

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GEORGIA EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022

1:30 PM TO 2:30 PM

CONFERENCE CALL

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Billy Hancock, *Chairperson*

Alex Lee, *Vice Chairperson*

William Wright, *Secretary*

Cheryl Greathouse

Amy Oneacre

Pete Olson

Ted Wynn

Steve Nichols

Brian Screws

Board Members Absent:

Billy Grogan

The Georgia Emergency Communications Authority (GECA) held a board meeting on December 15, 2022, as a conference call. A List of Attendees, an Agenda, and the Meeting Presentation are attached hereto and made official parts of these minutes as Attachments #1, #2 and #3. Billy Hancock called the meeting to order at 1:42 PM.

All board members were present except Billy Grogan.

Chairperson Hancock welcomed everyone to the meeting and the conference call.

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Hancock made a motion to approve the June 30 and September 28 meeting minutes. Ted Wynn made a motion to approve the minutes. Steve Nichols seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Old Business

Chairperson Billy Hancock opened the floor for old business. Chris Hollifield, with Rushton Accounting and Business Advisors, was introduced and gave an audit update.

Internal Financial Audit Update

Chris Hollifield prefaced his update expressing his desire for more finality to the audit. Rushton Accounting and Business Advisors initially requested about 100 vendor-payment invoices. These invoices were reviewed to determine scope of work and payment responsibility. Of the 100 invoices, 8-10 required additional follow-up. Rushton Accounting and Business Advisors requested supplementary documentation in November, and the documentation was received on

December 14. He requested additional time to finish reviewing the documents received in December. Next audit steps include requests for payroll files and grant funding.

Proposal of the FY 2023 Budget for January through June

Chairperson Billy Hancock announced item (b) from the agenda and introduced GECA's Deputy Director, Aleisha Rucker-Wright, to present the board with these figures.

Aleisha stated that GECA postponed adopting a 2023 budget, pending the outcome of the financial audit. Aleisha presented the board with request for totals of specific categories: personnel services (i.e. staff salaries), equipment, regular operating expenses, and contractual services. With regard to contractual services – GECA plans to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security (GEMA/HS) to compensate them for some of the services that are providing for GECA. Aleisha opened the floor for questions or discussion. Chairperson Billy Hancock offered further explanation on the decision. He stated that the GECA Board Finance Committee asked GECA staff to provide them with a numeric composition of what it would take for GECA to operate for 6-months. As of now, GECA has been operating month-to-month, in result, the composition would provide a better scope on how GECA is using their money by month. Chairperson Hancock opened the floor for questions or comments. William Wright asked if the MOU with GEMA/HS would include a salary for a Grant Analyst position? Aleisha answered “yes;” and that it is based on a twelve-month period. Further, based on the MOU, GECA plans to pay for a Purchasing Procurement Agent, a Senior Manager for Finance, a Senior Budget Analyst, an Accountant, a Financial Operations Generalist, an additional Financial Analyst, and a Director of Accounting and Financial Services. Though GECA would not be paying those salaries in their entirety, the MOU with GEMA/HS will allow GECA to work with GEMA/HS staff for financial operations who are highly trained and specialized in those specific areas. William Wright yielded further questioning. Chairperson Hancock opened the floor for further questions. An unnamed caller asked for the reasoning behind the 6-month budget. Chairman Hancock explained and William Wright “piggy-backed” from his explanation by justifying that GECA needed a financial re-organization in congruence with the internal audit to ensure that “no stone was unturned.” William Wright asked Deborah Gore, the Assistant Attorney General, to comment, so that the board could have a better understanding legally before taking a vote. Chairperson Hancock decided to move-on to *New Business* before the board voted.

New Business

Chairperson Billy Hancock opened the floor for new business. The following topics were covered based on the agenda.

Memorandum of Understanding Between the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency and GECA

Deborah Gore, Assistant Attorney General for the Georgia Office of the Attorney General (AG), stated that she received a copy of the MOU on December 14, and she plans to review some of her observations before the board. She stated that she forwarded the MOU to the Commercial Transactions team at the AG's Office. This team deals regularly with government contracts and

