

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting Minutes — August 19, 2026 — 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 19th day of August 2026 for a duly noticed regular public meeting. The public meeting was called to order by Chairman Sid Gautreaux at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum gave the Invocation. Commissioner David McDavid led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chairman called roll:

Commissioner Name	Status
Chairman Sid Gautreaux	Present
Commissioner David McDavid	Present
Commissioner Michael Kimble	Present
Commissioner Chris Landry	Present
Commissioner Myron Daniels	Present
Commissioner Clay Rives	Present
Commissioner Chad Roberson	Present
Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum (by Commissioner Wade Evans)	Present
Commissioner Darnell Waites	Absent

Others Present Included The Following: Director Jim Verlander, Joe Thompson, Scott Lazarone CPA, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Todd Campbell, and Denise Hemke (Chief Product Officer, CentralSquare).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner McDavid moved to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2026 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 were through June 30, 2026, representing the midpoint of the fiscal year. Mr. Lazarone reported a total cash on hand position of just under \$11.5 million. Accounts receivable from carriers were just under \$1.0 million (\$960,000), and prepaid software subscriptions and maintenance agreements totaled \$716,000. This resulted in total assets of just under \$13.2 million. On the liability side, accounts payable totaled \$97,000, and accrued expenses stood at \$332,000, representing the biannual accrual paid to other PSAPs for the first half of 2026. The total fund balance was \$12.7 million as of June 30, 2026. Mr. Lazarone noted that this includes a non-spendable prepaid balance of \$700,000 and committed capital project funds of almost \$800,000, leaving approximately \$1.5 million in restricted or non-spendable fund balance.

Regarding the revenues and expenses versus budget, Mr. Lazarone reported that halfway through the year, the watermark for being on track is 50%. Total fee revenue was just under 47.5%, primarily down due to the continuing decline in prepaid wireless revenues. The budgeted amount was adjusted down to \$580,000 for the year, but collections for the first two quarters totaled only \$175,000 (averaging \$85,000 per quarter). Interest earnings were strong at \$166,000 against a \$200,000 annual budget. Total revenues through the first six months were just under \$4 million.

With respect to expenditures, salaries and benefits were both tracking at 45% of the budget, representing about 5% below the watermark. Under supplies, spending remains well under budget because the \$250,000 allocated for furniture upgrades has not yet been spent. Contractual services stood at \$2.9 million on a budget of \$7 million (41%), leading to total expenses of just over \$3.4 million and a year-to-date increase in the fund balance of \$570,000.

In response to a commissioner's question regarding contractual services payments, Mr. Lazarone clarified that \$237,500 is paid monthly to the City-Parish for EMS personnel, and the May jump to \$570,000 reflects the semi-annual payment accrual to other PSAPs. Commissioner McDavid moved to approve the financial report. Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

North Tower Project

Todd Campbell reported that the North Tower is completed and fully operational. Director Verlander reported that the District has requested a contract amendment from Motorola to address tower ownership transfer without voiding the manufacturer's warranty. Motorola sent a version of the agreement via DocuSign last week, but it was legally insufficient (described as a copied memo inside a DocuSign page). Legal Counsel Henry Olinde rejected the document, and both parties' attorneys are now working together to obtain a proper agreement to finalize the ownership transfer to the City of Zachary.

911 Phone System Transition

Joe Thompson reported that all Originating Service Providers (OSPs) have been migrated off AT&T and onto InDigital's ESInet, meaning all feeds now go straight through ESInet to the CentralSquare Vertex system for call handling. Mr. Thompson provided an update on the Vertex call-handling system, noting that CentralSquare's Chief Product Officer, Denise Hemke, is in attendance. He reported that a major system patch was deployed last Thursday. While the team spent over nine hours on the phone during installation, a call transfer issue arose, requiring a partial rollback. CentralSquare analyzed and resolved the issue, and

the final portion of the patch was successfully deployed yesterday, resolving several defects and enabling features like the Instant Recall Recorder (IRR).

