

**MINUTES OF THE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF MANAGERS**

REGULAR MEETING

March 18, 2020

LOCATION: 9-1-1 Board Room
150 Hilbig Road, Conroe, Texas

BOARD ATTENDING

PRESENT: Paul Virgadamo, President
Robert Hudson, Vice President
Ryan Gable, Secretary
Jack Yates, Treasurer
James Simon, Member

NOT PRESENT: Mike McClosky, Ex-Officio Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Larry Foerster, Legal Counsel
Chip VanSteenberg, Executive Director
Andrea Wilson, Associate Director
Roberto Gutierrez, Operations Manager
Robert Brewer, Systems Tech
Regina Payne, 9-1-1 Database/GIS Manager
Terri Gill, Office Manager
Kristi Dunn, Training Coordinator
Jeanne Frey, MCECD Retiree

Mr. Paul Virgadamo, President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., noting Mr. Mike McClosky was unable to attend, and that several were attending via conference bridge.

Public Comments

No one requested to address the Board.

The Woodlands Fire Department's request under the PSAP Improvement Program for enhanced and updated electronics providing redundancy to the Texas Wide Area Radio Network (TX WARN)

Mr. Virgadamo noted item one of the agenda, consider and take action approving The Woodlands Fire Department's request under the PSAP Improvement Program for enhanced and updated electronics providing redundancy to the Texas Wide Area Radio Network, Texas WARN.

Mr. Chip VanSteenberg stated the Woodlands Fire Department is requesting \$108,000 to provide a redundancy for radio systems which improve interagency interoperability. This includes a second connection to the Texas Wide Area Radio Network (Texas WARN), a switch for patching to the NextEdge system, and console upgrades to expand the use of talk groups for every radio position. Since 9-1-1 telecommunicators in the Woodlands Fire Department operate both phone and radio systems, these improvements will improve their ability to serve both caller and the personnel in the field.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were questions, and being none, requested a motion. Mr. James Simon made the

motion to approve The Woodlands Fire Department's request for enhanced and updated electronics providing redundancy to the Texas Wide Area Radio Network. Constable Ryan Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

The Montgomery County Hospital District's request under the PSAP Improvement Program to use funds from the FY 2019 program for construction of a monopole at the Conroe Police Department

Mr. Virgadamo noted item two of the agenda, consider and take action approving the Montgomery County Hospital District's request under the PSAP Improvement Program to use funds from the FY 2019 program for construction of a monopole at the Conroe Police Department

Mr. VanSteenberg explained the Montgomery County Hospital District is requesting \$55,000 from the FY 2019 PIPP to install a monopole at the Conroe Police Department. At the meeting on January 15, 2020, the Board approved a request from MCHD to use \$125,000 of the FY 2020 PIPP for this project. Since that meeting, MCHD staff received the final cost estimate which was higher than anticipated. MCHD did not request any PIPP funds last year, so the money allocated for it is still available. This is now a multi-year request for one project, similar to the Conroe Police Department's PIPP project to purchase a new CAD system.

Mr. Larry Foerster noted for the record he would recuse from counsel on this matter.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were questions, and being none, requested a motion. Mr. James Simon made the motion to approve the hospital district's request to use \$50,000 in funds from the FY 2019 program for construction of a monopole at the Conroe Police Department. Chief Robert Hudson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Amendment to Retiree Benefits Resolution to allow for reimbursement for coverage from alternate providers

Mr. Virgadamo noted item three of the agenda, consider and take action amendment to Retiree Benefits Resolution to allow for reimbursement for coverage from alternate providers.

Mr. VanSteenberg stated the district has adopted at least three resolutions which cover the benefit of medical coverage for retirees which the staff use to administer the benefit. All of them state that retiree medical insurance will be provided under the same plan provided to employees. Furthermore, employees hired before March 10, 2010 are "grandfathered" into a more generous benefit that includes Medicare supplement and prescription insurance as offered by the district's medical insurance provider. There are six retirees currently eligible for this benefit and two employees who will be eligible upon retirement.

