

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 9-1-1 BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 1999, IN THE BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM OF CITY HALL, 555 WALNUT, ABILENE, TEXAS.

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Public notice having been duly given, the 9-1-1 Board met at 2:00 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room of City Hall.

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Board Members

Present:

Roy McDaniel, City Representative
Jo Moore, City Representative
Mitch McLain, County Representative
Don Russom, County Representative
Gary Young, President, Volunteer Fire Department Rep.

Others Present:

Bob Putnam, Fire Chief
Debbie Hurley, Secretary II
Melvin Martin, Police Chief
Donna Jones, Police 9-1-1 Supervisor
Linda Gallion, Fire 9-1-1 Database Supervisor
Sharon Hicks, City Attorney
Jack Dieken, Taylor County Sheriff
Carol Taylor, Taylor County Sheriff's Office
Stan Egger, County Commissioner
Chuck Statler, County Commissioner
Gary Hudson, City Engineering
Mike Morrison, Assistant City Manager
Sarah Hannah, City Manager's Office
Phyllis Boyd, Tye
Harold Boyd, City of Tye Council Place I
Hank McMahan, Tye-Potosi
Mindy Whisenhunt, City Finance
Ken Alexander, Southwestern Bell Wireless
Cecelia Bowers, Southwestern Bell Wireless
Scott Moore, Southwestern Bell
Dennis Gloyna, Southwestern Bell
Roddie Reeder, Tye Volunteer Fire Dept.
John Bogart, View Volunteer Fire Dept.

President Gary Young called the meeting to order and stated the first order of business would be to approve the reappointments of two board members. Mr. Young stated Don Russom was reappointed by the County Commissioners as a County Representative, and Gary Young was reappointed by the Volunteer Fire Departments as their representative.

Mr. McLain moved to approve the reappointments of Don Russom as made by the County Commissioners, and Gary Young as made by the Volunteer Fire Departments, terms expiring 2/2001. Mr. Young seconded the motion and the motion carried. Mrs. Hurley then administered oaths of office to Mr. Russom and Mr. Young.

Mrs. Moore moved to appoint Roy McDaniel as President of the 911 Board. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. McLain moved to appoint Gary Young as President of the 911 Board. Mr. Russom seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. McLain moved to appoint Mr. Russom as Vice President of the 911 Board. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. McLain moved to appoint Mrs. Moore as Secretary of the 911 Board. Mr. Russom seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Mr. Russom made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 1999 meeting as printed, Mr. McLain seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Chief Putnam reviewed with the board the revised 1998/99 and proposed 1999/2000 budgets, noting adjustments to object 4215, the correct amount is \$160; and object 4305 the correct amount is \$60. The costs for objects 4485 and 4494, where combined in previous years, were separated this year to give the board a better idea of what that money is allocated for, and \$3,000 was used out of object 4441 for mapping fees to Sheppard Surveying. Chief Putnam noted under object #4459 \$23,500 was approved last year for a Taylor County Sheriff's dispatcher to handle all County calls. After making two payments for this dispatcher, it was discovered that the Sheriff's Office had not assumed that responsibility, and payments to the Sheriff's Office were discontinued. Chief Putnam recommended those funds be returned to the 911 District because those services have not been provided.

Mr. McDaniel asked Mr. Gloyna the status of the purchase of equipment to handle cellular calls. Mr. Gloyna deferred to Southwestern Bell Wireless representatives Scott Moore and Ken Alexander to answer the questions. The representative stated several things have to be taken into consideration as far as the equipment involved to handle this process, and expressed a desire to defer to their subject matter experts in this area to give a presentation to the board at the next meeting. Following discussion concerning some technical aspects of the service, Mr. McDaniel stated he thought the technical aspects presentation would be beneficial to Chiefs Putnam and Martin and their people; he was just interested in the cost and when the board would have to start paying.

Chief Putnam stated another unknown cost issue for discussion is the purchase of new equipment for a backup communication center for operating 911 after the new Central Fire Station is built, and the location for the backup system.

Mr. Moore stated Southwestern Bell would be in meetings with city staff and some of their 911 technical people regarding those issues and others, they would be exploring all the options.

Ms. Jones assured the board that although the backup is in the same area of town as the main system, they are not on the same switch, so if the main system goes down for any reason, they will go to the backup.

Mr. McLain stated clarification was needed regarding the money paid to the Sheriff's Office for dispatch. Mr. McLain asked Sheriff Dieken if the County had hired dispatchers with 911 funds, stating he was of the understanding that there was a question as to 911 holding off to see what Tye and Merkel were going to do about funding one dispatcher and the Commissioners Court had said something about funding one dispatcher. Sheriff Dieken replied that there were no conditions stipulated.

