

ABILENE / TAYLOR COUNTY 9-1-1 DISTRICT

PO Box 3497, Abilene, TX 79604

Phone: (325) 676~6294 Fax: (325) 676~6336

The Abilene/Taylor County 9-1-1 District Board met in regular session on September 27, 2023 at 2:00pm at 4310 Buffalo Gap Rd. #1246, Abilene, TX (South Branch Library).

Members Present:

DeWayne Bush, County Representative and Chairman
Tommy Pope, County Representative
Vincent Cantu, Municipal Representative
Michael Rice, Municipal Representative
Jon Hoebelheinrich, VFD Representative

Staff Present:

Troy Swanson, 9-1-1 Program Director
Sharla Allison, 9-1-1 Board Secretary

Others Present:

Ricky Bishop, Taylor County Sheriff
Rochelle Davis, City of Abilene, IT Dept
Stevie Dora, Taylor County Sheriff's Office
Mike Rains, City of Abilene Director of Finance
Shawna Atkinson, City of Abilene, City Secretary
Phil Crowley, Taylor County Judge
Kelley Messer, City of Abilene Legal

Item 1 – Call to Order

Chairman Bush called the Abilene / Taylor County Emergency Communications Board meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and led the invocation.

Item 2 – Pledge to the United States Flag and the Texas Flag

Item 3 – Swearing in of Appointed and Re-appointed Board Members

Item 4 – Public Comments on Any Item on the Agenda

Chairman Bush noted that there were no Public Comments.

Item 5 – Approval of Board Minutes from September 28, 2022 Board Meeting

Boardmember Pope motioned to approve the item as presented. Board Member Rice seconded the motion. Motion carries.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich
NAYS (0): None

September 28, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes **Approved**.

A copy of the minutes will be posted on: <http://abilenetx.gov/714/Agendas-minutes> and a voice recording of all minutes is on file at the City of Abilene.

Item 6 – Current State of 9-1-1 Board

Chairman Bush introduced the new 911 District Director, Troy Swanson. Troy commented on the past and present/current status of our District. He then gave a brief summary of his experience in IT and 911 and states that he recognizes there is a large fiduciary responsibility to the fund supporting this District and how it takes in revenue and expends monies. He plans to take ownership at a higher level and figure out how to make this a solvent program that really supports the 9-1-1 District and its mission.

He explained the staffing issues for GIS/Addressing; having gone from four staff down to zero. To mitigate that, he leveraged contracted assistance to provide GIS/Addressing functions and states that it has been working out very well. This effort has improved the process, and the first main focus has been customer service - answering the phones, responding to emails, etc. A new web address tool which allows the customer to request addressing without having to send an email request, is now being utilized as well. IT staff track these requests more productively by creating internal work items. Troy proposes establishing a long-range financial plan for the 9-1-1 District that includes how to target the use of the fund balance and reimbursement for various expenses. He believes there is opportunity to create a strategic vision of what the 9-1-1 District's mission should be and where do we want to be as a 9-1-1 District in the future? This would help plan future activities and functions, and be able to fund them properly.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich

NAYS (0): None

Item 7 – Discussion and Approval of the Director Appointment of the Board of Managers

Chairman Bush led the discussion of appointing Troy Swanson as the current Director for the Administration of the 9-1-1 District. The Board's recommendation is to appoint Troy as Director to carry out the purposes of subchapter 772.308 as in the rules for the District.

Board Member Rice motioned to approve the item as presented; Board Member Pope seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich

NAYS (0): None

Item 8 – Discussion, Consideration and Action regarding Taylor County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) request for Main & Backup Eventide Recorders Upgrade for \$92,917.00

The Administration recommends approving this action as it provides the upgrade of a very old, aged system. This upgrade is needed in order to operate the system properly. This is the (PSAP) recorder system for the ability for media playback. Stevie Dora, Taylor County Sheriff's Office, stated this is the recording system used to record all of their radio traffic, 911 and non-emergency calls. She added that the system is approximately nine years old, and has reached end of life.

Historically, the Board has funded this for both PSAPs - Abilene PD and Taylor County SO. The vendor sends the information and quote when it is due for maintenance or upgrade. It is not a full upgrade every year when the renewal is done - it is annual maintenance costs for the software paid for both districts. This request is for the physical (equipment) upgrade of the old system.

The vendors send updates on life cycle replacement of equipment. They give warning ahead of time and to work on getting the equipment replaced.

Board Member Cantu motioned to approve the item as presented; Board Member Pope seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich
NAYS (0): None

Item 9 – Discussion, Consideration and Action regarding scheduled critical equipment replacement for both (APD and TCSO) Public-Safety Answering Points (PSAP) for \$42,318.44

Chairman Bush noted from his understanding, this is critical for both law enforcement agencies in response to 911 calls. Sharla added that these are the first steps for the ESInet implementation that we are transitioning to, which is rebuilding the infrastructure in our district. In the next special meeting (Item 10), this will be discussed in greater detail. This (request) is for equipment upgrades to already be in place without backorder delays.

