

**ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 9:00 a.m.

**Warren E. McDaniels Communications Center Boardroom
118 City Park Avenue
New Orleans, LA**

MEETING MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Collin Arnold called the meeting to order. Chelsea Porche (OPCD) called the roll with the following members present:

Josh Cox (proxy for Chairman Tidwell, CNO), Director Collin Arnold (NOOHSEP), Brigadier General Keith Waddell (LA National Guard), CAO Gilbert Montañó (CNO), NOFD Assist. Supt. Roman Nelson (proxy for Supt. Timothy McConnell), William Sameron (proxy for Dr. Emily Nichols, NOEMS), Dr. James Aiken (proxy for Mr. Danny Hardman (UMC), and Dr. Brobson Lutz (OPMS) were present.

Capt. Donovan Archote (LSP), NOPD Supt. Shaun Ferguson, and Dr. Jennifer Avegno (CNO Health Dept.) were absent.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (NOVEMBER 12, 2019)

Vice Chairman Arnold called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2019 regular meeting. There was a motion by Vice Chairman Arnold, and it was seconded by Mr. Cox. No discussion. Board members unanimously approved the minutes.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

A. MARCH 2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Morris reported the following Financial Report highlights:

1. The OPCD Finance Department is transitioning to a different finance system to enable real time visualization of the numbers in each department. That change was made January 1, 2020, and OPCD's 2019 finances are going through the auditing process to make the transition complete.
2. Additionally, there are delayed remittance payments from some carriers due to OPCD being in the middle of a remittance audit. The numbers presented in the report are what have been received to date, and more

remittances should come in the following weeks, along with information from the audit.

Next, Ms. Cassandra Robert, OPCD Finance Manager, presented the report. In the Board packet there were unaudited 2019 financial statements. Ms. Robert said the year-end revenue is not complete due to waiting on final statements from carriers. Personnel services was slightly over budget due to overtime, additional holiday, and emergency pay netted against our vacancy savings. Ms. Robert stated contractual services was slightly under budget, total operating expenses was slightly over budget, and the total inflow and outflow is where it was expected to be at the end of 2019.

Director Morris stated there was a large capital project that was funded in 2018 to deploy Motorola Premier One Mobile (MDT's) across the enterprise for New Orleans, the completion of which was delayed. Therefore that \$280,000 expense did not hit until 2019 and was carried over into the current capital projects. The NOFD and EMS RDW was deployed prior to the cyber-attack in New Orleans but is still in good shape for the departments to use. It includes the purchase of equipment for NOFD and NCIC integrations in CAD and is also included in the current capital projects. In 2018 there would have been significant savings, but once that hit was identified, additional projects were halted to close that gap.

Director Morris states that prior to this meeting, \$1 million was moved out of reserves due to yearly contract payments being made in January 2020. He stated that money should be deposited by May 2020 once remittances from the second quarter come in, along with the CEA payment. The cash balances listed include this reduction in reserves. Currently, there is \$2.3 million left in the reserve account.

CAO Montaña asked how has the agency refilled vacancies that have been used over the course of the last year for personnel services (\$122,000) and if there is projected vacancy savings. He was concerned that the agency would start out 2021 with a deficit of \$421,000 in vacancy savings due to personnel services. Director Morris stated for personal services 2020, it was not planned for those additional holiday payments to happen again and there will be an overage. For Operations, it is expected to have about ten vacancies, and for more savings to come about due to people leaving the agency. For the past three years the city awarded those extra holidays so it is being anticipated that it will happen again, and OPCD will plan for unexpected expenses. Emergency pay, leave payouts and additional holiday pay cannot be planned. Traditionally the city was invoiced when decisions were made, but for the past three years OPCD has not. The goal is to hold vacancies until savings are realized.

CAO Montaña asked what percentage of vacancies are built into the finance projection model. Mr. Josiah Morgan, OPCD Director of Support Services, stated

that it is set at 100% and is translated into vacancy savings, which was a carryover from how Mr. Morgan did it when he worked for NOPD.

Director Morris stated in 2019 there was \$450,000 budgeted in vacancy savings, and for 2020 it was lowered. In 2020, \$200,000 was put aside for additional holiday, emergency and overtime pay for larger events such as Mardi Gras instead of using savings for it.

