioner Daniels stated that the district should create an evaluation process for all employees including the Director. Director Verlander advised that the creation of such a process is underway.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kimble moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Denicola seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.