

**ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 3, 2026 10:00 a.m.
Chief Warren McDaniels Board Room**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Avegno called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

II. ROLL CALL

Executive Director Karl Fasold called the roll.

PRESENT: Dr. Jennifer Avegno, Rep. Stephanie Hilferty, LSP Capt. Rodney Hyatt, Col. Jesse Barth, NOFD Superintendent Roman Nelson, NOPD Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick, EMS Chief William Salmeron, Dr. James Aiken, Dr. Brobson Lutz

ABSENT: NOHSEP Director, Michelle Woodfork, Dr. Joseph Dyson

VACANT: Louisiana State Senate Appointee (1), Louisiana State House Appointee (1)

A quorum was present and the National Guard and State Police were welcomed back.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Avegno called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2025 regular board meeting. Chief Salmeron made the motion and Dr. Aiken seconded. The motion was approved.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

ED Fasold reported the 2025 fourth quarter City payment was received. On December 11, 2025, the OPCD entered into a new five-year CEA with the City. The CAO's office has requested and OPCD has authorized for the first payment of 2026 to be paid as two payment rather than the one specified in the CEA due to City cash flow constraints. He anticipates once full payment is received and as anticipated 9-1-1 revenues are received, OPCD's cash flow for the first six months of 2026 will be stable. The OPCD budget approved by the City Council and providing the funding assigned does not require personnel lay off's or furlough, although it does not provide for full staffing (10 ECS positions to remain vacant).

ED Fasold reported that the Mardi Gras scheduling will have limited overtime shifts. He anticipates no external effects other than perhaps longer call answer times for 911. In an effort to manage the public's expectations, ED Fasold asked Deputy Mayor Harrison to mention the possibility of slightly longer call answer times (15-30 seconds) during a recent Mardi Gras safety news conference.

Dr. Aiken asked about the \$500K for sick leave in the 2026 budget. He asked if that was the budgeted amount or what was actually paid in the past. ED Fasold replied that it is a budgeted expense. As a follow-up, Dr. Aiken asked how much did OPCD normally pay? Before the meeting ended, Finance Manager Robert reported \$583K was paid for annual sick leave and for terminal leave payout in 2025.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Call Answer Times. ED Fasold reported that for the last eight days, OPCD OPS have met the NENA 1 call answering standard (90% of 911 calls answered in 15 seconds or less).

Recruit Class 26-01. ED Fasold reported that ECS Recruit class 26-01 began January 20th, with fourteen new hires. One resigned during training, after realizing the job was not for them. Once the new recruits complete FTO training, OPS will still be down twelve ECSs. As 10 positions are not funded, ED Fasold plans to hold off on more new hires until observing the resultant call answer times. Since 'full staffing' was determined in the 2016 staffing study, and the job and technology has changed, since then, we need to determine through observation what's needed.

Cybersecurity Report. Ed Fasold reported the GOHSEP performed a cybersecurity audit at OPCD. GOHSEP was very impressed with OPCD's security program and said it was one of the best on-site visits they've experienced. ED Fasold recognized how well the OPCD Technology Team led by Ryan Eleew is ensuring that OPCD's systems are safe, that the systems meet or exceed security standards, and that OPCD isn't a high risk for experiencing adverse effects of an attempted cyber-attack.

311 Report. Rep. Hilferty asked if ED Fasold anticipates that 311 will stay at OPCD under the new City Administration. ED Fasold replied that while changes to 311 were a part of the budget discussions with the new City Administration, 311 will remain at OPCD. Rep. Hilferty replied that while she believed in the need for 311, she didn't agree that it needed to be at OPCD.

What followed was an extended discussion by the Board about 311 at OPCD: it's costs and personnel, its purpose, and it's effectiveness.

ED Fasold reported that OPCD would see some cost savings by migrating 311 from Cisco Call Center Express software and hardware to Carbyne, the existing 911 call taking

equipment. This migration will bring added functionality to 311 call-taking and is planned to happen by the end of March (revised – pushed out due to changes in vendor delivery timetable for feature additions needed). Additional cost savings are anticipated by using an AI agent to handle the most common 311 inquiries. This will allow us to examine future staffing requirements for 311, given technology improvements and some decline in call volume. OPCD is also working with City ITI on replacing the Quickbase 311 application (at no increased cost to OPCD). No layoffs of 311 personnel are anticipated, however positions vacated by attrition may not be filled going forward and may be eliminated.

There was more discussion about the way the public perceives the effectiveness of 311. Rep. Hilferty remarked that 311 basically functions as an answering service for city infrastructure and service departments. Dr. Avegno pointed out that 311 incidents help give the new administration an idea of the scale of the issues. ED Fasold reported that OPCD is working with City ITI to better integrate the 311 data with the City's asset management software to automate incident status notifications to the callers.

ED Fasold, Dr. Aiken and Dr. Avegno discussed the effectiveness of 311 for vulnerable populations during emergencies. While the NOHD's lists of nursing home residents and special needs residents have not been reliably maintained, Dr. Avegno felt it was more current than static 311 lists. A major part of the issue is the use of Rave Smart 9-1-1 profiles for the registry, as Rave requires annual validation which is not possible by many members of the vulnerable population.

