

MOBILE COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of November 9, 2023

Commissioners Attending:

Roy Hodge
Robert Adams
Chris McLean

Jeff Reeves
Glenn Hodge

Pat Mitchell
Timothy Hughes

Staff Attending:

Kristi Stamnes, Acting Executive Director
Hayley Clough, Recording Secretary
Katrina Brewer, Communications Manager

Jeffery Hartley, Attorney
Ashley Carlisle, Comptroller
Robert Jackson, Radio System Administrator

The REGULAR board meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on November 9, 2023, at the Mobile County Communications Center.

Call to Order – Chairman R. Hodge called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M.

Approval of Minutes – Commissioner G. Hodge made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2023, meeting, seconded by Commissioner Reeves, all approved.

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

Commissioner Mitchell presented the MCCD Budget-To-Actual.

Personnel – No Report

Planning – No Report

Communications – Commissioner Reeves reported that the radio department is currently working on core upgrades and lighting issues at the Springhill tower site.

Emergency Medical – Commissioner Hughes reported that he has reached out to Mobile County EMS to establish his relationship with them.

Building/Configuration – No Report

Board Attorney – Mr. Hartley stated that MCCD entered into an agreement with the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians some time back. The goal of that agreement was to allow a private contractor to install equipment on the MCCD tower to bring broadband to the MOWA tribe and community. The owner of the company agreed to pay \$650 a month in rental space on the tower for his equipment but he has not paid since June of 2022. He stated that he has fallen on hard times with COVID and trying to recover and asked MCCD to consider dropping his rent to \$300. Mr. Hartley stated that the board has the right to move however they wish as he is in breach of contract. MCCD received a letter from the Police Chief of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians regarding this matter as well. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that we have tried to work with him, but it has been difficult. Chairman R. Hodge asked if he continued to provide the service even though he is not paying his rent to which Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated yes, his customers and the tribe are currently using the internet service. Robert Jackson stated that he has several antennas on the tower that would need to be removed as well as the shelter that he purchased from MCCD. When this was initially brought before the board, there was an agreement to allow him to purchase the old EDACS shelter to house his equipment in addition to the rental of tower space. The shelter was purchased for \$1,000. Several weeks back, there was a gentleman arrested for trespassing on the property. He was identified as someone who was not authorized to be on the property but was working for the internet provider. Gary Hand also stated that in order to install the antennas on the tower, the gentleman had to use someone approved by MCCD for

the installation. The approved contractor has also not been paid for his work. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to allow the gentleman 14 days to remove his equipment and allow legal to handle the financial matters, Commissioner McLean seconded. Commissioner Reeves stated that he would like to keep the shelter in case it is needed but take off the \$1,000 he paid for it from his balance. Gary Hand stated that we need the equipment properly removed from the tower to not cause problems down the road. Mr. Hartley stated that it may be wise to go ahead and spend the money to have the equipment properly removed as the gentleman does not have the means to pay for it. Commissioner G. Hodge asked if the MOWA tribe's internet was currently through this provider to which Acting Executive Director Stamnes answered yes, and the service will stop as soon as the equipment is removed. All approved of the motion.

Executive Director – Acting Executive Director Stamnes informed the board that every five years the Alabama State 9-1-1 Board does a review of the 9-1-1 fee. The review was completed recently and the 9-1-1 fee will be increasing on 1/1/2024. The current fee is \$1.86, and the new fee will be \$2.23. We should see the funds for this increase in March and can make budget adjustments then.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that MCCD provides software to the volunteer fire districts and the current software company they use has been bought out by another company and will not have the same capabilities as it had before. The fire districts have met to find a solution to this problem and decided that the First Due software would be the best solution. The software costs \$85,075 and would deploy to all fire districts except Mobile Fire Rescue Department as they use a different software. She stated that we are still in talks with the company about wording in the contract. After the initial \$85,075, including a one-time set up fee of \$7,000, there would be an annual maintenance fee of \$78,075. We are currently paying \$49,000 annually for maintenance on the software they are using now but it is nearing end of life. Commissioner Hughes asked if the software is for communications only or would there be an operational component as well? Commissioner Mitchell asked if this was a good company to use for this to which Commissioner Reeves stated yes, that Shane Loveitt with Saraland Fire Department is extremely knowledgeable, and he trusts his judgement on this recommendation. Not only will the software be used for running calls, but it will also be storing data and doing updates. Commissioner Hughes stated that looking at the contract, there is only one item that falls under communications, and he would prefer to only cover the costs of the communications portion of the software and the agencies cover the operating portion. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that when we first started talking about this, she had the districts provide a report of their costs for the software and they expressed their frustration. Commissioner Mitchell asked how soon we need to act on this because he would like to do more research. Commissioner Reeves stated that the current software can still be used but it is not updating anymore. Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to table this until the next meeting so more research can be done, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes reported that Robert has worked with the engineers on finalizing the plans for the warehouse project. She will update the board when it is ready to go out to bid.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes reported that Robert has also worked with the engineers on the Oakhill tower site project on finalizing those plans. Once finalized, they will be submitted to the City for approval and then we will move forward from there.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes reported that the Salco tower site is in need of major repairs and replacements. The radio department has found some equipment to be used for repairs out of Iowa. The cost is \$3,329. We don't have an estimate for the cost of shipping the equipment to us yet. Commissioner Reeves stated that he would prefer it if some of the radio department went to pick it up personally. Robert stated that it would be in our best interests to pick up the equipment ourselves to ensure the quality of delivery. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to approve the purchase of the equipment and the costs to obtain it, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes recommended approval of bid # 2023-03 for janitorial services. Our current company used for weekends, holidays, and emergencies has been problematic, so we put the janitorial services out for bid. We only had one company answer the bid and it is the current company we use. Ashley Carlisle has spoken to the owner, and they stated that if they were awarded the bid, there would be changes made. The bid submitted is the same cost as what we are currently paying. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to approve the bid, seconded

