

**ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

April 14, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Chief Warren McDaniels Board Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Avegno called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

II. ROLL CALL

Executive Director Karl Fasold called the roll.

PRESENT: Board Chair Dr. Jennifer Avegno, LSP Capt. Rodney Hyatt, LA National Guard Col. Mike Bendich, NOFD Supt. Roman Nelson, NOPD Chief Stephanie Landry, NOEMS DC Chris Keller, NO Office of Coordination and Emergency Management (NOCEM) Director Darrick Hesson, UMC New Orleans Dr. James Aiken, and Orleans Parish Medical Society Dr. Brobson Lutz.

ABSENT: Michelle Woodfork, LA State Rep Stephanie Hilferty, and Dr Joseph C. Dyson

A quorum was present however additional members continued to arrive after the meeting started.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Lutz made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 3, 2026 meeting, seconded by Supt. Nelson. The motion passed.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report was emailed to Board members prior to the meeting for convenience. ED Fasold reported that OPCD received the first and second quarter CEA payments from the City of New Orleans. OPCD agreed to allow the payments to be postponed until March and April to accommodate the City's cash flow needs.

Prepay Phone/Data Revenue. ED Fasold reported that prepay phone revenues from the State are down drastically due to the carriers not remitting money on the sale of prepaid

data. ED Fasold, along with the State 911 Director's Consortium, disputes their position that data is not used for 911 and thus no fees are due. The carriers have admitted that they are not remitting fees on data purchases as required by the legislation. Another 911 District is the lead in a complaint with the State Department of Revenue, and we expect to prevail in 'tax court'. ED Fasold and the finance team are being very conservative with prepay revenue estimates, as we believe a negotiated settlement may not require carrier payment of historical funds. This situation began some 18 months ago, and may take that long again for closure.

Personnel Report. The Personnel Report was emailed to the Board members. Out of a fully staffed complement of 186, of which 176 are funded in the budget, there are currently 159 employees. Operations are down 16 ECS's (10 of which are not funded), however eight (8) trainees are still in CTO training and not working independently – thus operations is actually down 24 ECS's (from full staffing of 64 / funded 54). As a result, 911 call answer times are hovering between 70% and 80% of calls answered in 15 seconds or less. The national target, as you may recall, is 90%. ED Fasold will revisit future staff decisions once the trainees complete their training and working independently.

ED Fasold reported he and senior staff monitor cash flow and payroll costs continuously, and he believes there will be funds to start a new recruit class of ten people in the next few weeks. Keeping in mind all the factors that can affect staff attrition, he thinks that by the time that class graduates, all the budgeted ECSs positions should be filled. He again noted the 'full staffing' numbers were based upon the consolidation study in 2015, and that the goal has never been reached to test its validity.

Supt. Nelson asked how long it might take to fill the next recruit class. ED Fasold replied that due to a number of improvements to the ECS salary and working conditions, he doesn't anticipate any issues attracting the 10 recruits. He pointed to the facts that the OPCD Ops staff are the best paid 911 personnel in the state and the people applying are more qualified, making filling the class quickly a non-issue, and that the last class was filled within 24 hours of opening for applications.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

AI Use in Ops. Two weeks ago, the Times Picayune newspaper featured an article about the use of AI at OPCD. ED Fasold reported that OPCD has been using AI on 911 for almost two years to handle MVA, or motor vehicle accident, triages. Chair Avegno asked ED Fasold to walk the Board members through the process used to employ AI in the call taking process. ED Fasold explained what happens when a 911 call is made during times of high call volume: about the call stacking queue; about caller frustration with longer call answer times; about caller hang-ups and re-dials; and about abandoned calls (and their

subsequent call-backs). He described that, without the full complement of ECSs, 911 callers become very frustrated with longer call answer times.

In an effort to improve this situation, call data was analyzed. It became apparent that during drive times, morning and evenings, the call waiting queue was getting stacked. Eventually the analysis revealed that MVAs during drive times were creating the problem. For every MVA in Orleans Parish, OPCD receives an average of 20 phone calls, with 19 of those calls effectively providing no useful information.

At 10:13 am, NOPD Deputy Chief Landry (proxy for Chief Kirkpatrick) arrived.

With the AI agent, if a 911 call would go into the call waiting queue and the caller's location is within 200 meters of a known auto accident, the AI agent will answer the call. The AI agent will ask if the caller is calling about the accident, stating the location as well. If the caller says anything but yes, the AI agent will stop and the call will be handled as normal. If the caller says yes, the AI agent will advise the caller that we are aware of the accident, and that unless the caller is involved or has any further information, they may hang up.

Just as OPCD ECD's do not hang up on callers, neither will the AI agent. However, if the caller chooses to hang up, their call has been answered and addressed.

In the event that there is further investigation into the accident by NOPD, OPCD can pull a report on all calls received about that incident, including the audio of the interaction with the AI agent. OPCD can still provide NOPD all the information they need to follow up appropriately.

ED Fasold reported that the AI agent was deployed approximately two years ago. In the 90 days following deployment, both Carbyne and OPCD checked 100% of the calls that went to the AI agent. There were no false positives or negatives. OPCD continues to randomly audit those calls under normal QA/QC review of incoming 911 calls. We continue to study additional call types for triage moving forward.

Chair Avegno asked if the AI agent was having any impact on call answer times? ED Fasold replied that was very difficult to quantify, but anecdotally it was doing so. Even when ECS staffing is at a critical level, when we would expect call answer times in the 50-60% level, we stay consistently higher. We believe this is occurring due to the calls not queued due to the AI agent triage.