Mr. McDaniel stated 911 finally agreed to pay for one dispatcher on the premise that the Sheriff was going to take over all the county dispatching. Although that never happened, two quarterly payments have been made for that service. Mr. McLain stated the Sheriff gave a year's time frame before this was to be implemented as far as county-wide dispatching.

Mr. McDaniel stated he recalled it was January of this year; Mr. McLain stated he just remembered that there was discussion that in the coming year they were going to try to get it done.

Sheriff Dieken stated he didn't remember any stipulations or any conditions at all on the hiring of a dispatcher. Mr. McDaniel clarified that he was not talking about the hiring, but about when they would take over the county dispatch. Sheriff Dieken replied that they had anticipated that they would probably do it sometime in January, but it didn't materialize. They presented the request for funding of a dispatcher to the cities of Tye and Merkel but those cities haven't made a decision yet. The Sheriff further stated he went ahead and hired a dispatcher with the expectation that another dispatcher would be funded and the Sheriff's Office would go on with the county dispatch.

City Attorney Sharon Hicks stated the 911 board has the fiduciary duty to use the 911 funds for 911 situations.

Mr. Young referred to the September 29, 1998 minutes in which Sheriff Dieken stated when he expected to hire the additional dispatcher, based on the County support as expressed by County Commissioner Egger. The minutes also reflected there had been discussion between the Sheriff and the Police Chiefs of Merkel and Tye, and the Sheriff had stated the chiefs were enthusiastic and felt their City Councils would approve sharing the cost; and one dispatcher was hired in anticipation of that happening.

Mr. McLain stated the County hired the dispatcher without approved funds other than what the 911 Board had agreed to pay back to the county for the dispatcher. Chief Putnam asked when the Sheriff's Office is going to provide the service that the board is paying for, and stated

the county rural fire departments are not receiving dispatch services like the Sheriff's Office agreed to provide.

John Bogart, Chief of the View Volunteer Fire Department and Vice President of the Big Country Firefighters Association, stated the Sheriff's Office is dispatching their fire department, Buffalo Gap's fire department, ECCA's Fire Department, and others.

Donna Jones stated that View is and always has been dispatched directly to the Sheriff's Office, but that's the only one. Mrs. Taylor agreed with Mrs. Jones.

Mr. McDaniel asked Sheriff Dieken what they are doing different this year? Sheriff Dieken explained the Sheriff's Office dispatching operations and stated nothing has changed, it's the same operation as last year.

Mr. McDaniel stated with this additional dispatcher, the City was supposed to send all the county calls to the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Dieken replied with one dispatcher for Tye and Merkel, yes.

Carol Taylor stated there was no stipulation made to that effect, nor to an exact date, nor to complying with taking countywide dispatching or their funds would be cut off. Mr. McDaniel agreed it was never discussed that their funds would be cut off because they assumed the Sheriff's Office was going to do what they said they were going to do, and asked Commissioner Stan Egger if he were remembering wrong. Commissioner Egger replied no, Mr. McDaniel was not remembering wrong, the request for the extra dispatchers was to implement the program whereas all county 911 calls were to be transferred over to the Sheriff's Office. This would have allowed them to become more familiar with where the calls were to be dispatched. Mr. Egger stated he understood that that would happen and was hoping it would already be in place.

Mr. McDaniel stated he thought the board finally agreed that 911 would pay for one dispatcher and that the Sheriff's Office would handle all county calls.

Mr. Young stated initially, the 911 board had agreed to pay for two positions, and the county was going to pay for one then Mr. McDaniel refused to approve it through the Abilene City Council budget hearing, so the board had to go to plan B, which included Tye and Merkel, who haven't approved funding for a dispatcher yet.

Sheriff Dieken stated they hired the one dispatcher that the 911 board approved, and one that the County approved. They needed one more and are negotiating with Tye and Merkel for that one, but progress seems to be at a standstill.

Harold Boyd, Alderman Place 1 Tye, Texas, stated Tye pays for their own independent dispatcher out of Merkel. Mr. Boyd stated in his opinion, there is a duplication of services. Mr. Boyd asked why can't what the cities pay into the district be prorated back to the County, and give them fire, police, and ambulance dispatching. He sees a duplication of services within the

City of Abilene and the County, why can't they work together for less dollars and provide a better service?