Ms. Hemke addressed the Board, acknowledging the legitimacy of recent go-live issues and affirming CentralSquare's commitment to resolving them through iterative patches. She noted that CentralSquare is conducting root-cause analyses to ensure the patch delivery process is improved. Mr. Thompson also reported that CentralSquare is standing up a dedicated test/training tenant that will fully mirror the District's production environment. This environment will allow the District to thoroughly test large, upcoming software updates—including text translation, video, and transcription features—before they go live. It will also be used at the backup facility (BUCC) for holistic training of call-takers and dispatchers on both Vertex and CAD.

Director Verlander and Mr. Thompson emphasized that establishing the Test/Training environment is a top priority and that they are working closely with CentralSquare and Denise Hemke to have it configured and available as quickly as possible. They noted that the dedicated environment is essential to safely validate future updates, support dispatcher training, and reduce the likelihood of disruptions in the live Vertex system.

Commissioner Landry strongly supported and was thankful for the establishment of the test environment, noting that dispatchers have experienced significant operational "pain points" and that testing updates prior to production is critical. Ms. Hemke reiterated her commitment to ensuring the Test/Training environment is completed promptly and to continuing CentralSquare's efforts to correct any remaining issues affecting the Vertex system.

Additionally, and at the prompting of Commissioner McDavid, a brief discussion occurred regarding abandoned AT&T equipment boxes left throughout the city. Director Verlander and Mr. Thompson agreed to share their AT&T 911 contact information with the Board to help facilitate their removal by the City-Parish.

CAD Rebuild Project / CentralSquare One (AI Integration)

Joe Thompson reported that he and Lieutenant Snyder (EBRSO) are working with CentralSquare on designing 'CentralSquare One,' an initiative that integrates AI features into CAD to streamline workflows (e.g., managing data overload, auto-briefing hazardous materials, and checking warrants and property history) without automated call-answering. Mr. Thompson announced that St. George has agreed to transition into the District's CAD system, creating a single, unified CAD system in East Baton Rouge Parish. He explained that CAD-to-CAD interfaces cannot perfectly emulate a single CAD database, making a unified system essential for seamless response coordination. The transition will be complex, requiring the rebuilding of the fire discipline side, including 187+ response zones and mutual aid truck orders.

To support this integration and clean up historical database clutter, which must be done every few years, Mr. Thompson recommended a comprehensive 'CAD Rebuild' project. He noted that agencies typically rebuild their CAD systems every 8–10 years. Rebuilding the system will allow each agency's CAD team to configure workflows based on modern standards and clean up redundant premise data (such as duplicate entries for Exxon and On the Run). CentralSquare will stand up a separate cloud tenant for the re-build, ensuring that ongoing production operations remain completely unaffected. The project is estimated to take six months and cost between \$200,000 and \$250,000.

Commissioner Michael Kimble expressed his strong support for the project to resolve dropped and failed transfers and to train the next generation of CAD administrators. Commissioner Kimble moved to authorize the CAD Rebuild project and proceed with the St. George CAD integration at an estimated cost of \$250,000. Commissioner McDavid seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Desk Project at Harding

Director Jim Verlander reported on his findings from the national APCO conference. Standard sit-to-stand console desks supporting six monitors start at \$12,000 (including installation), while high-end models with premium features such as heating and cooling can reach \$25,000. In light of limited staff resources, Scott Lazarone suggested that rather than managing a centralized procurement project, the District should reimburse individual agencies for purchasing their own desks. The current estimate is for 52 desks: 10 at EMS, 12 at BRPD, 7 at BRFD, 10 at EBRSO, 2 at Baker, 2 at Zachary, 1 at Central, and 8 at St. George. Agencies that have recently purchased desks (Zachary and Central) would also be eligible for reimbursement for monies spent.

Legal Counsel Henry Olinde confirmed that an MOU process could legally facilitate these reimbursements as the money has already been budgeted. A lengthier discussion ensued regarding the overall layout of the ATM/EOC Building. Commissioner Landry and Commissioner Rives emphasized that the project must look at the overall floor design, power grids, and infrastructure rather than just placing new desks on the floor. Moving 311 out of the room was highlighted as a key step to free up substantial space (about a fifth of the floor).

