

**ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Special Board Meeting**

Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at 10:00 am  
Administrative Conference Room, OPCD Administrative Building  
118 City Park Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70119

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

OPCD Board Chair Col. Terry Ebbert called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Ausetua AmorAmenkum called the roll. The following Board members were present:

Board Chair Col. Terry Ebbert; Lt. John Stelly (proxy for Capt. Donovan Archote); Dr. Jim Aiken (proxy for Mr. Greg Feirn); Lt. Col. Timothy Chastain (proxy for Major Gen. Glenn H. Curtis); Deputy Mayor Andy Kopplin; NOFD Supt. Timothy McConnell; NOEMS Director Dr. Jeffrey Elder; NOHSEP Interim Director Mr. Aaron Miller; and Department of Health Director Ms. Charlotte Parent.

Vice Chair Dr. Brobson Lutz and NOPD Supt. Michael Harrison were absent.

**III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL BOARD MEETING (JANUARY 10, 2016)**

Board Chair Ebbert called for the adoption of the minutes from the OPCD Special Board meeting held January 12, 2016. Lt. Col. Chastain motioned and Dr. Aiken seconded the motion to adopt the minutes as submitted. Board members unanimously adopted the minutes.

**IV. DEVIATE FROM AGENDA FORMAT**

Board Chair Ebbert announced that because this was a Special Board meeting, he would not be following the Agenda as established in the by-laws. Chair Ebbert requested a motion and second to deviate from the Agenda as provided for in the by-laws. Col. Chastain motioned and Dr. Elder seconded. Board members unanimously adopted the motion.

**V. ADOPT RESOLUTION 16-02: Approve Current Consolidation Costs and All Other Future Consolidation-Related Costs**

Board Chair Ebbert referred Board members to Resolution 16-02 in their packets. Chair Ebbert recognized Lt. Stelly, who stated that consolidation should be cost neutral to OPCD, and that all consolidation-related expenditures should be deducted from OPCD's annual payment to the City. Chair Ebbert asked for a motion and second to adopt Resolution 16-02. CAO Kopplin motioned to adopt the resolution and it Dr. Aiken seconded the motion. Board members unanimously adopted Resolution 16-02.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Submission of HR Policies for Consolidation**

Board Chair Terry Ebbert referred Board members to the draft HR policy for the 9-1-1 operations employees. Chair Ebbert emphasized the need to have integrated, consistent policies.

Chair Ebbert recognized Lt. Col. Sneed, who introduced HR Manager for consolidation, Ms. Jeanne Hobson. Lt. Col. Sneed asked Ms. Hobson to explain the policy and the process for its development. Ms. Hobson explained that it was necessary to examine what is currently in place to determine what is working, determine what is not working and to create a policy that will fit the consolidated environment. Lt. Col. Sneed advised the Board that he formed a committee of interested employees from the three agencies. There were two employees from NOPD, one from NOFD, and one from NOEMS. These employees made significant contributions to the policy.

Chair Ebbert recognized Lt. Stelly, who asked for clarification regarding employees accepting anything of economic value. In the document, there is a hyperlink that, in his opinion, did not provide clear or easily understood language on ethics requirements. Lt. Stelly also asked about the validity of requiring an employee to notify his/her supervisor about their prescription drugs; the policy should be a little stronger by requiring documentation from a doctor. Ms. Hobson objected to that information being given to a supervisor, as it is a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). Dr. Elder stated that HIPPA does not apply to this scenario because OPCD is not a healthcare provider, and Dr. Aiken concurred. Ms. Parent stated that there was an existing CAO policy on this subject. Deputy Director Malin suggested that the HR policy adopt and incorporate the specific CAO policy. CAO Kopplin agreed and suggested that the HR policy be amended to reflect that.

Lt. Stelly also asked about the policy referring to carrying weapons onto OPCD property. Lt. Stelly stated that weapons should not be brought into the building, but employees have a Second Amendment right to carry weapons in their cars. Ms. Shinar Haynes, Training Coordinator for consolidation, stated that this had been corrected in a previous version, but the change obviously was not incorporated in the document being reviewed today.

Dr. Aiken asked who would be the originator of policies for the consolidated environment, and wanted to clarify that all future policies must originate from OPCD, with concurrence from the three agencies and the Operations Director. Lt. Stelly voiced his agreement with Dr. Aiken.

Lt. Stelly continued to address his concerns regarding employees and their protection under the Whistle Blower law. The policy reads that the employee shall be protected from any disciplinary action. Lt. Stelly stated that he understood the intent, but the policy should be amended to make it clear that the employee is not protected from any disciplinary action, but any disciplinary action that is reprisal from the act of whistle blowing. A short discussion ensued and CAO Kopplin agreed that the policy should be more clear and specific.

Lt. Stelly then asked about the five days that the HR manager has to provide written documentation when notifying an employee about pending disciplinary action. Lt. Stelly

stated that that documentation should be provided prior to the disciplinary action, and that employees should be notified well in advance of the action being implemented.