Director Morris stated the current numbers do not include the recent employee raises which went into effect on January 1, 2020. CAO Montano states he is estimating a \$700,000-\$900,000 deficit once the raise is included in budget numbers. Director Morris stated there is a gap in operating cost vs operating dollars with revenue coming in the current year and in the 2020 budget the board authorized the use of reserve funds to fill that gap. There is an increase in remittances in several areas, including in prepaid wireless through the census and Director Morris believes there will be an increase. Wireless revenues are up and its expected for landline revenue to increase significantly due to landlines services not being reported by commercial business before. Director Morris stated there are now 34,000 landline phones in commercial business paying a 9-1-1 surcharge that can be audited. The audit was targeted based upon December remittances. It is now known how many lines every carrier has. During a spot check, it was found that many hotels are paying hundreds less than what they should. The first piece of data was received in December and businesses have 60 days to remit properly which is March 1, 2020. Now the agency is preparing to send late payment letters and letting companies know that for the December remittance they need to send the historical data on every commercial line and business line for which they are remitting, which will have to be validated by OPCD. Director Morris expects to see significant increases in the amount remitted for landlines.

There were significant deficiencies in what should be remitted vs what has been remitted. New Orleans and CO. will help communicate what the law is to those businesses and found out most of it is interpretation of the law. It is an educational matter for some businesses and some carriers are simply not remitting properly. There has been movement in state legislator to put penalties on carriers who do not remit properly and give OPCD the authority to enforce the law as it is written. The law says the agency can go back three years to collect fees that were not paid or to pay the remittance properly going forward.

Dr. Aiken asked if there would be any revenue gained from remittances for our 2020 budget and Director Morris stated major carriers are willing to correct their errors and some increase may be realized in 2020. Director Morris stated that until he has the data, he can't give an exact number on increase.

Director Morris stated the agency's lobbyist at the association level for 9-1-1 directors is in talks to have revisions added to an already filed billed regarding

this matter. Communication districts throughout the state are having this issue and has been in the works for the past three years. Other districts are waiting for Orleans Parish to get results so the rest of the 63 parishes can take their action. Also, the FCC has started to issue reports on 9-1-1 fee diversion to investigate situations where agencies are not using those fees for 9-1-1, which causes them to lose the ability to levy a fee in general.

If the resolution passes to begin the auditing process, by March 15, 2020 information will begin being sent to the auditor with the budget's actual numbers.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. 1st Quarter Presentation – Overall status of OPCD

Director Morris stated the agency is working closely with the CDC and the New Orleans Health Department on how to respond to COVID-19. In January 2020, OPCD issued an emergency directive to activate the pandemic surveillance tool, provided by the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch. This will help provide high level surveillance of symptoms in the general area and provides pre-arrival data to first responders to care for someone with symptoms.

Emergency Directive 20-02 takes it from just surveillance to implementing Protocol 36, which gives public safety agencies the ability to alter responses based on level of the pandemic and what is being reported, including symptoms, travel history, and more. This was recommended by New Orleans Emergency Medical Services. Mr. Salmeron stated that as more cases appear, they want to decrease the amount of exposure to public safety professionals by decreasing and altering responses when possible. The Academy does provide a tool for a nurse triage line that can be done over the phone, such a prescribing medication, instead of sending an ambulance. The agency is looking into implementing this.

Director Morris stated plans are being made if many staff members get sick which will have an impact on public safety. If that were to happen and emergency declaration can be issued to bring in other specialists to come from other parts of Louisiana or nearby states to come and support us.

The NFPA standard states the agency must answer 95% of its calls in 15 seconds or less and that was met in 2019. Another standard stated 10% of the agency's calls must be answered in 10 seconds or less, and that standard is 90%. The agency exceeds both standards. The agency's emergency call volume increased significantly from one year to the next possibly due to more visitors coming into city for events and holidays. Overall call volume has increased.

