

MOBILE COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of March 14, 2024

Commissioners Attending:

Roy Hodge
Sam Cochran
Chris McLean

Robert Adams
Glenn Hodge

Pat Mitchell
Timothy Hughes

Staff Attending:

Kristi Stammes, 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 March 14, 2024, at the Mobile County Communications Center.

Call to Order – Chairman R. Hodge called the meeting to order at 9:58 A.M. Before the first item on the agenda, Chairman R. Hodge stated that he had spoken with Mr. Hartley about the meeting date and time. Mr. Hartley has a conflict on the second Thursday of every month at 10:00 AM and Chairman R. Hodge proposed that the board meetings be moved to the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM to which no one disagreed. Chairman R. Hodge made a motion to move the board meetings to the third Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM, seconded by Commissioner Adams, all approved.

Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Adams made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2024, meeting, seconded by Commissioner McLean, all approved.

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

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

Personnel – Commissioner McLean reported that the personnel committee has held several meetings regarding the Executive Director job description. There was a good amount of input from the committee for the description and the committee has some suggestions on how to move forward. Commissioner McLean recommended a 30-day window for advertisement on various platforms including NENA, newspapers, AL.com, and possibly local news media. He believes it should be properly advertised for 30 days. Commissioner Adams asked how far the description would be advertised, to which Commissioner Hughes stated that the advertisement on NENA would be nationwide. Acting Executive Director Stammes recommended advertising the description with APCO as well. Commissioner Cochran stated that he would like to not advertise the position if it is not illegal to do so to which Mr. Hartley stated that it is not illegal to do so but it is up to the Executive Board to select a director. He stated that if someone from the board has a good candidate, they should bring them in for interviewing. Commissioner Adams stated that he feels the board should advertise the position to be fair and that the position was advertised when the prior Director was hired also. Commissioner McLean stated that there are some things he would like the candidates to do prior to an employment offer including a psych eval. Commissioner Hughes stated that the vetting process should be similar to the process for a law enforcement officer. Commissioner Mitchell stated that he would like to advertise the position, but he does think a month-long advertisement window is too long. Commissioner Cochran stated that he thinks a 2-week advertisement window would be good. Commissioner McLean stated that as the resumes come in, they will go directly to Mr. Hartley. The personnel committee will then take the top 3 candidates to present to the board and start the interview process. Mr. Hartley stated that this is the standard process but recommended the board not limit themselves to only 3 candidates but maybe just the top selections. Commissioner Cochran asked who would go through the resumes to which Commissioner McLean stated that Mr. Hartley would pass the resumes along to the personnel committee for review and then the committee would present those candidates to the board. The committee is currently Commissioner McLean, Commissioner Hughes, and Commissioner G. Hodge. Commissioner G. Hodge stated that he is retiring at the end of the month so the board may want to find someone to replace him on the personnel committee. Chairman R. Hodge stated that Commissioner Cochran had expressed interested in being on the committee to which Commissioner McLean stated that Commissioner Cochran will

replace Commissioner G. Hodge on the committee. He then asked the board for their thoughts on what to do to move forward for the advertisement window, 2-weeks, or 30 days? Mr. Hartley stated that the board will decide on a window and then have the posting reflect the date at the end of that window and give a day for the advertisement to post. That date will also reflect the date that he must receive the resume and not the date that it was post marked. If the window will be 2 weeks, the window would close on March 29, 2024. Commissioner McLean recommended holding off on advertising the Assistant Executive Director position and then the new Executive Director decide. Commissioner McLean made a motion to advertise the position for 2 weeks on NENA, APCO, and various websites until March 29th, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved. Commissioner Hughes asked the board if it would be possible to go into executive session before leaving personnel. Commissioner Adams made a motion to go into executive session. Mr. Hartley ensured that the requirements for an executive session were met and announced the statement for an executive session. A roll call vote was taken and all approved to go into executive session beginning at 10:15 AM. The executive session ended at 10:54 AM. Commissioner Adams left the meeting once the executive session was concluded.

