

**EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2021 – 2:00 p.m. CST**

**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 Sheriff's Office on the 23rd day of March 2021 for a duly noticed regular meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sid Gautreaux at 2:23 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Barrow.

The Invocation was given by Mayor Waites.

Roll was called by the Chairman:

Present: Chairman Sid Gautreaux, Mayor David Barrow, Chad Guillot, Mayor David Amrhein Deputy Chief Robert McGarner, and Mayor Darnell Waites

Absent: Chief Ed Smith

The Chairman found that a quorum existed.

Others Present:

Director Jim Verlander, Part-time Assistant Director Todd Campbell, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Radio Shop Manager Joyce Wales, Mohit Vij (365 Labs), Ricky Klug (EBRSO), Chief Gerry Tarleton (St. George), Stacy Hannon (EMS) and Darryl Gissel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Waites moved to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting. Mayor Amrhein seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

CAD Project Status, Issues, and Developments including:

Director Verlander presented. Management is looking into obtaining new paging system from Central Square that will reach all agencies.

RMS Project

Director Verlander presented.

The previously reported warrant access issues were the result of the failure to fill in all fields when the warrants were put into the previous ADSI system. These fields were not required fields as they now are in the new system. Mohit Vij of 365 Labs confirmed this. This issue is almost resolved now.

Stakeholder Concerns/Related Issues

Mayor Amrhein interjected that there are radio dead spots in the Zachary area. New tower placement and the costs thereof was discussed. Director Verlander reported that grant money may possibly be available to construct a new tower, but that the ongoing cost of operating the tower is what the District is trying to get a handle on. Mayor Amrhein expressed his view that getting proper radio coverage without dead spots should be a priority for the Board and District.

Joyce Wales stated that the dead spot issue was investigated several years ago and there was a problem on Highway 19 between Jackson and Zachary.

The Chairman requested that the various agencies in the northern part of the Parish investigate the problems and report back exactly where dead spots are.

Director Verlander stated that he was working on the issue with Mr. Clay Rives, Director at the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

NEW BUSINESS:

Parish wide emergency notification system/Rapid SOS

Director Verlander presented on the Rapid SOS Service. This service, which has been widely available for 2-3 years, picks up information from wireless calls when they are made (even before the 911 phone system rings). It provides GPS coordinates of cell phone calls and provides live updates of position. It can also provide medical information from callers that have voluntarily placed their medical information with the American Heart Association. This service has been implemented across the nation and state. It costs no money. Mayor Amrhein moved to approve and authorize participation in Rapid SOS and to authorize the director to move forward with it. Mayor Waites seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Other Recent developments

The District has been planning an upgrade to the Intrado VIPER system and replacing servers. Director Verlander conducted research and talked to other communications districts. He discovered that traditional hard-wired 911 is becoming obsolete (end of life currently 2022 but may be extended) and that cloud 911 service is replacing it. The cloud 911 has many advantages, including the ability to set up back-up location anywhere there is internet available. Director Verlander will be attending a demonstration of cloud 911 being put on by NGA 911 at the Livingston Parish Communications District.

In light of this discussion, Mayor Amrhein noted the increasingly technical nature of the issues that come before the Board. This issue was discussed.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Finance Report / Discussion of Financials presented by Director

Director Verlander is in the process reviewing and scrutinizing all aspects of the communications district. This is a large undertaking and he has been extremely busy with this process which is ongoing and has included: working with current EMS staff, City/Parish Finance, EMS business office, and vendors. He has been identifying, evaluating and solving equipment needs, problems and issues. He has also been reviewing invoices, contracts and related items. Finally, he has been reviewing legal authorities of the district and its purpose.

Director Verlander highlighted the communications district purposes contained in La. R.S. 33:9102. There are essentially 3 “buckets” that the communications district should be funding in the following order of importance: (1) 911 services; (2) GIS services; and, (3) related items that will decrease emergency response times. Mr. Verlander also went over La. R.S. 33:9106 and the limitations on use of funds set forth in La. R.S. 33:9109.2. He also discussed Attorney General opinions on the use of funds.

Mr. Verlander discussed the December 2020 report to congress on 911 services across the nation and the unfavorable light cast upon communications districts that use funds for purposes other than 911. Mr. Verlander also noted that he has to submit information to, the Louisiana Legislature on the use of communications district funds. He pointed out that the District is spending “a lot of money” on “bucket 3” and that District should focus its resources on “bucket 1,” i.e., core 911 services.

Winbourne Consulting will audit service providers, and this will likely increase the District’s revenue. Winbourne will also review call volumes by all PSAPs in the Parish and will help evaluate the need to place the 911 services that these PSAPs in a priority position for funding.

Mr. Verlander did a survey of other communications districts in the state, and asked if they do repair, programming and maintenance of radios. With one exception, all of the responding districts indicated that they did not do radio

repair and maintenance. The one exception that did provide these services charged for them. A discussion was had on whether the radio shop should continue under the communications district when priority should be given to core 911 services.

Board members requested a break-down of services and how the Communications District funds are specifically being spent. Director Verlander advised the Board that he has been trying to make this determination for the last two and one-half months and this analysis is part of his ongoing review process.

The discussion continued and the question of a back-up facility and options were discussed.

IN light of funding priorities, the Board discussed the prior movement toward acquiring property and constructing a new radio shop. Mayor Amrhein moved that all work and expenses on the radio shop stop immediately. Mayor Waites seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 YEAS and Chief Daniel abstaining.

Purchasing policy

Director Verlander presented a draft of a proposed purchasing policy. Mayor Amrhein requested certain amendments to the proposed policy: no receipt no reimbursement, and no tipping reimbursement.

Chief Daniel discussed the sales tax provision in the purchasing policy. There were amendments to that provisions.

Chief Daniel also brought up the issue of possible limits to purchases/expenditures by the Director. The issue was discussed at length. No action was taken on this issue, but Board members requested that counsel check with other similar entities and to see how they handle this issue.

MUNIS Security Authorization for Director Update

Director Verlander access to MUNIS is proceeding as planned.

Insurance/Workers Comp Update

Director Verlander and Mr. Olinde presented the insurance proposal from Eustis. Mr. Olinde advised that Workers Compensation, additional coverage for certain property and excess coverage were added to the prior year's coverage. Mr. Olinde recommended that the Board approve the purchase of excess coverage option with \$3 million/\$6 million limits for an excess coverage premium of \$13,490. This would equate to a total combined insurance premium of up to \$43,033.11. Mayor Amrhein moved that the insurance proposal with the recommended \$3 million/\$6 million excess insurance option and premium of up to \$43,033.11 limits be accepted, authorized and approved. Mayor Barrow seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

Website and insignia

The Board reviewed the two proposed insignias provided by Director Verlander. Mayor Amrhein moved to approve the insignia with the 6-point start (as opposed to the one with the 5-point star). Mayor Barrow seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Amrhein moved to adjourn the meeting. Chief Daniel seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.