It is the routers and firewalls, that will be part of the ESInet infrastructure, and the equipment can be utilized now at both PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points). The equipment upgrade is critical for many reasons. One being, the ability for callers to send text, pictures and video to the dispatcher. This is a more secure way for dispatchers to receive them.

Although APD got new equipment a few years ago, new technology has made the current equipment obsolete. Technology only lasts around 5 years or so, and this is at the end of life for this particular manufacturer, so it's no longer supported. The concern is it has a security role with the environment and if it lapses or becomes too old, it may cease to function as a security protection. By replacing it, we will have enhanced its capabilities and sustained that security profile.

The Palo Alto next generation firewall presented enables our district to utilize the equipment longer. This equipment is higher caliber, so better protection from a security perspective.

Board Member Pope motioned to approve the item as presented; Board Member Cantu seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich
NAYS (0): None

Item 10 – Discussion and Approval of a Special Meeting on November 1, 2023 for migration to ESInet (NG911)

Troy begin by stating the ESInet (NG911) proposal is to embrace the new technologies that have been coming to us over the last handful of years. This is the final conclusion of all the discussions and the technology needed to employ at both PSAPs and backup 911 Dispatch areas. It moves the analog segment of the conversation in a dispatch call to that first mile instead of across the length of the call, which will create redundancy in the circuits and resiliency if the district suffered a disaster(s). It enables the district to run one leg of that across a digital threshold line - fiber versus cellular. It is a collaborative effort between our district and AT&T to provide our 911 service. AT&T is providing all the infrastructure and we will provide the end gear and the ability to talk on that in a digital form.

Troy adds that ESInet is not a trivial project and has been presented before the Board previously. The current estimate approximately \$1.7 million. \$1 million is projected for the City/APD. and \$700K for Taylor County SO. However, there may be grant opportunities to assist with the funding. The extra time requested is to provide a

good final proposal on what the costs may be and how/if the grant money might be used to help with these costs. November 1st special meeting will give more time to research costs and funding and the AT&T representatives for our District will be present at this special meeting to explain more detail.

All Districts are headed this way; this is a shift in the technology industry. This is our districts opportunity to step into the future with this equipment.

There will be training for the dispatchers on receiving these texts and pictures. While Stevie (TCSO) added this could be very valuable and beneficial as it would allow citizens to communicate with them (dispatchers) in other ways if they are unable to call.

This is a requirement in Texas and this will allow Texas dispatch centers to communicate between (surrounding) centers such as when Coleman County dispatch was down. It would automatically fail over to the nearest dispatch center, which would still allow dispatch centers to contact their deputies closest to them for assistance. The deadline for this is 2026, and it is done in phases. The total cost is for the entirety of the project. The Motion is to propose the special Meeting on November 1st, 2023.

Board Member Cantu motioned to approve the item as presented; Board Member Rice seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich
NAYS (0): None

Item 11 – Presentation and Acceptance of Annual Audit for Year Ended September 2022

Mike Rains, Director of Finance, City of Abilene, presented the item. He stated the audit was prepared by Forvis in conjunction with the City's audit. Rains reviewed the totals for expenditures and revenues. He noted the total revenue was a decrease from the previous year, and kept the balance positive. He noted the wireline service fees dropped by 51% from 2021. Rains explained that the goal is to not have a deficit year after year, and the rate structure should be looked at again. Troy suggested a possible rate study and review of expenses and that ESInet should allow us to reduce our footprint in copper and the expenses that go along with it. He suggested that a long-range financial plan be discussed in order to sustain District operations.

Board Member Rice motioned to approve the item as presented; Board Member Hoebelheinrich seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AYES (5): Boardmembers: Bush, Pope, Rice, Cantu and Hoebelheinrich
NAYS (0): None

Item 12 – Discussion and Approval of the Revised FY 2023 and Proposed FY 2024 Budget

Troy began by directing the Board to their packet page showing the budget and expenditures. There was a higher set of expenses, but a lower revenue. He adds that dispatch reimbursement and telephone service are heavy hitters in this budget, and suggested reengineering rate revenue and dispatch reimbursement to be more appropriately sized. He proposed there is not enough information to make significant changes in rates; to sustain the current budget for FY 2024 and move the **annual budget meeting to February** to allow time to collect better information on rate structures and an informed proposal on how to change it up; as well as recommendations on how to change up expenses. If there continues to be a reduction in the fund balance, corrective action will need to be taken. Administration will work with the Board to create a long-range plan that