Calls to 3-1-1 increased 8% due to it being available 24 hours a day and the Hard Rock Hotel Collapse. 3-1-1 pushed out information surrounding the collapse which caused an influx of calls. There is a large increase in police incidents in CAD primarily due to tracing paid details and creating an incident

every time a unit goes in/out of service. Since 2019, 24,000 tickets have been opened on the 3-1-1 website.

Director Morris and some members of the staff went to Washington D.C. in February for the "911 Goes to Washington" event where Director Morris received an award from Congress and met with Louisiana's congressional representatives. They discussed bills that affect emergency communications and the possibility of receiving direct appropriation dollars for OPCD's expansion project and all were in support.

There is currently a bill sitting in the House for a vote called the 9-1-1 Saves Act which calls 9-1-1 a protective service putting it in the same classification as law enforcement. In Louisiana, a bill was filed to do the same thing at the state level.

OPS Director Juana Green received the Certified Public Safety Executive (CPSE) designation through APCO. She is one of three people who have earned that title in the state with all three of them being employees of OPCD.

Director Morris welcomed his new Chief of Staff, Domonique Curry, who joined the team in January 2020. She will be leading strategic initiatives, policies, accreditations, and the Carrier Remittance project.

The first Communications Executive Leadership Academy (CELA) was hosted in December. Twenty-two attendees from across the country came to OPCD to learn how they can implement what OPCD does and to prepare them to be an executive director. Tuition was listed as \$750 a person and a sponsor paid tuition for everyone. The next class is scheduled for April and is already filled.

B. Resolution 20-01 – Approve the Annual Compliance Questionnaire

This is a resolution to approve the annual compliance questionnaire as required by the State legislative auditor. As a political subdivision, the agency is required to submit a legislative auditor questionnaire and attach the resolution. It is done every year and begins the auditing process.

A motion to accept was requested. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Arnold and seconded by CAO Montaña. All were in favor of passing the resolution, and the motion passed.

C. Resolution 20-02 – Vote to enter Executive Session (if necessary) for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an employee pursuant to La. R.S. 42:6 (A)(1).

The resolution was recommended by the Chairman and General Council to be put on the agenda regarding the compensation of Director Morris. Director asked Mr. Juan Lizarraga, OPCD General Council, to give the introduction to the

discussion of his compensation. Mr. Lizarraga stated an item was entered into the agenda regarding the Executive Director compensation of Director Morris. It was brought up that it did not have to be discussed now and that it could go into executive session to be discussed further.

D. Resolution 20-02 – Executive Director Compensation

CAO Montaña said he believes the request to increase the OPCD Executive Director's compensation is reasonable and around what directors of agencies make throughout the city's organizations. He sees no concerns with the request and made a motion for approval. It was seconded by Dr. Lutz. All agreed and the resolution passed.

E. Resolution 20-03 – Authorization to move expansion project into Design Development Phase (Special Presentation by VergesRome and Page).

A public meeting was held Friday for the building expansion project. A video put together by VergesRome Architect and Page was shown at the Board meeting to give visuals of the expanded building. Mr. Chip Verges, with VergesRome Architect, then addressed the board with the schematic design presentation. Mr. Verges explained the goal is to maximize and expand the building that is already in place. Added will be a backup Emergency Operations Center (EOC), NCIC, onsite activation supplies, onsite storage for emergency vehicles, and a helipad. There will be an onsite childcare for first responders which will help with employee wellness and retention. The existing OPCD Administration building will be converted into the childcare facility, and the Roman Capitol building will be renovated and expanded by 57,000 square feet. The vehicle storage will be on the Banks St. side of the property with the helipad located near that area.

There will be three secure entry and exit locations, expanded parking which will be partly under the building, and security fencing around the site will be increased. Parking for the childcare facility will be outside of the secured entry of the site.

By expanding around the call floor, designers can maximize the existing infrastructure of the call floor. The changes include more space for IT, management offices and improved personnel amenities. The second floor is where the OPCD Administration offices, Board Room, NCIC, and break room are located. The third floor will include training\meeting spaces, spaces for testing purposes, a green roof, and connection PC to interact with call floor. More bunking and locker room space will be added. The call center will remain operational during construction.