Mr. Young replied that that's been done in some places and been tried in others, and some worked and some didn't, but that's beyond the scope of what this board is here to act upon.

Mr. Boyd stated the Sheriff's Office came to Tye asking for about \$13,000 per year to pay for their half of the dispatcher and Merkel was to pay for the other half. Mr. Boyd further stated Tye doesn't have the money and that he has not seen any paper on the amount of calls dispatched out that way or calls coming in or going out. He stated he feels his city doesn't actually have a representative on the board here.

Mr. Young cited the statute that governs Taylor County is clear along those lines and it requires that all of the incorporated areas in the county jointly select the two city representatives that represent them on this board. Mr. Boyd replied the first time they had anything on a presentation for 911 was about a year ago, and stated communication within Tye's City Hall is an internal problem out there, but that we should work from today and go forward.

Mr. McLain stated as far as the 911 budget goes, he believes that as a board they owe the money to the County and need to pay that money for that dispatcher. Mr. McDaniel reiterated, that's fine, but didn't the County agree to do something, it was his understanding that the Sheriff's Office was going to start dispatching all the county calls. Mr. McLain agreed that that was discussed, but stated the citizens that live in rural Taylor County deserve the same service as the city, and stated he lives in rural Taylor County and pays 50 cents as a 911 surcharge. The board needs to pay the County what they agreed to pay them, and to continue to pay that fee. At a later time if Tye and Merkel would like to make their request to this board to fund the dispatcher for them through the County, the board owes them at least an ear to listen to what they have to say. The other cities involved have not had an opportunity in his understanding to vote on the budget because it never gets that far.

Mrs. Moore and Mr. McDaniel replied that that's not true.

Mr. McLain continued that the board is not doing any good worrying about whether or not the Sheriff has fully fulfilled what he said he would, and he hasn't because he hasn't been given the people to do that with.

Chief Putnam noted that 911 is to ensure that when a citizen picks up a telephone, calls dispatch, a call taker picks up the telephone and their identification and address comes up on the screen, 911 is through. Dispatching is the responsibility of the emergency response agency. Mr. McLain is trying to get dispatchers for the Sheriff's Office from 911 funds when the County's supposed to be paying for Sheriff's dispatchers. Chief Putnam stated sixty-two 911 calls came into the Sheriff's Office in March, compared to 5755 that the City received, and asked if the board wanted to split up the money equally there and pay ten dispatchers for the City for every one for the County, stating that doesn't make sense and that's not what 911 is about. Commissioner Egger agreed.

Mr. Young stated there are going to be some calls come in that they won't have a clue how to handle them. The calltakers don't have maps in front of them, they're on the dispatch side of the room, so it's not as clear. Donna Jones replied that's not so, the calltakers have got a map in the calltaker area and the dispatchers have a map in the dispatch area.

Mr. Young quoted Texas Safety Title 9 Code 772.317, "Allowable operating expenses of a district include all calls contributable to designing the 911 system and all equipment and personnel necessary to establish and operate a public safety answering point and other related answering points the board considers necessary. Ms. Gallion replied that law is talking about secondary answering points, like a backup, not the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. McDaniel stated he wanted to clarify that every city in Taylor County 911 District was offered an opportunity for their representatives to attend one of their meetings to explain the budget and go over everything that happened last year. He and Mrs. Moore went to Tye and Tuscola, who were the only two that responded to that offer, but that opportunity has been available to the 911 District cities every year for the last 12-13 years.

Mr. McLain stated that last year Mr. McDaniel said that regardless of what this board does with the budget, the City of Abilene City Council has to approve the budget. Mr. McLain further stated several entities out in the County have told him, knowing that he is on the 911 board, that they've never seen a copy of the budget, nor had an opportunity to vote on the budget.

Mr. McDaniel asked who are these people? Are they on the City Councils? Mr. McLain replied Harold Boyd is here and can tell you. Mr. McDaniel asked if Mr. Boyd was saying that he wasn't at his meeting last fall and explained the budget to him? Mr. Boyd stated Mr. McDaniel presented the 911 dispatcher issue and that was the first time that their Council had heard anything about being involved.

Mr. McDaniel stated Mrs. Moore could show him a copy of everything that was sent. Mr. Boyd conceded that it may have been sent, but their Council did not receive the information, implying it was an internal office problem in Tye. Mrs. Moore replied that's certainly not this board's fault, the City of Tye received the information. Mr. Boyd stated there is correspondence mail that has not been opened in Tye for five years.