Planning – No Report

Communications – Commissioner Hughes reported that the new portable radios have been received. Programming has been completed on several units and they have been deployed in a test phase to ensure everything works well. So far, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The only negative is that the batteries are dead or close to depletion by the end of a 12-hour shift. Commissioner Hughes stated that Robert Jackson has a fix for this and has spoken with Harris about ordering different batteries for the radios. Robert reported that there are currently 12 radios deployed in the field for testing. The battery issue was not something that anyone could have known about prior to obtaining the radios but there is a solution. Out of the 12 radios in the field currently, roughly 1/3 of the batteries completely depleted before the end of the 12-hour shift and the remaining radios were close to depletion by the end of the shift. One of the solutions is to get another battery from Harris by a third-party vendor to replace the current ones but we cannot be sure this will help as these batteries are similar to what we currently have. The other solution is to purchase different batteries from Harris. These batteries would be bigger but better.

Commissioner Hughes stated that the core upgrade is ahead of schedule and should only have 3-4 months to go. Robert commended Gary Hand for handling a lot of the upgrade and actually doing a lot of the work himself and doing it well. Upgrading the core is a big project on a running system and because of this, the upgrade is done over the course of months to do testing and ensure things are working properly. So far, everything is going well.

Commissioner Hughes stated that in the last meeting, the Bard requested Mr. Hartley send a letter for the Oak Hill tower site requirements to the City of Mobile. Robert reported that we have received a reply and the City is requiring a tier 2 land disturbance study be completed for the project. We have received a quote to have this completed and Acting Executive Director Stamnes has approved it, but the study has not been scheduled. Mr. Hartley stated that the letter requested that these be the final requirements for us to move on with the project. Chairman R. Hodge asked what will happen if the land study comes back and we still have to do additional requirements to move forward to which Robert stated that we will have to go from there and then the board can make a decision.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the bid opening for the warehouse will be April 3rd.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the issue with the MCPSS bus radios has been resolved. Gary received a call about a single radio that the alarm had been triggered but he contacted MCPSS, and they immediately fixed it.

Commissioner Hughes reported that the contract with Escambia County has been signed. Robert stated that they still need to sure up their tower site locations, but the project is underway.

Commissioner Hughes stated that in the meeting last month, the board discussed some agencies having missing equipment issued by MCCD. An audit was done, and Robert is prepared to discuss the findings. Robert and his team completed audits in Prichard Police Department and Mt. Vernon Police Department. Before he reported the numbers, he informed the Board of the agreement with Prichard Police Department from December of 2022 stating that there was a large number of radios unaccounted for from their department and they would be responsible for this equipment, and they had to sign the agreement before they would be issued anymore equipment. From the audit in Prichard, there was no additional equipment missing since the agreement in December of 2022 but there are still 25 radios missing out of 101 after the initial audit was completed. After the initial audit discovered radios that were unaccounted for, Robert's team