Commissioner Daniels moved to form a subcommittee—comprising, at a minimum, representatives from EBRSO, BRPD, Fire and EMS - to holistically address these floor layouts, power requirements, and standardization concerns and report back to the Board. Commissioner Landry seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed. Scott Lazarone suggested a 2023 time-limit for reimbursable historical desk purchases, which Jim Verlander noted matches the District's budget accumulation timeline beginning in 2024. Verlander agreed to coordinate with legal counsel to finalize the appropriate reimbursement parameters.

NEW BUSINESS:

Attorney Engagement Resolution

Legal Counsel Henry Olinde reported that due to moving his practice to Babin & Blanchard, and because his last contract was signed 11 years ago, a new engagement contract is required. The contract will reflect standard Attorney General rates. Olinde noted that legal fees so far this year are under 20% of the budgeted amount. Commissioner McDavid moved to approve the new legal services contract with Henry Olinde's new firm, Babin & Blanchard. Commissioner Rives seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Implementation of 2026 Louisiana Legislative Act 947 (911 Fee Increase)

Director Jim Verlander reported on Act 947, which allows communications districts to increase wireless 911 fees from \$1.25 up to a maximum of \$2.00. The law requires a multi-step process including a rate need analysis, formal presentation to the Board, a public hearing, a board resolution, and formal certified mail notification to carriers. Verlander detailed a looming \$1.19 million deficit for 2027, driven by a 67.9% drop

in prepaid wireless revenues (amounting to a \$729,000 loss from 2020), a 17% drop in interest earnings, and a \$276,000 increase in cloud-based technology and service costs.

Director Verlander presented revenue projections: a \$1.75 fee would generate \$7.7 million, while the full \$2.00 fee would generate \$8.8 million (based on 4.4 million annual subscribers). He also proposed increasing business lines from \$1.99 to \$2.50. Under the current MOU, 45% of the new revenue would be divided between EMS and St. George, while the District would retain 55% (\$1.99 million), yielding a net increase of \$800,000 after accounting for the deficit. Director Verlander and Joe Thompson emphasized the critical need to expand administrative staffing to support over 3,000 public safety personnel across 26 agencies. They proposed adding three positions: a Network System Specialist, a Technical Specialist, and a GIS Specialist, totaling \$240,000 annually in salaries and benefits.

Commissioner Daniels urged caution and noted the public optics of raising fees while the District's fund balance is at \$12.7 million. Scott Lazarone explained that much of the current fund balance is encumbered for major capital projects (like the North Tower and CAD cloud transition) and represents a necessary 'rainy day' reserve for public safety technology.

To address the volume of major projects currently underway (Act 947 fee increase, Harding desk project, and CentralSquare/Vertex testing), Commissioner Rives moved to return to a monthly meeting schedule. Commissioner Kimble seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed. The consensus of the Board was that the Act 947 public hearing and subsequent consideration of a fee adjustment could be held on the date of the Board's October meeting to allow Scott Lazarone to compile historical financial data for public transparency.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Report on Operations of the District

Director Jim Verlander reported that the Backup Unified Communication Center (BUCC) has been heavily utilized over the last four months for training, agency drills, and emergency operations. For example, East Baton Rouge Parish Animal Control successfully set up their operations at the BUCC during a planned generator power outage at their primary facility, seamlessly handling their typical volume of 90 calls per day.

Legal Updates

Legal Counsel Henry Olinde noted that the Board needs to finalize the Motorola contract amendment for the North Tower, establish parameters for the desk reimbursement MOUs, and evaluate the legal limits on spending District funds to improve immovable property that does not belong to the Communications District (such as the City-Parish owned Harding facility).

BUCC Readiness / Gap Analysis

Commissioner Landry reported on the EMS backup drill conducted at the BUCC. While basic call-taking and dispatching functions were successful, several critical gaps were identified, including the inability to perform radio or phone patches, toning for fire departments, or receive emergency radio alerts without full console systems. Todd Campbell advised that existing portable and mobile radios can be configured to perform these toning functions, indicating a need for targeted training rather than expensive hardware upgrades. The Board agreed to compile a gap analysis from upcoming drills for future planning.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Daniels moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Landry seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed, and the meeting adjourned.