

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025 – 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 Parish Communications District Board of Commissioners met at the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office on the 15th day of January 2025 for a duly noticed regular public meeting.

The public meeting was called to order by Chairman Gautreaux.

Commissioner Daniels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Kimble gave the Invocation.

The Chairman called roll:

Present: Chairman Sid Gautreaux, Commissioner Designate Becnel (by Commissioner Darnell Waites), Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum (by Commissioner Wade Evans), Commissioner David McDavid, Commissioner Michael Kimble, Commissioner Myron Daniels, and Commissioner Michael Denicola

The Chairman found ythat a quorum existed.

Others Present Included The Following:

Director Jim Verlander, Joe Thompson, Brenda Welch, Todd Campbell, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Scott Lazarone CPA, BRPD Chief Thomas S. Morse, Jr. and Todd Morris (SGPD).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Daniels moved to approve the minutes of the November 20th, 2024 public hearing and meeting. Commissioner Kimble seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Report

The financial report was presented by Scott Lazarone, CPA.

The presented financials are through November 30, 2024.

Cash was \$12.2 million and Accounts receivable of \$518,000. Total fund balance was \$13.3 million, but approximately \$3 million of this amount is restricted for pending capital projects.

The budget watermark was 91-92%. Service revenues of \$7.1 million are slightly behind this watermark. Prepaid wireless revenue was low because the District is waiting on the State's 4Q remittance. Interest earnings of \$460,000 are above watermark due to high interest rates. Expenses are at or below the watermark. Salary expense is lagging due to unfilled positions. Supply expense is low because furniture has not yet been purchased. Contractual expenses are behind projection, but should catch up to projections by year's end. Capital outlays were \$1.25 million on a total budget of \$1.6 million. Total expenditures for the first 11 months of 2024 are just under \$7 million. Revenues were about \$7.6 million. The overall change in fund balance as of November 30, 2024 was a positive \$600,000. Mr. Lazarone cautioned that the district will probably not end the year with this surplus due to funds expended in December, but should finish ahead of budget.

Commissioner Daniel asked, relative to salary expenses, whether there was an event that pushed overtime up. Mr. Lazarone responded that the majority of the overtime was in September. Director Verlander explained that the District only authorized overtime when there is a large emergency event such as a hurricane or other natural disaster. There was such an event (Hurricane Francine) in September.

Commissioner McDavid moved to approve the financial report. Commissioner Denicola seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

North Tower Project

Todd Campbell reported on this item.

An environmental assessment is underway, which should take another 15 days. After this 15 days, the District will be able to make the 30-day posting required by the FAA. Once the 30-day posting period has expired, installation can begin. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the equipment that will be installed on this project has been delivered.

CAD Update

Joe Thompson reported on this item.

CAD is operating well. Upgrades were done before the before the end of the year. The District is working with the CAD vendor, Central Square, on several more upgrades and projects. Staff is talking with Central Square and everything is going well.

911 Project

Jim Verlander reported on this item.

The District has favorably concluded negotiations with the new cloud 911 vendors, Central Square (CHS) and INdigital (ESINET) . Both contracts are now signed. Kick-off meetings have been held and both vendors are now performing.

Joe Thompson advised that the District is starting system and network design.

Commissioner Daniels inquired about the terms of the contracts. Mr. Verlander will forward copies of the signed contracts to all board members. Mr. Olinde stated that, at it's November meeting, the Board gave authority to Director Verlander to negotiate and enter into the contracts as long as they were within budget.

Commissioner McDavid stated that he wanted to meet with the Sheriff and ZPD Chief to determine how Zachary 911 will be handled.

Commissioner Kimble asked when the 911 projects would move forward. Mr. Verlander advised that they are already moving forward. Commissioner Kimble asked if there was an estimated go live date. Mr. Verlander advised that, in the best-case scenario, it could be as early as 6 months if there were no problems. But, it could be as long as 12 months in the event of issues.

Joe Thompson stated that, given all of the incidental issues involved, including training, he hoped that it be done in the 6-8 month range.

Commissioner McDavid asked when the City of St. George will have a seat on the Board. The Chairman asked Mr. Olinde about the process of getting a seat for St. Goerge. Mr. Olinde stated that either the Metro Council could substitute a St. George member for a current member or the legislature could add another seat to the board by legislation.

Commissioner McDavid asked whether St. George should have a seat if it does not participate in the District's RMS and/or CAD. Mr. Olinde advised that, in his opinion, that would not make a difference because technically the Board members represent the entire Parish.

In response to questions from the Chair, Mr. Olinde advised that how to handle the St. George seat would be solely up to the Metro Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Recent Developments

Jim Verlander reported that there were none.

Operations of the District

Administrative Matters

Operations of the District

Jim Verlander reported that there were some issues with certain reports that were generated, which contain inaccurate data. Mr. Verlander explained that there were other reports that the District is generating with correct data.

Commissioner Kimble pointed out that, based on the accurate data, 911 call takers are exceeding applicable standards and are congratulated for this.

Mr. Verlander additionally reported that the District is in the process of replacing older equipment. Brenda and Ms. Vickie also are working through and identifying carriers who remit funds to the District.

Legal Updates

Mr. Olinde offered to reach out to the Metro Council administrator and ask if she knows how the Metro Council will handle St. George's seat on the Board. The Chairman asked if it were appropriate for the Board to take a vote and ask the Metro Council to address the issue. Mr. Olinde offered to draft a resolution to that effect for the Board to approve if the Board wanted to do so. There was discussion on the matter. Chairman Gautreaux requested that St. George's Police Chief, Todd Morris, ask his Mayor to write a letter to the Communications District Board requesting a seat on the Board. Chairman Gautreaux said he would then write a letter to the Metro Council requesting that the City of St. George have a seat on the Board. The Chairman also went through the options that he thought would be available to St. George.

The Chairman stated that he believes that all members of the Board are focused on providing the best 911 service to the entire Parish. He asked that the Board's mission statement be reviewed and updated if necessary.

Adjournment

Commissioner Kimble moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Daniels seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.