disabled the missing radios. Out of the missing 25 radios, 10 of them have attempted to turn back on and 4 of those 10 were since December 2022. Chairman R. Hodge asked if the agreement in December of 2022 reflected the original missing 25 to which Robert responded that the original 25 are still missing. There has been additional equipment issued to them since the agreement in December of 2022, but none of that specific equipment has been unaccounted for. Robert stated that the agreement was a semi-reset for the department and their equipment. Robert then reported on the audit from Mt. Vernon. He stated that prior to issuing equipment, he looks at the number of officers in the agency to see if more equipment is necessary. Mt. Vernon requested this equipment for officers in the field that do not have a radio currently. In the past, this agency has given equipment to people outside of the police department and that's a concern. Since that time, we have not issued them any additional equipment. Mt. Vernon has been issued a total of 35 radios and 21 are unaccounted for, 3 of the missing radios have attempted to be turned back on since their initial audit as well. Commissioner Hughes stated that it's concerning because not only do they not have the equipment issued to them, but they also have other agencies' talk groups and that's a matter of security. Robert reported that the missing equipment includes mobiles and portables. Chairman R. Hodge asked when the last audit was done to which Robert responded that it was completed this month. Chairman R. Hodge then asked when the last audit was before this one to which Robert stated he would have to get the exact date, but it was also around December of 2022. Chairman R. Hodge then asked if any equipment had gone missing since the audit in December of 2022 until the most recent audit to which Robert responded that they have been issued more equipment since then so he would have to check to see the actual number and report back to the board. Commissioner Hughes asked how many officers they had to which Jesse Sluder answered that they have 8 officers. Commissioner Hughes then asked why they are requesting more equipment if they only have 8 officers to which Robert responded that they stated that they have added officers to their department and that is the reason for the request. Chairman R. Hodge asked how many radios these agencies were requesting to which Robert responded that they were requesting both mobiles and portables and he believed Prichard was asking for 10 mobiles and Mt. Vernon did not give an exact number but requested more equipment for their officers. Chairman R. Hodge asked if they just said we want more equipment but didn't specify how many to which Robert responded yes, their acting Chief called and stated that they have officers without radios and inquired about how to get them. Commissioner Hughes stated that in the last meeting, the board decided to have the audit completed and then they would decide what to do so they need to make a decision about the requests. Commissioner McLean stated that if Prichard is requesting 10 mobiles, does that mean 10 new vehicles to which Chairman R. Hodge stated that he believes there was an issue where they had old vehicles being taken out of the fleet and the equipment was left in the vehicle when it was sent to the crusher, so the equipment was damaged. He stated that they have requested both mobiles and portables but if there is portable coverage in Prichard, maybe we need to look at that. Robert stated that there is portable coverage in the City of Prichard. Chairman R. Hodge stated that he has spoken to Mr. Hartley and asked about possibly issuing the equipment to individuals to hold them accountable. Commissioner Mitchell advised against issuing to individuals because the agency needs to be held accountable. Chairman R. Hodge stated that he agreed that the agency needed to be held accountable but how do we do that? Commissioner McLean stated that each agency has an inventory sheet per officer that shows everything that has been issued to them and that maybe we could add that to their inventory sheet to show which officer got the radio but that may be more work for Robert and his team to keep up with due to turnover. Commissioner Mitchell asked if there had been a conversation with the Chiefs regarding the missing equipment and the importance of keeping up with the inventory to which Robert responded yes, it's been discussed multiple times. Commissioner Mitchell then asked if it would be legal to bill the agencies for the missing equipment to which Mr. Hartley stated that the current contract was not designed for that, but we could form one and layout the exact amounts they would be responsible for if the equipment is unaccounted for and have the stipulation that they will not be issued more equipment if they do not pay what is owed for the missing equipment. Commissioner Cochran stated that he recommended putting the mayors on the agreements as well to also hold them accountable. Commissioner Mitchell stated that he believes the board should be careful about issuing equipment to agencies just because they ask for it and it might not be what they truly need. Commissioner McLean agreed with Commissioner Mitchell stating that he believes his own agency should be held accountable and should have to justify when more equipment is requested. Commissioner Mitchell stated that he believes that we should be fair when holding the agencies accountable for their equipment.

Chairman R. Hodge stated that we are being fair because we need to know why they need this equipment before to issue it to them. Robert stated that they try to do their due diligence and treat everyone the same that requests equipment. Commissioner McLean stated that he would like to know why they need more radios to which Gary stated that he believed that one of the reasons that Mt. Vernon was requesting additional equipment was because one of their officers was in an accident and the radio was damaged at that time. Robert stated that loss of radio and equipment is considered when these requests come in. Commissioner Mitchell stated that a representative from Prichard Police Department was present if he would like to speak. A Captain with the Prichard Police Department stated that there was an agreement with