ED Fasold did see positive uses for 311 during recent freeze activations earlier this year. Using 311 after hours and having ECSs handle the transport requests to warming shelters was very effective for the thirty-four transports that occurred. Also, lessons learned after the New Year's Day terrorist attack have led to improvements in 311 responses for other incidents that don't include infrastructure repairs.

VI. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

No special presentations scheduled.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

City of New Orleans Public Safety. ED Fasold reported that OPCD has been invited by Public Safety Deputy Mayor (and former NOPD Superintendent) Michael Harrison to continue attending the weekly public safety meetings. The fact that the agency was recognized and included speaks volumes to OPCD being a valued member of the City's public safety team.

As part of the City's public safety team, OPCD falls under the mayor's Executive Order for looking at public safety. OPCD created a report identifying the biggest risk to the agency: fiscal risk. Because OPCD has no ability to raise its own independent revenue,

the agency depends on the 911 fees (state-regulated) and on the revenue from the city of New Orleans (75% of the budget). That risk report has been submitted and is included in the City's 120-day plan to identify and mitigate risks. ED Fasold is confident that OPCD's relationship with the city will continue to improve.

OPCD Revenue Enhancement. The LA 911 Directors Consortium is moving forward with a plan to raise 911 rates statewide. ED Fasold explained the hurdles and possible path forward to proposing a statewide 911 rate change. Currently the New Orleans Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) team is working with the LA NENA/APCO Chapters and the lobbyist they have hired to produce a rate increase study and proposed legislation. They will then draft proposed legislation and identify legislative sponsor(s).

Chair Avegno felt that there was good momentum behind this effort from the New Orleans delegation. ED Fasold also mentioned discussion about whether the legislation should address the inability of 911 districts to enforce the rules over the carriers on how the customers are charged and the fees collected, but stated it was likely that would be postponed to a future session.

Discussion followed about ways to raise district income, for example, various special event fees. Also, Dr. Aiken suggested more PR features highlighting the 911 funding needs. ED Fasold feels that the FCC laws need to provide the teeth that will make the carriers follow the law for more equitable collection of 911 fees. Dr. Salmeron suggested that with the on-going budget constraints, an education campaign of 911 use and expectation management on emergency response be created to keep the lines of communication open with everyone.

New OPCD Board Members. Chair Avegno acknowledged that changes are coming to the Board member make-up. Rep. Hughes has been elected to the City Council and will need to be replaced by the House of Representatives. Rep. Hilferty has reached out to her colleagues for more information on a replacement. Senator Bouie was appointed as President of SUNO and needs a replacement named from the Senate. ED Fasold noted the City has hired a new Director of OEP, so that person will be on the OPCD Board as well. Additionally, Col. Barth is going to be retiring from the LA National Guard at the beginning of March. He has insured that his replacement, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Bendich, will be assuming the Board position at the beginning of March. ED Fasold thanked him for his service to the Board and mentioned his that his cybersecurity experience and leadership were valuable resources for OPCD.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 26-01. Ed Fasold reported that Resolution 26-01 is an annual resolution to begin the annual audit process required by the LA State Auditor. This resolution authorizes the Board Chair to sign the preliminary audit documents on behalf of OPCD.

A motion to accept Resolution 26-01 was made by Dr. Lutz and seconded by Dr. Salmeron. The motion carried unanimously, and Chair Avegno signed the required documents.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

CPE Graduate Gwen Johnson. ED Fasold recognized OPS Director Gwen Johnson on her graduation from the APCO Certified Public Safety Executive (CPE) Program. Ms. Johnson was also elected the president of her class (following in ED Fasold's footsteps!). ED Fasold said he received nothing but compliments about Ms. Johnson throughout the program from Dr. Edwards, who is the facilitator for the program. OPCD now has its entire senior leadership as CPEs: ED Fasold, Deputy Director Teresa Thompson, and OPS Director Gwen Johnson. He reported that they will be working on articles for the APCO publication (*PSC*) and for the CPE Training Institute.

Chair Avegno asked why it was significant for OPCD to have these certified employees?

ED Fasold replied that it involved many months of on-line and in-person training. It is the only national program within the 911 profession for leadership training for public safety executives. He described it as a life-changing experience. Additionally, all levels of OPCD OPS management receive public safety leader training. It is significant because OPCD is trying very hard to ensure that all of OPCD's OPS team leaders are very well versed in being a leader, in solving problems, in avoiding problems, and making sure that our staff has everything they need to be successful.

CAD Viewer. A request was made to ED Fasold about providing LSP Troop NOLA with a viewer to see CAD incidents. He replied that an MDT terminal is probably the best OPCD could offer currently. He mentioned that Motorola is working on a new web client that is a fully featured CAD client that goes through secure web connections and will literally allow OPCD to put CAD on any desktop. ED Fasold will follow up with the agencies on what is available.

X. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chief Salmeron and seconded by Dr. Aiken. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Karl Fasold
Executive Director