The interior plan was also presented to the board. There will be employee support spaces, which include places for isolation and a television. The bunk room can house 160 people at a time with twelve bunks to a room. The childcare

facility will house up to 82 children with code-compliant windows and playground area. The front building (Roman Capitol) will be used for enrichment spaces with administrative offices for that facility.

Currently, construction costs are projected to be between \$16 million and \$25 million. The next steps are design development and the creation of construction documents which will take about seven months. This will all depend on when this project is approved to go to bid towards the end of 2020. The anticipated timeline is to start construction in January 2021 with eighteen months for construction and a grand opening of the facility in August of 2022.

Director Morris stated there was an opportunity to take in revenue from vendors who constantly want to study our staff so they can develop the next, best materials for agencies. On the third floor there will be a space for vendors to rent out as a mini 9-1-1 center where they can conduct their tests with OPCD staff.

The architects state the building will be missile impact-proof to exceed requirements, and there is currently enough existing electrical capacity to power ten of the McDaniels PSAP building.

Director Morris stated that 75% of funding could come from the state, and there are opportunities for private vendors to provide some funding. He stated the agency has time to investigate funding options without pulling from allocations. Or OPCD could bond the entire project but that would be under a worst-case scenario. Finances and funding opportunities will be looked at before going to the Board to move to the bid phase.

Director Morris stated that the facility will not have exterior signage to protect first responders and their children at the location.

CAO Montañó stated there is no pragmatic finance plan, and he does not know how OPCD will afford it. Director Morris stated, in a worst-case scenario, if OPCD continued the bond payment on the 2019 statements, that payment continuing once the project is built would make the note. CAO Montañó voiced concerns about the agency having a nearly \$1 million deficit which the bond note should cover. Director Morris stated in the 2019-2020 budget there was a gap identified in operations which was about \$1 million. The Board decided not to go back to the City of New Orleans for a request in the increase in allocations and used reserve funds to fill that gap. When reserve funds run out it will have to be decided whether an allocation increase will be requested or a reduction in service. CAO Montañó stated if we are going to tie up in the form of debt a net of \$900,000, which could cover the deficit, there would be no need to make that request in future years. He advises OPCD should balance out the debt and focus on the financial health of the agency. Director Morris stated the agency has outgrown the McDaniels PSAP. For recent large events, OPCD OPS had to send

people home because there was nowhere for employees to sit, and \$150,000 are spent on emergency repairs on the building.

Director Morris stated there is some untapped funding that the agency has access to, and he offered more time to examine what the sources will be. He stated if the agency does not have a solid way to pay for the expansion by June, then the project will stop and not go to the bid phase. He said most 9-1-1 centers are funded based on population, so there is a chance to ask the state for a re-occurring appropriation to support the agency. The June meeting is when design development will be presented, and it will be decided whether to go to the construction documentation phase. Many members of the Board requested a more robust finance plan before June.

CAO Montaña expressed that he wants to ensure that the floor is expanded so that more telecommunicators can be added. Verges Rome and Page broke down the space for him showing that there is room for growth on the floor. CAO Montaña stated he will not stop the process but when it comes to payments, 911 and 311 will not be able to go to the city for additional money if they are tied up in other things. If the project gets minimized or focused in a different way, that will help. Director Morris stated there have been conversations about who should be funding the organization and its core functions. There has been a historical shift where this Board has felt that it is the city's responsibility to fund operations. He said that there are multiple funding sources that the agency can turn to other than the city. In June, there will be concrete information as to how the project will be funded. The Chair moved to call a vote to resolution 20-03 to move into the design development phase of the expansion which was seconded by Mr. Cox. All members of the Board were in favor.

V. Old Business

There is no old business to discuss.

VI. New Business

There is no new business to discuss.

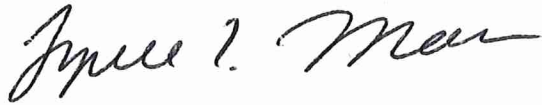
VII. Announcements

Director Morris announced Text to 9-1-1 is coming to Orleans Parish and is currently live as a soft launch. On March 26, 2020, it will be live to the public and announced during a press conference. The technology also provides location information from the text messages.

VIII. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by CAO Montaña and seconded by Chief Nelson. The motion was approved unanimously.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyrell Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tyrell Morris
Executive Director