MCCD where they had requested 25 radios initially. He stated that they bought new vehicles in 2020 and picked them up in 2021. He personally picked up 15 radios from MCCD and was told that when the additional 10 vehicles were delivered, the other radios would be ready and picked up to make a total of 25. He stated that of the missing radios, they accounted for 4 of them. 3 radios were in vehicles in the repair shop and 1 was with an officer that had been on vacation but there is only currently 1 still unaccounted for. Chairman R. Hodge asked the captain if it was to the best of his ability that the 4 radios missing since the agreement was signed were the only ones and that 3 of those have been accounted for to which he responded yes. Commissioner Hughes asked if the new vehicles were replacements or additions to which the Caption responded that they are new vehicles. Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to have Robert get with the captain and go over the equipment request so we can move forward and report back to the board, seconded by Commissioner McLean. Commissioner Hughes asked the board if any more thought had been given to Mr. Hartley's suggestion to which Mr. Hartley stated that he can draft something for the next meeting and have it circulated between the board. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that agencies have started to request other equipment as well including MDTs so that may be something that needs to be included in the contract. Mr. Hartley stated that he would include that as well. All approved of the motion. Motion passed. Chairman R Hodge stated that a decision needed to be made for Mt. Vernon also. Robert stated that their justification is that they have officers without radios currently, but he wants to be mindful of the history we have with them, and their mayor took radios from the police department stock and was giving radios to people that do not need them. Commissioner Hughes stated that that is a problem and a matter of public safety. Chairman R. Hodge stated that he would like to know how much equipment is missing since the last audit and not just the overall missing number. Robert stated that he would get those numbers to the board. Chairman R. Hodge asked if the board wanted Mr. Hartley to draft a letter for them as well to which Mr. Hartley stated that he would draft something generic and would recommend the board have all agencies have this contract. Commissioner McLean stated that he thinks this is a great idea and he would like to see it pushed out to all agencies as well and maybe even have it listed in the contract that these agencies should only issue the equipment to police personnel. Commissioner Hughes stated that he agreed because these are the radios that law enforcement is using, and it is a matter of public safety. Commissioner McLean stated that he believes that should be part of the agreement. Chairman R. Hodge stated that Mt. Vernon will go on the agenda under old business next month. Commissioner Hughes stated that we could invite the mayors of those 2 agencies to the next meeting to justify their requests to which Mr. Hartley stated that you can request but not require them to come.

Emergency Medical – Commissioner Hughes reported that Mobile County EMS is taking delivery of 2 new ambulances. Dirk Young stated that the delivery should be in April, and he has already spoken with Robert about radios for the new units.

Building/Configuration – No Report

Board Attorney – No Report

Executive Director – Acting Executive Director Stamnes presented to the board a payment to Communications International for the new portable radios that were requested last month. Any amount over \$50,000 must be presented to the board for approval. Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve the payment, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes recommended the board approve the FY 2023-24 budget amendment. There are a few things in the amendment that she wanted to point out. The 9-1-1 fee increased at the beginning of the year and that has caused our revenues to increase as well. The interest in the CD has also increased and has generated more than the \$15,000 budgeted for. Solacom is on the amendment as well as PursuitAlert. Those funds will go into reserves. Commissioner Cochran asked why the interest has increased so much to which Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that the CD is doing better than expected. Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve the amended budget, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that she has 2 items that are not on the agenda. She informed the board that the towers have to be inspected and we have to hire a team to complete the inspection. This is a problem because we have to work on someone else's time, and we have to sometimes rent equipment to have the inspection completed. She proposed a drone system to have our own access to view every aspect of the tower whenever we would like. Cody Chinrock has been the only civilian to be accepted into the Coast Guard's drone program and is currently going through the tower inspection portion of the program now. She stated that if something on the tower goes out or needs to be replaced, that we will still have to hire someone to come out and replace it, but we will be able to identify the problem quicker and tell them exactly

what needs to be replaced in addition to being able to inspect the tower as required. Robert stated that the standard inspection is every 3-5 years, but they have it inspected every 3 years. Having a drone would be super helpful for the radio department. Chairman R. Hodge asked if the FAA accepts just a drone inspection to which Robert responded yes. Commissioner Hughes stated that he supported the purchase. Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that there is a recurring cost for insurance. The initial cost is \$32,509 with an annual cost for insurance of \$2,500. Commissioner McLean made a motion to approve the project and the yearly costs, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes stated that the 90-day agreement with our current janitorial company has passed and we're looking to move forward with another company. Cliff Deakle has found a company that can do the weekend, holiday, and as needed janitorial services. The new company would be \$2,000 more than our current company but they do supply their own cleaning chemicals. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to approve the new company, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Acting Executive Director Stamnes reported on the feasibility study and stated that we should have the results in a few weeks.

