MOBILE COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of April 18, 2024

Commissioners Attending:

Pat Mitchell	Robert Adams	Eric Linsley
Donnie Brown	Timothy Hughes	Chris McLean

Staff Attending:

Roy Hodge, Interim Director
Hayley Clough, Recording Secretary
Ashley Carlisle, Comptroller
Jeffery Hartley, Attorney
Robert Jackson, Deputy Director
Katrina Brewer, Communications Manager

The REGULAR board meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on April 18, 2024, at the Mobile County Communications Center.

Call to Order – Vice Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and welcomed our two new board members, Donnie Brown, and Eric Linsley. Vice Chairman Adams read the Proclamation designating April 14-20, 2024, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2024, meeting, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Treasurer Report – Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve the March claims list, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the MCCD Budget-To-Actual, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved.

Personnel – Commissioner McLean reported that the personnel committee has finished the Director's position applicantion process. There were some outstanding candidates, but they have narrowed down the selection. He stated that he would speak with Mr. Hartley about setting up the interviews and hopes to have a decision by the next board meeting.

Vice Chairman Adams commended Interim Director Hodge and Deputy Director Jackson for immediately stepping in and resolving issues. He stated that their good work has been time and cost saving.

Planning – No Report

Communications – Commissioner Hughes reported that the new radios were received, and the battery issue has been resolved. The radios are currently being programmed and deployed.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the software for the core upgrade has been installed and the project is still ahead of schedule.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the land disturbance certificate has been filed for the Oak Hill tower site project. Mr. Hartley has had conversations with the City of Mobile and Mobile Infirmary's legal counsel about moving this project forward.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the bid opening for the warehouse project was last week. Interim Director Hodge reported that he will discuss the project further into the meeting.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the UPS at the Citronelle tower site essentially exploded, and the site is currently on generator power. Deputy Director Jackson reported that the new UPS should be delivered on Friday, but the site cannot be taken off generator because the power needs to be cleaned before going to the tower. Commissioner Hughes recommended purchasing 1 or 2 more UPS' to have on hand in case of emergencies.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the tower sites must be painted per FAA mandate and that our tower sites need to be repainted. Interim Director Hodge stated that he and Deputy Director Jackson went to all the northern tower sites last Friday and plan to visit all of them in the coming weeks. They are putting a schedule together to have the tower sites repainted every couple of years.

Commissioner Hughes reported that there may be some areas in the county that need a "mini" tower site to improve coverage in the area. There are not many areas that will need this but there are some.

Commissioner Hughes reported that some of the radio department deployed to a drill in North Carolina recently with the mobile tower site and mobile command truck. The truck that pulls the mobile tower site had serious mechanical problems on the way back from the drill but was able to make it to the center. The truck was towed to Truckworx and it is estimated to cost $28,000 to repair. Commissioner Hughes recommended fixing the truck and then look at purchasing a new one. Vice Chairman Adams asked if we needed a motion for the recommendation of purchasing a new truck to which Interim Director Hodge stated that we would need to look at the budget and plan for it as it was not budgeted for this year. Commissioner Hughes recommending doing research to try and find a more rugged truck to purchase as the mobile tower site typically goes into rough terrain. Vice Chairman Adams stated that research will be done, and this can be put on next months agenda.

Commissioner Hughes stated that the North Carolina drill was a great opportunity for training. Cody Chinrock took some video footage while at the drill and showed the board.

Emergency Medical – No Report

Building/Configuration – No Report

Board Attorney – Mr. Hartley stated that in the last meeting, he was instructed to draft MOU's for Mt. Vernon Police Department and Prichard Police Department. He asked the board if they wanted him to move forward with including the costs of the radios in the agreements and wanted to know if the figure would be the cost we incurred purchasing the equipment or fair market value. He stated that the agreement is straight forward listing that the equipment is ours and they are responsible for it when issued to them and it stipulates that the equipment should only be given to first responders. He wanted to know if the next move is to have all agencies sign the MOU and stated that this is just an agreement and not a contract. Commissioner Mitchell stated that he believes all agencies should be held accountable. Commissioner McLean stated that he agreed, and he thinks that the depreciation of the equipment should be taken into consideration. Mr. Hartley stated that the MOU will be similar to an asset list, and he will get with Deputy Director Jackson on pricing for the equipment. Commissioner Linsley stated that there have been agreements that list the depreciation of equipment before with agencies because some equipment deteriorates faster than others. Mr. Hartley stated that the depreciation values would be a sliding scale for the cost.