Executive Director Stephen Gordon advised Board members that OPCD Legal Counsel had received the policy but had not completed his review of it. Executive Director Gordon stated that Mr. Chapman's changes would be considered and added to the final document.

Board Chair Ebbert called for the motion to approve the HR policies with changes needed and submitted at the next meeting. CAO Kopplin motioned to approve the HR policy, and Ms. Parent seconded. Board members unanimously approved the HR policy with changes to be submitted at the next meeting.

## **B. Submission of Personnel Costs for Consolidation**

Chair Ebbert recognized CAO Kopplin, who acknowledged the presence of Councilmember Jason Williams. CAO Kopplin thanked CM Williams for his assistance on securing the additional \$1 million for consolidation costs. These additional funds have made it possible to raise salaries that we hope will attract new employees and retain and promote current employees.

CM Williams suggested that because of the stressful nature of call-taking and dispatching, there should be more emphasis on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and more proactive emphasis on stress management and reduction. He suggested that the HR policy be revised with more clear and concise protocols.

Chair Ebbert recognized Mr. Eric Melancon, who referred Board members to the one-page handout in their packets. (Please see attached.) He explained that the salaries listed on the handout were the proposed base salaries, and did not include overtime or longevity and merit raises. He further explained that no one would have to take a cut in pay because of consolidation. Employees from the Fire Department may lose their state supplemental pay. In order to keep an equivalent pay, they will have to learn to dispatch for one more agency.

Chair Ebbert asked for comments or questions from the audience. Board Chair Ebbert recognized Ms. Teresa Thompson, a dispatcher in NOPD. Ms. Thompson explained that she is currently a dispatcher and can take calls for one discipline now. However, the base salary under consolidation for a Telecommunicator I is less than what she is currently making. Mr. Melancon replied that the numbers provided are base salary only, and that adjustments will be made for employees in the same situation as Ms. Thompson. Lt. Col. Sneed reassured Ms. Thompson that no one would have to take a pay cut. Ms. Thompson replied that she will be required to take on additional duties – call-taking for Fire and EMS – for about \$50 more per month before taxes. Ms. Thompson noted that NOPD takes the bulk of all 9-1-1 calls, and that the current NOPD dispatchers do the bulk of the work and are getting the smallest pay increase.

Chair Ebbert recognized Ms. Wanda Newsome, a Dispatch Supervisor in NOFD. Ms. Newsome wanted to know what would happen if a former Fire employee takes longer than a year to gain certification in the new dispatch discipline through no fault of the employee. Lt. Col. Sneed replied that the projection was that it should take about a year to get that training, but if the timeline needs to be adjusted, it will be.

Chair Ebbert asked if there were any more comments or questions from Board members or the audience; there were none. Chair Ebbert asked for a motion to approve the

proposed pay rates for consolidated personnel. CAO Kopplin motioned, and Lt. Stelly seconded. Board members unanimously approved the motion.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Cooperative Endeavor Agreement**

Board Chair Terry Ebbert referred Board members to the revised draft CEA in their packets. He reminded them that Resolution 16-01 authorized the Board Chair to sign the CEA pending the reception of the Attorney General's opinion on consolidation, and the adoption of HR policies. We have received the opinion from the Attorney General that allows the consolidation to occur under OPCD. Lt. Stelly suggested that the CEA specifically reference the opinion. Dr. Aiken said the Board needed a better handle on how the money budgeted for consolidation is being spent.

Chair Ebbert recognized Mr. Melancon and asked him to review the substantial changes that had been made since the special Board meeting in January. He advised that Civil Service has approved transferring the full value of sick and annual leave for each affected employee from the City to OPCD. The termination for consolidation was increased to 365 days to give time for a transition plan to be put in place. Mr. Melancon noted that he had added a section to provide for added indemnification to protect Board members and added a section that contains the Attorney General's opinion on consolidation.

Chair Ebbert recognized Dr. Aiken, who asked about the hiring of the Operations Manager, and asked for clarity regarding the hierarch and one chain of command. Dr. Aiken requested that the Operations Manager report to the Executive Director. Lt. Stelly voiced his agreement with Dr. Aiken and a single chain of command. Board Chair Ebbert stated that he supported moving forward with the current organizational structure so that consolidation could get underway.

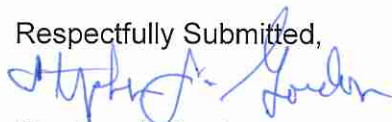
Chair Ebbert recognized Captain Simon Hargrove, NOPD Commander of 9-1-1 Communications. Captain Hargrove asked the Board to consider raising the salary of Telecommunicator I above its current base salary and make it closer to the Telecommunicator II base pay. Mr. Melancon agreed to review the request.

Chair Ebbert asked if there were any additional comments or questions. CAO Kopplin moved to approve the CEA as amended during the meeting to present to the City Council. Dr. Aiken seconded the motion. Board members unanimously approved the motion.

## **VIII. ADJOURN**

Board Chair Ebbert called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lt. Stelly motioned, and Dr. Elder motioned to adjourn. Chair Ebbert adjourned the meeting at 11:35 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Stephen J. Gordon  
Executive Director