

**ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 17, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Chief Warren McDaniels Board Room**

MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Collin Arnold (NHLS) called the meeting to order

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called with the following attendees present: Executive Director Kar Fasold, Acting Chair Collin Arnold, NOHSEP), Captain Hyatt (proxy for Capt. Joseph Piglia, LSP-Troop B), Dr. James Aiken (proxy for Interim CEO John Nickens, UMCNO), Supt. Anne Kirkpatrick (NOPD), Supt. Roman Nelson (NOFD), Dr. Megan Marino (NOEMS), Dr. Jennifer Avegno (CNOHD), and Dr. Brobson Lutz (Orleans Parish Medical Society). Stephanie Hilferty (LA State Representative); Senator Joe Bouie (Senate District 3), Jason Hughes (State Representative House District 100), Mandy Montelongo (Executive Officer Troop NOLA) Col. Kenneth Donnelly, Ret. (LA National Guard), and CAO Gilbert Montañaño (CNO), were absent.

New Member Introduction

Representative Stephanie Hilferty (LA House of District 94)
Representative Jason Hughes (LA House of District 100)
Senator Joseph Bouie Jr. (LA Senate District 3)

III. NOMINATION

Dr. Brobson Lutz (OPMS) nominated Dr. Jennifer Avegno (CNOHD) to be appointed as Board Chair.

The motion was moved by Rep. Jason Hughes and seconded by Dr James Aiken. Karl Fasold recommended that Vice Chair Colin Arnold revert to Vice Chair role going forward. No motions were made.

IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 12, 2024, BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Vice Chairman Arnold called for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous regular OPCD Board meeting on March 12, 2024. The motion to approve was made by Chief Nelson (NOFD) and seconded by Dr. Marino (NOEMS). The motion passed on an unanimous vot.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Sewer Repair Update

Executive Director Fasold stated that 60% of the plumbing is completed and anticipate completion by the end of the year.

Although attempts were made to find additional bidders for the project were unsuccessful, therefore the agency negotiated with the contractor who responded to the RFP.

Expansion Project

Executive Karl Fasold noted that OPCD has worked to try to gather the 25% funding match to allow the process to continue.

Fasold noted the 25% OPCD match as required by the original overall cost estimate would be roughly \$7 million. He noted that plans for the expansion have been scaled back, with a focus on efficiency and making any eventual expansion goals more utilitarian. The expansion plan does not call for any increase to the size of the call/dispatch center floor; Fasold explained that other areas of the organization / facility are in more critical need of facility space. He has explained to project architects the scaled-back vision for the expanded facility and is awaiting a return from them on a revised plan.

VI. LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

Executive Director Fasold reported OPCD continues to receive inquiries from both LLA and OIG on assorted things both are looking into and is cooperating fully with both. OPCD just gave LLA's office of CAD data for NOPD related to LLA's report on NOPD response times and have also provided the LLA with what exists in the way of board rules and regulations history, the legal history of OPC, etc. and OPCD not received any feedback on any yet.

OPCD has met with OIG for a preliminary meeting on one investigation which Fasold later discussed in executive session.

VII. LOUISIANA LEGISLATVE AUDIT

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OPCD has met with OIG for a preliminary meeting on one investigation which Fasold later discussed in executive session. Fasold noted the OIG is happy with what we've provided, noting, "Under my administration, we have a pretty good relationship with them and with the legislative auditor's office in that we're not trying to hide or keep them from getting anything they ask for."

VIII. Staff Recruitment, Training, and Performance

As per Executive Karl Fasold there are 8 vacancies on the comp floor for TCS emergency communication specialists and 9 vacancies for dispatchers.

A Formalized 2 Pfizer program will be implemented.

New Dispatcher hires will be coming from the ECS ranks and OPCD will then open the ECS positions for candidates.

Fasold spoke about initiatives to require and provide better training for staff, particularly supervisors.

OPCD are working toward the requirement that Supervising Dispatchers have certification in all three disciplines: Police, Fire, and EMS. Before the end of the year, we are mandating Supervisors to have all three; if they don't by that time, they can return to being a dispatcher for any of the three specific disciplines for which they are certified.

OPCD will continue to look at evaluating and refining the Liaison positions for Fire, EMS and NOPD. These are trained firefighters, EMS employees and police officers who provide valuable assistance to OPCD specialists and dispatchers for specific calls related to their training.

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT

Executive Director Fasold discussed an issue of the agency's required pension contributions that were not included in 2023 budget request to the city. They were paid off from January – September. Mandatory overtime was suspended for several reasons. OPCD decided to stop paying the Pensions contributions in September because it was not budgeted.

OPCD had \$2.5 million for the fire station alerting project that the city had paid us, and we met with the city's CIO, who suggested we use that as effectively as a revolving line of credit until funding from the new year came in."

Fasold said these efforts allowed OPCD to make payroll and pay expenses.

He also explained how he and the OPCD Finance team have been working to bring the organization's finances current about payments to the Pension Board, strict budget practices and funding requests to the New Orleans City Council.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Hurricane Francine

Executive Director Fasold reported OPCD made it through the hurricane very well with fantastic work and dedication by the staff. The team's work received extremely positive comments from many city department heads at the Mayor's hurricane briefings.

Fasold described how well all agencies worked together as never before, and how the blanket of response across the city from NOPD, LSP, OPD, OPSO kept incidents to a minimum.

OPCD staff credited Fasold with being fully transparent with employees in the run-up to the storm with regards to preparation, staffing, and expectations. This overall change in culture moving forward has also meant that for the first time, OPCD is not anticipating having to require level 2 staffing for Essence Fest

Fasold spoke about AT&T connectivity issues impacting callers trying to reach OPCD's 911 call center. It was later determined that the notification was related to a tower that was down. The down towers had caused an overall blanket outage for some of AT&T customers. The outage did just affect AT&T customers from calling from 911

OPCD released an update through Nola Ready, social media, and news outlets that all AT&T services could connect with 911.

On the evening of September 11, 2024, and the morning of September 12, 2024, OPCD received a new alert from AT&T of a service issue that could prevent AT&T VOIP customers from connecting with 911 (also affecting 988, the suicide hotline.) OPCD's communication team distributed this alert via Nola Ready, and social media / traditional media.

Fasold explained how the messaging about the outage directed callers who could not reach 911 to instead call 504-671-3600, the OPCD 10-digit number which reaches the same OPCD 911 Operations Center.

XI. Financial Audit

CPA Joey Richard delivered the overview of the OPCD financial audit, reporting no difficulties in performing the audit, no problems with communications with OPCD officers, and general proper adherence to proper accounting practices and procedures by OPCD staff.

Reviewing OPCD's budget for the past to upcoming years 2023 – 2025, the financial statements, you're going to have a loss, which is consistent. A portion of the loss is absorbed in the growth of the pension liability over time, which is not funded.

The remainder of the funds comes from the City.

Executive Karl Fasold added that the called system that was developed costs \$2 million dollars.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ED Fasold called for a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss agency personnel concerns. _____ motioned to enter Executive Session and Supt. Nelson (NOFD) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Regular Board Meeting was adjourned and called to order.

XIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upon returning from Executive Session, ED Fasold said there were no actions taken in the Executive Session which required Board action.

XIV. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Bourgeois and seconded by Dr. Marino. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Submitted by,

Karl Fasold
Executive Director