Mrs. Boyd stated the City of Tye didn't know about this meeting until last night, when Tye's policeman came to their house. Mr. Boyd stated it was relayed from Mr. McLain to their local police for Mr. Boyd to get in touch with Mr. McLain about this meeting.

Mr. McMahan stated the rural people should not be ostracized just because of lack of communication within the board and between the board and the rural people.

Mrs. Moore replied that she doesn't think there's a problem with the board and the rural people. The board has met its responsibilities as far as notifying the cities. The 911 District has been operating for over 10 years, and the board has never sent individual agendas to the entities; it's posted as required by law on the City's official bulletin board. Mrs. Moore stated that she

and Mr. McDaniel as the cities representatives have offered through written correspondence to meet with every one of the cities and sent the last three sets of agendas and minutes to these entities, offering to meet with them and only two of the cities responded. Mrs. Moore further stated every year when the budget is approved, the board is responsible to notify the entities and have that placed on their Council agendas for their approval. They are notified; and if they don't respond, another notice is sent to all of the cities to remind them that their councils have to approve the budget. We have to have a majority of the cities within the district approve the budget and sometimes it's difficult to get them to respond that their councils have acted on the budget. A majority of the seven cities besides Abilene in the district have to approve the budget and the County Commissioners have to approve it.

Mr. McDaniel stated to Mr. McMahan that he did not understand his comment about the rural folks being ostracized, that nobody's tried to ostracize the rural folks, nobody's talked down to them, that he's aware of.

Mr. McMahan stated ostracized may not be the right word, but if Jack Dieken needs another dispatcher, he ought to be afforded the money from the rural Taylor County in order to provide that service for everybody, just like Mr. McDaniel is wanting him to do, he ought to be provided money in order so he can do it.

Mr. Young stated there is a responsibility that's shared by several here, not only the cities, individual cities like Tye and Merkel and these incorporated areas, have the responsibility to offset part of those costs as well, the County shares in that, and they've come forward to take one of those positions. It was the board's understanding last year that it had been worked out between Merkel and Tye and the County, and this board ahead of time. They had a plan, had it worked out and agreed to by everybody, and then that plan failed. Mr. Young stated his appreciation to the Sheriff for staying with them, and asked him to just stay with the board and if there's any way for the group, Abilene, Taylor County as a whole to work this out, they'll do it and they as a board will do their part.

Commission Egger stated that 911 has been taking calls and doing a good job at that, noting there have been a few glitches from time to time and some problems pointed out and that was one of the reasons for the addition of doing the actual follow-up of the 911 calls out of the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Egger appreciated the 911 board attempting to do that, stating it's the responsibility of the County to furnish the Sheriff dispatchers for the County. Commissioner Egger further stated Sheriff Dieken said that he needed an additional three people, and he would have hoped that would have happened and still will happen because that is one of the things that could help familiarize the Sheriff's Office with the rural areas, etc. As far as 911 paying the salary of a dispatcher in the Sheriff's Office, that's up to the 911 board to determine whether that's what they want to do here or not, but that was the reason for the addition of that employee. It's the County's responsibility to fund dispatchers for dispatching at the Sheriff's Office, and if the Sheriff's Office will start taking a more active role in the actual directions received from 911, then it definitely needs help from the 911 board.

Mr. McDaniel stated he would like to clarify just a couple of things, stating the board can give money to the Sheriff's Office or not, but the gentleman in the audience talked about the

rural folks paying money, and he's right, however many phones there are out there in the rural section, all 2000 of them at 40 or 50 cents a month, whatever it is. There are 50,000 phones in the City of Abilene, and he doesn't think the rural folks could fund the 911 system by themselves. He stated he may be wrong, but in 1986 when they voted this in on a county-wide basis, they talked about how the District would operate. The County didn't want to operate it. The City offered to administer it rather than hiring a whole new staff of people to run it. The City has run it and continues to run it, and is asking for \$10,000 to run it next year. For that \$10,000 you get a lot of folks working on it. The board has a contract with the City of Abilene to administer the 911 district, and Mr. McDaniel stated he is to the point now that he is willing to ask this board to change that or give it to the County or set it up somewhere different or whatever. Maybe that should be discussed, but the way the City of Abilene runs a budget is, if you give X dollars to run a program, you expect that program to happen. Mr. McDaniel further stated he and Mrs. Moore have been the City's elected representatives to this board since day one. Every year, every city, every 911 city gets a chance to talk about the budget, to talk about their representatives, we offer to come and meet with them. We can't help it if some cities don't get their mail, but nobody's trying to put down the rural folks, everybody's trying to give them the same service that everybody else gets. When the Sheriff's Office gets two calls a day and the Abilene police department's getting 300, 400, and 500 a day, it doesn't balance on that basis, or on how many telephones are out there or on how much money's coming in.