by Commissioner McLean. Commissioner Reeves stated that he would like to think about a possible part-time employee if they do not hold up their end of the contract. Commissioner Hughes stated that maybe that is something to think about now. Mr. Hartley stated that we could have a 90-day trial period to ensure they are doing satisfactory work. Commissioner Reeves amended his motion to reflect the acceptance of the bid for a 90-day period but to also explore hiring a part-time worker. Commissioner Hughes seconded, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes presented to the board a payment to Communications International. Any amount over \$50,000 must be presented to the board for approval. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to approve the payment, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes presented the annual employee longevity pay to the board. Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes informed the board that we had an employee with a milestone year of service. Jesse Sluder has been with us for 5 years in October working in the radio department. During the October meeting, he was on deployment, so he was presented with a service pin this month. He's a hard worker that truly makes a difference.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes informed the board that the radio department has been super busy with deployments lately. A few weeks ago, L3 Harris hosted their National Conference in Mobile and the radio department did a really good job showcasing our equipment. During the same week of the conference, ALERT had a training class and the radio department really stepped up and did everything above and beyond what was asked. Lastly, during the October meeting, they were deployed to a training exercise at the Alabama Fire College and really made a difference while there.

Old Business – Commissioner G. Hodge asked for an update on the Schillinger Road property for the potential new center. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that there isn't much of an update. The last step was to see if the size of the new building would fit on the property in question. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that she does not recommend moving forward with building a new building and that it would not be a wise way to spend money. Our current building is fine but could use some updates and she recommends spending money to update and expand here than build a new building. Robert stated that the first tower site here at the center is inoperable and could come down as well as some other space that could be used for expansion. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that there are a lot of options to expand here rather than spend the money on a new building. Commissioner G. Hodge asked if we could officially notify the County that we are not moving forward to which Acting Executive Director Stamnes replied yes, she would notify them. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to halt moving forward with the new building project and provide official notification that we are not moving forward with the Schillinger Road property, seconded by Commissioner Adams, all approved.

Mr. Hartley stated that there will also need to be a motion to allow Acting Executive Director Stamnes to move forward with possible expansion plans. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to allow Acting Executive Director Stamnes to pursue looking at architects, seconded by Commissioner Adams, all approved.

New Business – Commissioner Reeves stated that when Acting Executive Director Stamnes took over the Executive Director position, her pay did not reflect the change. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to move her pay to the Executive Director's pay scale and make it retroactive to August 28, 2023, seconded by Commissioner Adams, all approved.

Commissioner Reeves stated that he would still like to help the community of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, but he doesn't know what we could do. Mr. Hartley stated that there isn't much as it is beyond our limitations. Robert stated that there has been some recent legislation that passed regarding internet service in rural areas. The legislation is funding the cost of expanding internet service to these areas and that it is happening very quickly.

Commissioner Reeves stated that this is his last meeting as a member of the Board of Commissioners. He stated that he did express interest in continuing to serve this board, but it didn't work out that way. His replacement is not a

representative of the volunteer fire districts and he wanted to remind the board not to forget about them when they don't have representation on the board anymore.

Commissioner Reeves stated that when Acting Executive Director Stammes was hired, the idea was always to potentially have her replace the Executive Director if needed. Commissioner Reeves made a motion to make her Executive Director and hire an Assistant Executive Director, seconded by Commissioner Adams. Commissioner Hughes stated that in the spirit of transparency, the position should be advertised with a job description. Commissioner Mitchell mirrored Commissioner Hughes' thoughts and stated that we could do an advertisement for the position to be transparent. Commissioner McLean stated that the board originally agreed to do a 6-month trial period so that we could make the right decision and give us time to do that. This is why we did not automatically advertise the position and we also knew that we had someone capable of handling the duties during that time. A roll call vote was taken:

Chairman R. Hodge – No
Commissioner Reeves – Yes
Commissioner Hughes – No
Commissioner Mitchell – No
Commissioner G. Hodge – Yes
Commissioner Adams – Yes
Commissioner McLean – No

Motion did not pass.

Commissioner Adams stated that we should recognize Commissioner Reeves for his dedication to this board and his years of service. Commissioner Adams made a motion of appreciation, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, all approved.

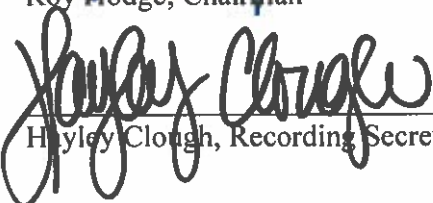
Announcement – Next board meeting to be held December 14, 2023.

Adjournment – Commissioner Reeves made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Adams. Meeting adjourned by 9:05 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Roy Hodge, Chairman



Hayley Clough, Recording Secretary