ED Fasold went on to discuss how OPCD is deliberately not expanding the AI agent too quickly. Members of the Tech Team are currently working with Carbyne to develop a user interface to allow the OPCD Tech team to stand up a 311 AI agent, including training it, modifying it, and having the ability to immediately modify or disable it ourselves. Having this skill set allows OPCD to adapt AI to better suit OPCD's needs. ED Fasold is confident

the new 311 AI agent will be very helpful due to the number of 311 calls simply requesting information, a task which the AI agent is well suited to address.

ED Fasold continued the AI discussion by relating how many in the 911 industry were skeptical about the new technology. They questioned him about why he would be an early adopter. What about data security? CJIS requirements? HIPAA requirements? He explained that by using the AI agents created in the 911 (and now 311) telephony world with Carbyne, the AI agent lives in that same secure space as each 911 phone call. It's Amazon.gov, which meets federal requirements for security. It meets HIPAA requirements. It meets CJIS requirements for data protection. PII is secured and shielded. ED Fasold reported he is pleased to not have to worry about data security because the security is, by default, built into the Carbyne product and the Amazon.gov cloud. He expressed confidence in the technology and plans to take it very slowly, very iteratively, and one step at a time to implement it.

Chair Avegno asked about the cost of the AI technology implementation at OPCD. ED Fasold replied that there was no additional cost as it is part of the OPCD's Carbyne contract and as an early adopter OPCD is developing the technology in partnership with Carbyne. He advised that the shift of 311 personnel from the failing Cisco Call Center Express to Carbyne would require additional licenses, but that incremental cost is minor compared to the forklift upgrade required to remain on the Cisco system – and the flexibility inherent in Carbyne Apex, as well as the NG911 functionality, becomes a part of 311 as well. He also mentioned that Carbyne was acquired by Axon a few months ago, and it is being renamed Axon 911. Their staff will not change, and he is not concerned about any adverse effects from that acquisition on OPCD operations.

VI. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Chair Avegno discussed the status of the OPCD Board committees. There haven't been many Committee meetings thus far and the Board membership is in flux right now. She is speaking with all Board members about new Board member committee assignments, returning Board members' desires to remain on their assigned committee or switch to another committee, and the frequency of committee meetings going forward. She reminded Board members that committee meetings may be held virtually provided they are properly advertised to the public. Chair Avegno requests the Finance Committee meet to begin discussions regarding the 2027 budget & process.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

HB 463 – 911 Wireless Fee Increase. ED Fasold thanked Chair Avegno for getting City Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) involved to assist OPCD at the state level regarding appointing legislative members to the OPCD Board and the statewide 911 rate increase. City IGR has been instrumental in helping OPCD with support for HB 463. HB 463,

introduced by Representative Dixon McMakin provides provide for an increase in the maximum 911 fee for wireless devices. ED Fasold described the proposed rate increase to \$2.00 per wireless phone as not everything the communication district directors wanted, but it's what they think will pass in the legislature. The current statewide rate on wireless phones has been \$1.25 since 2013.

ED Karl Fasold continued to describe the legislative process, noting that the LA House Commerce Committee amended the proposed legislation before reporting it favorably to the House. We are reviewing the effect of the amendments and will determine a strategy as the bill progresses regarding any further changes necessary.

HB463 was passe by the house with a 98 to 0 yesterday and sent to the LA Senate. If enacted, it will go into effect on January 1, 2027, and yield approximately \$2.4 million in additional revenue annually to OPCD. While not perfect, ED Fasold thinks passage of HB 463 would be a win for everybody. OPCD retains the option to pursue a local option bill in the future if necessary.

Communication District Governing Structure. Supt. Nelson asked about how other districts in the metro area are structured compared to OPCD. ED Fasold explained that OPCD stands outside of Parish government, unlike Jefferson Parish, where the Parish Council is the 911 Board. The JP Sherrif's Office runs the primary call center, and the cities of Gretna and Kenner have their own (secondary) 911 centers. Calls are transferred to the cities from JP if they get sent to the JP primary PSAP. In Jefferson Parish, 911 fees go into their general fund and the 911 District budget is provided by the Parish. This arrangement can lead to the intentional or accidental diversion of 911 fees.

In St. Tammany Parish, the 911 district is the administrator of the 911 funds, and contracts (MOU) with the first responder agencies to provide call-taking and dispatch services. This is the model for most of the rest of the state. Many of the 911 centers that are run by law enforcement only dispatch law enforcement, and there's a secondary PSAP, which handles medical and/or fire calls. Callers are transferred between the primary and secondary PSAP's. OPCD is unique in that its consolidated, and unique in that one center has done everything for years since all agencies co-located after Katrina.

Discussion about the rising costs of running a 911 center followed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Avegno announced that due to the change in Director of NOCEM there was a vacancy in the Vice-Chair position. Dr. Lutz made a motion to nominate Chief Bill Salmeron of NOEMS. Dr. Aiken seconded, and the motion passed. A motion to close nominations was made by Director Hesson and seconded by Supt. Nelson. The motion passed. The board extended congratulations to Chief Salmeron via his proxy in his absence.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Avegno announced that its National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. She asked the OPCD Sr. Staff to convey to the staff the Board's appreciation for the work they perform. ED Fasold gave a background on why the special week was established in 1981. Board members were then invited to tour the operations floor following the conclusion of the meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Avegno requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Dr. Atkin and seconded by Capt. Hyatt. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Karl Fasold
Executive Director