Old Business – No Report

New Business – Chairman R. Hodge brought before the board a proposal for LPR readers for the Mobile County Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Cochran made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, all approved.

Chairman R. Hodge asked if the board needed to go into executive session to discuss the open purchase orders to which Mr. Hartley stated no. Commissioner Hughes stated that during conversations with Robert, it was mentioned that there had been a delay in ordering equipment because we were on a credit hold with some companies due to delays in payments. He stated that 2 vendors would not respond to them when work needed to be completed and the reasoning was that there were issues with the payment from a previous job from some time ago. Chairman R. Hodge asked if there were any other departments that were experiencing issues getting equipment due to payment issues to which no one responded. Acting Executive Director Stamnes provided a list of open items to the board and stated that some of those items are still ongoing projects. She reached out to one of the companies and the finance manager there stated that they had sent the invoice directly to Robert and had forwarded the same invoice several times to him for payment. Acting Executive Director Stamnes informed the board that she spoke with Ashley Carlisle about the payment, and she received the okay to pay on February 8th from Robert and the check was cut on February 9th. This issue has been resolved by telling the company to send all invoices directly to Ashley moving forward to avoid a delay. Ashley stated that she reached out to another vendor and informed them that she had not received the invoice from them and requested it be sent to her. The invoice was sent to her and immediately paid. Ashley informed the board that she contacted all of the vendors from the list that Robert gave approval to pay to obtain those invoices and once received, they were paid immediately. Chairman R. Hodge stated that there must have been a breakdown in communication and going forward, whoever is ordering the equipment is responsible for informing the vendor that Ashley is the point of contact for payment.

Commissioner Hughes stated that Acting Executive Director Stamnes is leaving MCCD. He thanked her for her service and wished her well at Baldwin.

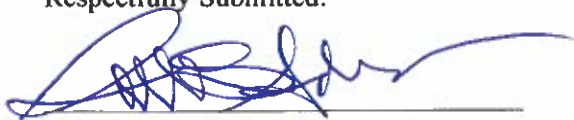
Commissioner Hughes stated that since Acting Executive Director Stamnes is leaving, MCCD will not have a director. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to appoint Chairman R. Hodge as Interim Director effective March 18th and waive the rule that a board member cannot be employed by the district. Pursuant to his position, he recommended him be started as a W-2 employee with a salary of \$148,500 for a minimum of 90 days until the position can be filled, He also moved to appoint Robert Jackson to Assistant Executive Director. Chairman R. Hodge stated that we have a motion and asked for a second to which Commissioner McLean seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Chairman R. Hodge abstained from the vote and Commissioner Adams had previously left the meeting, all remaining board members approved.

Commissioner McLean stated that there is a rule in place that a current board member cannot apply for a position at MCCD. He made a motion to rescind that motion and have the rule removed, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. A roll call vote was taken. Chairman R. Hodge abstained from the vote and Commissioner Adams had previously left the meeting, all remaining board members approved.

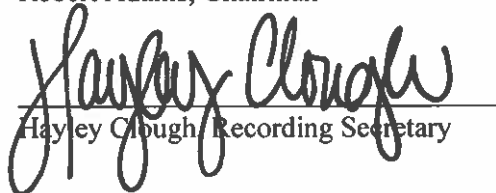
Announcement – Next board meeting to be held April 18, 2024. Mr. Hartley stated that this was probably Commissioner G. Hodge’s last meeting and wished him well in retirement.

Adjournment – Commissioner Hughes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Meeting adjourned by 12:01 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Robert Adams, Chairman



Hayley Clough, Recording Secretary