East Baton Rouge Parish Communications District
Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. CDT

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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 20th day of May 2026 for a duly noticed regular public meeting.

The public meeting was called to order by Chairman Gautreaux. Commissioner Darnell Waites gave the Invocation. Commissioner David McDavid led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairman called roll:

Present: Chairman Sid Gautreaux, Commissioner Darnell Waites, Commissioner David McDavid, Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum (designated by Commissioner Wade Evans), Commissioner Designate Shane Spillman (designated by Commissioner Michael Kimble), Commissioner Chris Landry, Commissioner Myron Daniels, Commissioner Clay Rives, and Commissioner Chad Roberson.

The Chairman found that a quorum existed.

Others Present Included The Following: Director Jim Verlander, Joe Thompson, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Scott Lazarone CPA, Jim Fleming (InDigital), and Sarah McWhorter (CentralSquare).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Waites moved to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2026 meeting. Commissioner McDavid seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Report

The financial report was presented by Scott Lazarone, CPA. The presented financials were through March 31, 2026.

Balance Sheet: Total cash position was just under 11.8 million, and prepaid expenses totaled $275,000. Liabilities were $85,000 in routine accounts payable and 12.6 million in fund balance.

Revenue vs. Budget: Through the first quarter 1.9 million on a total service revenue 8.1 million budget. Interest earnings were strong at $77,000 on a $200,000 annual budget. Lazarone highlighted a significant downward trend in prepaid wireless revenue, $90,000 this quarter vs. $250,000 a quarter in previous years.

Expenses: Salaries and benefits were at 22% and 23% respectively. Contractual services were well under budget at 18%. Rent expense was slightly ahead of budget due to a 2025 CAM adjustment processed in the first quarter.

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

North Tower Project

Director Jim Verlander reported that the project is nearing a close. Motorola has resolved final frequency issues, and the District is preparing to close out the final milestone payment.

The District has drafted an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to sign over the tower to the City of Zachary. Verlander requested authorization to sign the agreement once finalized by legal counsel.

Commissioner McDavid moved to allow the Director to sign the IGA once approved by legal counsel. Commissioner Waites seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

911 Phone System Transition

Joe Thompson reported that all agencies are now on a single system using the ESInet and on Vertex. Jim Fleming of InDigital reported that OSP migration is nearly complete, with only Level 3 and Verizon providers remaining to be cut over.

Mr. Thompson reported technical issues involving a PBX server occurred over the preceding weekend. CentralSquare engineers applied two patches on Monday morning, which appear to have resolved the immediate problem. The District is currently working through a list of functions and features with the vendor to ensure the system performs as expected.

Sarah McWhorter (CentralSquare) emphasized the close partnership with EBRP, noting that Jim Verlander and Joe Thompson have direct access to all levels of CentralSquare, including all the way up to CentralSquare's CEO for urgent issues.

McWhorter presented a report on system performance. She stated that the system is in a "post-go-live system optimization" phase. McWhorter explained that reported issues fall into two categories: configuration (tuning settings) and development (requiring code changes). She highlighted that CentralSquare's engineering team successfully leveraged AI to analyze system logs to pinpoint the cause of the weekend server issues significantly faster than traditional methods. She expects significant progress on remaining system defects within the next four weeks.

Commissioner Chris Landry expressed concern regarding significant "pain points" for dispatchers, noting they have had to rely on backup systems daily for the last eight days. He requested that CentralSquare technicians be placed on-site to observe real-time issues and identify training gaps. Ms. McWhorter agreed to this request and will work with District management to coordinate on-site visits to observe dispatcher frustrations firsthand.

NEW BUSINESS:

Other Recent Developments

Commissioner David McDavid requested an update on the BUCC's status and future upgrades to the Harding Blvd facility.

Jim Verlander reported that the Backup Unified Communication Center (BUCC) is fully operational for 911 calls, CAD, and portable radios. Commissioner Landry announced a full-scale drill scheduled for 9:30 AM the following morning to simulate a total failure at the Harding site and test BUCC readiness.

Future Planning: A lengthy discussion occurred regarding the BUCC's limitations, specifically its lack of console radio systems for fire alert tones, radio patching, and emergency radio alerts. Verlander noted that as a backup facility, it was not originally planned to mirror every functionality of the primary site due to space and cost constraints. Commissioner Waites and Commissioner Landry emphasized the need for long-term future planning and a financial roadmap to ensure that a future backup site can support sustained operations for several weeks if necessary. Commissioner Rives expressed support for Verlander's assessment that the BUCC is a backup facility and should not be considered to have all the same functionality as a primary site, but any gaps in necessary resources should be identified. Todd Campbell advised that existing portable radios can perform many of the same toning functions as the console radios.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Report on Operations of the District

Director Jim Verlander reported that the CAD Admin Team received the Technology Leadership Award for a large agency at the APCO-NENA symposium. Other individual recognitions included:

- Joe Thompson: Technologist of the Year.
- Scott Anderson: Cybersecurity Sleuth Award for his work during a recent "Red Team" event.
- Jim Verlander: Nominated by state peers as President of the Louisiana Chapter of NENA (National Emergency Number Association).

Legislative Updates

Verlander reported on House Bill 463, authored by Representative McMakin, which proposes increasing the 911 fee from $1.25 to $2.00. This would be the first change since 2016. The bill would allow the Board to vote on an increase following a required public hearing. Chairman Gautreaux urged Board members to contact their legislators in support of the bill.

Revenue Decrease

Director Verlander and Scott Lazarone detailed the ongoing issue with carrier remittances. Carriers are arguing that data plans should not be subject to 911 fees, leading to quarterly revenue dropping from $250,000 to $90,000. The Louisiana Department of Revenue is actively pursuing a multi-step legal process to take these carriers to court and recoup the missing funds.

Legal Updates

Henry Olinde requested an executive session to discuss potential paths to recover costs related to cybersecurity events that occurred in October and December 2023. He requested that two attorneys with significant experience in cybersecurity matters be included in the session to outline options for the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Waites moved to enter into executive session pursuant to La. R.S. 42:17 (A)(11) and La. R.S. 42:14(A)(4). Commissioner McDavid seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a roll call vote to enter in executive session: Sid Gautreaux (Yes), Darnell Waites (Yes), David McDavid (Yes), Stephen Branscum (Yes), Shane Spillman (Yes), Chris Landry (Yes), Myron Daniels (Yes), Clay Rives (Yes), Chad Roberson (Yes). The motion unanimously passed.

The Board entered into executive session at approximately 3:00 p.m. The Board came back into public session at approximately 3:39 p.m.

Commissioner Rives moved to engage the services of Sarah Anderson and Mr. Clegg in pursuing the recovery of costs associated with the result of the cybersecurity events in 2023. Commissioner McDavid seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner McDavid moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Branscum seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.