Executive Director – Interim Director Hodge presented to the board a payment to TSA for recovery software. Any amount over $50,000 must be presented to the board for approval. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the payment, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge presented to the board a payment to GTS for the replacement radio batteries. Any amount over $50,000 must be presented to the board for approval. Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the payment, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge presented to the board a payment to Esri for GIS software. Any amount over $50,000 must be presented to the board for approval. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the payment, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge presented to the board bid # 2024-01 for the warehouse project. He recommended the board award the contract to Roy Lewis Construction as they were the lowest bidder. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the award the bid, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge updated the board on the building expansion project and showed the board some photos and plans. He stated that the former acting director had a set of plans created that would only add a few additional offices and a board room. The biggest issue with those plans was that the majority of the construction would be where main utility lines are and they would need to be relocated. His suggestion is to build another building identical to our second building where the current parking lot is and move the MCCD parking lot to EMA's property. We would install a driveway between the two spaces and extend their parking lot to create more room. The EMA Director and Deputy Director seem to be okay with this plan, but it would need to go before their board. He reported that there would be two different options for the additional building. The first would be similar to our second building and would give the most space, the second option would be almost identical to our second building, including the berms but we would lose some square footage. There would be an access road between the two buildings to go to the multipurpose building. The options proposed by Interim Director Hodge would be the least disruptive and the main utility lines would not need to be cut and relocated. He stated that we have very minimal space here, especially with IT as the department is growing with everything being internet based. The radio department is currently working out of their garage space because they have outgrown the office space. The bunkroom would be converted into their office space and the bunkrooms would be in the new building. The new building would have plenty of room for personnel, the IT and GIS departments could be housed there and there would be room for outside agencies to be located here as well. Interim Director Hodge stated that with this expansion, we would get 15-20 more years out of this building. Commissioner Brown asked how much space we would lose with the berm to which Interim Director Hodge stated that it would be roughly 3,000 square feet. Commissioner Brown then asked what the benefits are of having the berm to which Interim Director Hodge stated that the berm hardens the building to storms but there are other ways to do that without the berm. Commissioner Linsley asked if we have inquired about obtaining more land from the grounds to which Interim Director Hodge stated that he has not attempted to do so but he can certainly try. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to move forward with inquiring about obtaining more land, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that the radio system is the most expensive portion of what we do here, and the radio department does all the work maintaining the system to not have recurring costs and contracts. Every tower site has equipment, generators, and AC units and if any equipment breaks or malfunctions, the radio guys take care of the problem themselves. They are even going to install the new UPS themselves to save on the cost of installation. They have also acquired the drone that will help to save on costs of tower crews identify problems as they can identify it with the drone and only call when it is not something they can fix. Because of their skillset, they are valuable to us and to others. He recommended a 10% salary increase to the all 4 of the radio guys across the board. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the increase, seconded by Commissioner Linsley, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that the organizational chart will also be updated to reflect their title changes as well as other changes. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the new organizational chart, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that our Communications Center Manager, Katrina Brewer, has been here since 1995. She has been managing the call center for 23 years and works to keep the floor staffed and frequently works on the call floor as well. She does not earn overtime while working on the floor as she is a salary employee. She became topped out of her salary range in 2011 and received a special 2.5% merit increase in 2017 but has not had a salary increase since then. Interim Director Hodge recommended reclassifying her from a grade 20 to a grade 23 with a 10% salary increase. Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the reclassification, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that we currently have several operator positions available but we are having trouble hiring and retaining employees for these positions. He stated that one of the problems is that there is not a dedicated person to train the new hires. We are working to have some other things taken care of but would like to have someone dedicated to creating a curriculum and to administer the training to our new hires. The person he has in mind for this position is Dakota Vest-Wright. She has experience doing this with the Mobile Police Department. Interim Director Hodge recommending creating the position of Training Coordinator/CALEA Manager with a grade of 17 retroactive to April 15, 2024. Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve the position, seconded by Commissioner Brown, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge updated the board on the CALEA accreditation. There are several agencies in Mobile that are accredited, and it just sets the standard for operations. Under Director McNichol, Dakota started working on the CALEA accreditation process and getting everything put together, and she has done incredible work. He recommended continuing to move forward with the CALEA accreditation process.