Mr. Young called for a motion on the proposed FY 99/2000 budget.

Mr. McLain moved to approve the proposed FY 99-2000 budget. Mrs. Moore seconded the motion and the motion carried with Young, McLain, Moore, and Russom voting Aye and Mr. McDaniel voting No.

Mr. Young stated the Sheriff's Office hasn't gotten to the point to where the calls that originate in the county route through the Sheriff's Office today because they don't have that other position and haven't been totally funded yet.

Ms. Taylor replied they don't have the equipment, nor the personnel to do countywide dispatching tomorrow.

Mr. McDaniel stated last year the question was raised if the Sheriff's Office had the equipment and the board was told they did. Ms. Taylor replied no, they needed staff and needed equipment and that's why the Sheriff predicted a futuristic date for that.

Mr. McDaniel asked who is paying for the equipment? Mr. Bogart replied he's paid for some of it himself, but he's doing it to improve his fire department's part in it.

Mr. McLain made a motion to approve the revised 1998-99 budget with object #4459 reflecting a total of \$23,500, stating the money's owed the County.

Chief Putnam suggested the board not set the amount at \$23,500 because the dispatcher wasn't hired at the beginning of the fiscal year, so it would be whatever the amount they invoiced, and not the \$23,500.

Mr. McLain restated his motion to approve the revised budget with that amount being \$23,500 and asked for a second. Mr. Russom seconded the motion, stating he felt the board is obligated.

Mrs. Moore requested clarification as to whether this motion is to authorize only a 911 dispatcher who will not serve any other function, only 911 dispatching services. Mr. McLain stated he did not think that the board needs to start putting stipulations on what that person will do.

Mrs. Moore asked if the board can allocate 911 funds authorizing the individual to function in other capacities? Mr. McLain replied he doesn't think the board needs to address what they will do.

Mrs. Hicks stated she thinks the board has to address what they're going to be doing, because according to the rules that the 911 Board president just read about what 911 money can be spent for, it must be spent for 911 or incidentals, and there has to be some allocation to a position funded what that in fact is being used for related to 911. If there is no change in what is being done with that dispatcher as it relates to 911, then the board is not using their fiduciary duty to the 911 money. The money has to be allocated in some form to a 911 incidental function, and if there does not come a time frame where that changes, then there has to be an addressing of that fund.

Mr. McLain stated he doesn't think any stipulations need to be made as to all that person does is answer a 911 phone. Mrs. Moore stated she wasn't making a stipulation, but needed clarification. Mr. Young added that they will be working in the communications center, either answering the phone, on the radio, entering data, looking up warrants, or whatever is necessary to keep that communication center in operation.

Mrs. Hicks stated they justified that request with the 911 board to pay for that because they would take on additional duties relating to 911. There has really not been a change in that functioning. If the Taylor County Sheriff's Office comes with a request that they have five dispatchers and they estimate that 30% of their time is used related to 911, then if they want this board to fund 30% of that, she thinks that's an absolute legitimate cost. If they add a whole new person and say that they will do additional duties and then never do additional duties to 911, then it is her opinion the 911 board is paying for dispatching, which is properly before the County. There has to be in this board's mind a satisfactory delineation of duties.

Mr. Russom asked if that can be done at a later meeting. Mrs. Hicks replied it does not have to be specifically addressed at this meeting, but at some point, the board has to be satisfied within their duty that the 911 money they're spending goes to 911 costs.

Sheriff Dieken assured the board that all the dispatchers for the Sheriff's Office will perform 911 services in and among their other duties.

Mr. Young called for a vote on approval of the revised budget as previously stated by Mr. McLain. McLain, Russom, and Young voted Aye. McDaniel & Moore voted No.

Mr. McDaniel stated there's a point of clarification; a proposed budget which included \$23,500 for a dispatcher was approved, so what is going to happen between now and this time next year concerning that 911 dispatcher's duties? Mr. McLain replied the budget has been approved by this board and we're going to continue to fund that position with that \$23,500.

In response to Mr. McDaniel's question, Mr. Young stated he would like to meet with the parties involved to see if there is something that can be discovered by working one-on-one. Another meeting will be called in the near future to bring this for everybody's approval.

Mr. McLain made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Russom seconded the motion and the motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Jo Moore, Secretary

Gary Young, President