The purpose of this resolution is to allow retirees to look for and obtain medical insurance outside of the district's group plan and then be reimbursed for that coverage up to the amount charged by the district's provider. If a retiree is able to find a plan which better suits his/her needs, they will have the freedom to choose that plan. This is especially applicable for the Medicare supplement and prescription insurance. The district's provider, TML IEBP, currently charges \$521 for this coverage; it is available from multiple providers for much less than that. This change would be a win for both the retirees and the district.

The need for this change came to our attention by a recent retiree. Due to some confusion on procedural requirements and application dates, this retiree missed the opportunity to get covered under the district's plan. This policy change would allow the retiree to still get the benefit and would allow the district to provide it at a reduced cost.

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were questions, and being none, requested a motion. Constable Gable made the motion to approve the amendment to the retiree benefits resolution. Mr. Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Amending Section 9.02 – Vacation Leave of the Personnel Manual to clarify the provision and use of vacation leave for newly hired employees

Mr. Virgadamo noted item four of the agenda, consider and take action on amending Section 9.02 – Vacation Leave of the Personnel Manual to clarify the provision and use of vacation leave for newly hired employees.

Mr. VanSteenberg explained that section 9.02.02 and 9.02.03 of the district’s personnel manual reads as follows:

9.02.02 Vacation is granted per calendar year, January 1 through December 31. Employees shall be allowed vacation with pay, as outlined in the table below:

Years of Employment	Vacation Hours Allowed
6 months	40
1 - 4	80
5 – 9	120
10 or more	160

9.02.03 On January 1, employees who have completed twelve (12) months of continuous employment shall be allowed vacation pay as outlined in the above table. Employees who are hired before July, and who have worked six (6) consecutive months shall be allowed 40 hours of vacation for the current year”

This language is confusing concerning how much vacation leave to grant newly hired employees both in the year they are hired and in the following year. It is also a meager benefit and hard to justify. It creates stark discrepancies based on hiring date. An employee would have to work 18 months before being granted any vacation time.

To clear up this confusion, the staff recommends the language be changed to the following:

9.02.02 Vacation is granted per calendar year, January 1 through December 31. Employees shall be allowed vacation with pay, as outlined in the table below:

Years of Employment	Vacation Hours Allowed
Less than 6 months	60
Six months - 4	80
5 – 9	120
10 or more	160

Mr. Virgadamo asked if there were questions, and being none, requested a motion. Mr. Simon made the motion to approve the amendment to section 9.02, vacation leave. Constable Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Executive Director’s Report on Items of Community Interest for Which No Action Will Be Taken

Mr. Virgadamo noted item five of the agenda, executive director’s report on items of community interest for which no action will be taken.

Mr. VanSteenberg reported on the following items:

- The Vesta Upgrades, the equipment is on-site, the field engineers’ visit has been postponed, the project dates will be updated
- The Mission Critical report is under review

Discussion only, no action was taken.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Virgadamo stated the Board would review the consent agenda prior to the closed executive session.

Mr. Virgadamo noted items eight through eleven of the consent agenda, noting the items may be taken separately or as a whole.

Mr. Simon made a motion to approve items eight through eleven of the consent agenda. Chief Hudson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

Closed Executive Session

Mr. Virgadamo noted the board may meet in closed executive session as authorized per the Texas Open Meetings Act, to consider personnel matters pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.074.

The open meeting adjourned to the closed executive session at 12:16 p.m.

Reconvene Open Session

Mr. Virgadamo reconvened the open meeting at 12:36 p.m., to consider and take action, if necessary, on personnel matters.

Mr. James Simon made the motion to increase the Executive Director's pay by 3.5%, effective April 1, 2020. Constable Ryan Gable seconded the motion. The motion carried with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

*These minutes were approved at regularly scheduled board meeting on May 20, 2020.
If needed, an official, signed copy may be obtained at the MCECD office.*