Interim Director Hodge stated that the audit fee sheet is included in the board packet, and this is a firm that we have used before. Commissioner Hughes stated that he thought that $35,000 was a little high for an audit and asked if it could be shopped around to which Interim Director Hodge stated that we can, we just obtained this quote from them because they are familiar with MCCD. Ashley Carlisle stated that this firm used to be Russell, Thompson, Butler, and Houston but they were bought out by another firm, but it is still the same staff. Vice Chairman Adams stated that he believes we should move quickly and to not go with the lowest offer. Commissioner Linsley asked for the cost from last year to which Ashley stated that an independent audit was not completed last year as we were audited by the Examiners of Public Accounts but the last time an independent audit was completed, it was roughly $30,000. Commissioner Linsley stated that if this price is similar to the cost of years passed, he believes the board should move forward. Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Linsley, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that our reserve has been in a mutual fund with Raymond James since 2014 and has lost roughly $300,000. His suggestion is to move $4,000,000 into a CD for 18 months to accrue interest. Commissioner Adams stated that he doesn't feel that the reserve should be in a mutual fund. Commissioner Brown stated that there are several banks with good rates on CDs currently. Interim Director Hodge stated that we do have to follow the Safe Bank Act, but Ashley Carlisle can explore those options if he passes along the information.

Interim Director Hodge informed the board that USA Police Department has requested access to the CAD system as they currently do not have access. He recommends moving forward with this request as all other agencies are on the CAD system but them. Most of the equipment to bring them over is already here, we would just need the fiber ran. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge informed the board that MCCD has several assets that need disposal. The 2018 Tahoe, previously driven by the former director, has 171,000 miles on it and needs repairs. He would like to post on Gov deals to sell. There are 3 diesel generators and fuel tanks and 1 LP generator and fuel tank from the old EDACS system that need to be disposed of as well. Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Linsley, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that the bid was put out for the director's vehicle, and we only received one bid from Joe Bullard. Ashley found a vehicle more suited for MCCD and at a cheaper price point so he would like to recommend rejecting the bid from Joe Bullard. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to reject the bid, seconded by Commissioner Brown, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge stated that he would like to move forward with the purchase of the other vehicle at a cheaper price but needs board approval. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the purchase, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved.

Interim Director Hodge reported on the grievance committee selection. He sees several issues with the process if we continue to follow what the MCCD handbook currently says. He stated that it may be difficult to get people from different areas together for a hearing. There is also an issue with there being no backup plan for the MCCD employee's selection if that person were to be the individual appealing to the committee and it could cause a potential riff in between employees depending on the circumstances. Interim Director Hodge stated that he would recommend that the committee be the board and have the hearing scheduled to be on the day of a board meeting. Vice Chairman Adams asked Commissioner McLean if he would select a committee to which he answered yes. Interim Director Hodge stated that we would need to follow the current handbook guidelines but would like to have 2 board members on the grievance committee. Commissioner McLean, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Hughes all agreed to be on the committee. Mr. Hartley asked if this was changing now to which Commissioner McLean stated not right now but will be changed for the future. Vice Chairman Adams stated that while the board is talking about the handbook, it should be reviewed and revised and brought back to the board. Interim Director Hodge stated that this is something that is currently being done to CALEA standard.

Old Business – No Report

New Business – Vice Chairman Adams stated that the board needed to vote on a new Chairman. Commissioner Hughes nominated Commissioner Mitchell for the position. Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to close nominations, seconded by Commissioner Brown, all approved. Commissioner Mitchell is now Chairman. Mr. Hartley stated that now that Commissioner Mitchell is Chairman, we will need a new Treasurer. Commissioner McLean nominated Commissioner

Linsley for the position. Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to close nominations, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved. Commissioner Linsley is now Treasurer.

Commissioner Linsley requested the board move the meeting date as he another commitment on Thursdays at 10:00 AM. He stated that he cannot meet on Mondays or Thursdays at 10:00. Mr. Hartley stated that he cannot do Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. Commissioner Linsley asked about Wednesday afternoon to which Commissioner Hughes and Commissioner McLean stated that mornings are better for them. Commissioner Linsley made a motion to move the board meetings to the third Friday of the month at 9:00 AM starting in June, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved.

Announcement – Next board meeting to be held May 16, 2024.

Adjournment – Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner McLean. Meeting adjourned by 11:29 AM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Pat Mitchell, Chairman

Hayley Clough, Recording Secretary