agreements. That said, because this team received the agreement this morning, they have not had ample time to review the MOU for their feedback. However, based on her observations, she noted a few minor technical errors (i.e. incorrect date; purpose of agreement states “goods and services,” but there are no “goods” provided; she believes the MOU should conclude with the signature of the Chair of the Board, rather than the Executive Director of GECA). Moreover, she stated that she looks forward to receiving feedback from the Commercial Transactions team, so that they may move forward with the MOU. Chairperson Hancock asked for Deborah’s opinion on whether the board should or should not move forward with the vote since the MOU is incomplete. Further, Chairman Hancock applauded the Finance Committee and GECA’s Deputy Director and Executive Director for their work toward the budget; he believes that the composition currently displayed is good enough for a vote, but also expressed concern with the MOU being left out of the vote. Deborah replied that ultimately the decision to proceed is up to the board. She stated that it is certainly an option for the board to agree on the proposed numbers and vote on the MOU at a later date. In that case, GECA could remain operating month-by-month. GECA’s Executive Director, Greg Whitaker, asked if it was possible to approve the budget, pending the results of the MOU. Peter Olson made a motion to vote on the amendments to the budget. Ted Wynn and Cheryl Greathouse agreed to the motion. Chairperson Billy Hancock made a motion to vote for the 2023 six-month budget, with exception to the minor changes of the MOU. Ted Wynn motioned to approve. Peter Olson seconded the motion. Chairman Hancock asked for discussion. William Wright asked about page 12 and Line Item 3 – GEMA/HS Legal Counsel Salary. Greg Whitaker explained the salary was included in the budget because it is a current existing expense, but the finance committee decided to remove this salary upon approval of the MOU. In summary, the board approved the budget request without an emphasis on each line item. Chairperson Hancock called for the board to vote. The six-month 2023 budget request was passed unanimously.

Revisions to the GECA Field Coordinator Regions

Chairperson Hancock asked Deputy Director, Aleisha Rucker-Wright, to introduce the next portion of the meeting. GECA requested a fifth Emergency Communications Field Coordinator to fill a newly created regional area – a map of the new regions is attached. Each GECA Field Coordinator will be responsible for approximately 28-30 PSAPs. The territories were influenced by regional PSAPs such as Middle Flint. She then asked the board if they had suggestions or if they accept the proposed territories. Chairman Hancock asked how many territories there were before. Greg Whitaker answered – there were originally 8 regions, but GECA only had 4 hired Field Coordinators, thus each coordinator had double regions. However, based on the budget GECA staff decided it wouldn’t be fiscally astute to hire for all 8 regions. GECA staff reviewed the workload and performance indicators for each existing region and reallocated from those observations. A fifth coordinator is needed to reduce the span of the territory. Greg emphasized that the Field Coordinators are a huge asset to GECA. They are more than just a point of contact. Chairperson Hancock opened the floor for a vote. Peter Olson made a motion. Alex Lee seconded the motion. Revisions to the GECA Field Coordinator Regions were passed unanimously.

Johnson County 911

Johnson County has completed the initial documentation required to begin receiving remittances. Their document includes a Letter of Intent, a signed contract with AT&T, a resolution establishing the 911 center, a resolution establishing the 911 advisory board, a wireless and prepaid resolution and a Local 911 Plan. William Wright made a motion to approve. Ted Wynn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Updates – Skylar Whitaker

Skylar Whitaker, GECA's Legislative Liaison, began with an update on House Bill 85 (HB 85) from last year's Legislative Session that ultimately did not pass. She explained that the purpose of HB 85 was to amend the Georgia Workers' Compensation Law to allow for a PTSD claim without a cooccurring physical injury claim. 911 Dispatchers have been added to the list of first responders who can benefit from this bill. A working group for the bill met two and a half weeks ago to discuss the status of where they are in revising the bill. The group was led by Ashley Wilson, from the Gwinnett County Police Department. They discussed hurdles they're facing with how the bill is currently written. They discussed the importance of the language, and specifically how these patients will be diagnosed with PTSD in a way that insurance companies would approve coverage. The bill will be ready for review by the end of December 2022 (before the 2023 Legislative Session. Further, Skylar mentioned that session begins on Monday, January 9. As of now, there are no other 911 related bills on the radar.

Public Comment:

Chairperson Billy Hancock opened the floor for public comment. David Murphy of White County spoke up and expressed his hard work about how GECA is handling things. He asked if GECA has always operated with a budget. Chairperson Hancock replied yes but expressed that GECA is just going deeper now that the board and GECA staff has recently begun operating as an authority rather than a commission. Cheryl Greathouse then took the floor addressing a question Russ Palmer added to the conference chat about continuing education requirements. Cheryl proposed the board put together a subcommittee for the purpose of drafting recommendations for POST Council, to consider the rules. Chairperson Hancock agreed with the proposal of creating a subcommittee.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Peter Olson called for a motion to adjourn. William Wright seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:54 PM.

These minutes are hereby approved and adopted on this 29th day of June 2023.

Billy Hancock
Chairperson

Secretary

Official Attachments:

1. List of Attendees
2. Agenda
3. Meeting Presentation

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Steve Nichols

Brian Screws

GECA Staff Members:

Greg Whitaker

Aleisha Rucker-Wright

Bess Larson

Skylar Whitaker

Amy Ramsey

Jonathan Jones

Tammy Smith

Pamela Waters

9-1-1 Advisory Panel:

Tamika Kendrick, Emory Police Department

Daniel Dunlap, Augusta-Richmond County

Russ Palmer, Chatham County 911

Barry Woodward, City of Decatur 911

John Blalock, Floyd County 911

Jason Lawson, Troup County 911

Lynn Smith, Habersham County 911

Others Attending:

Natalie Lee