

MINUTES



**MEETING OF
January 26, 2016**

MINUTES
Board of Emergency Telecommunications
Standards & Training
Ridgeland, MS
January 26, 2016

Call to Order, Roll Call, Establish Quorum, Introduction of Guests and Introductory Remarks:

Chairman Bell called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Chairman Bell called the roll and declared a quorum present to hold the meeting.

Members Present:

Mr. Mike Adcox, MLEOTA

Mr. Reggie Bell, State Fire Academy

Chief Lynn Buford, MS Association of Chiefs of Police

Mr. Jim Hennessey, MS Chapter NENA

Mrs. Sheri Hokamp, MS Chapter of APCO

Chief Rob Martin, Mississippi Fire Chief's Association

Mr. Jimmy Dale, Attorney General's Legal Counsel

Members Not Present:

Mr. Stan Alford, MEMS

Mr. Daniel Farrish, MS State Board of Health

Sheriff Billy McGee, Mississippi Sheriff's Association

Mrs. Marti Morgan, Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer's Association

Mr. Marvin Ratliff, Claiborne Co.

Standards and Training Staff:

Mrs. Dianne Berry, Operations Management Analyst, Senior

Mr. Robert D. Davis, Director, Office of Standards and Training

Ms. Geneva Hill, Administrative Assistant

Guests:

Ms. Angela Barnes, Gulfport P.D.

Mrs. Marie McCorry, Public Safety Academics and Consultants

Ms. April Lazenby, Caliber Public Safety - APCO

Mr. Robert Graham, Professional Dispatch

Ms. Tanya Mayo, Supervisor, Lee County E 911

Mr. Robert Bailey, Deputy Director - Harrison Co. Communications

Lt. Jeff Necaise, Gulfport P.D.

Mr. Rick Seavey, Public Safety Academics and Consultants

Mr. Donald Thomas, Asst. Director, Lee County E 911

Ms. Sandra Holliman, Dispatch Asst. Supervisor - Hernando P.D.

Ms. Pam Sward, Hurricane Electronics

Mr. Dirk Young, Hurricane Electronics

Ms. Trebia Rodgers, Grenada 911

Ms. Brenda Gowdy, Lee Co. E-911

Mr. Chuck Tate, Vicksburg/Warren 911

Ms. Cindi Alkhatib, Admin. Asst., Vicksburg/Warren 911

Ms. Alta Richardson, Dispatching & Training Solutions, LLC

Chairman Bell recognized and welcomed the guests and thanked them for their interest in the BETST.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Bell asked for the review of the minutes from the September 16, 2015 meeting and entertained a motion. Chief Martin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and a second was received from Ms. Hokamp, the minutes were approved without opposition.

Old Business

Review Current List of Approved Electives:

The Board reviewed the list of currently approved elective courses. During that review the staff recommended that the Board consider granting 2 elective credits for courses that are at least 16 hours in length. Many telecommunicators get well over the required 48 hours in their effort to earn 6 credits. This move would save the agency on manpower funds and save the Board's funds. The Board currently grants 2 elective credits for conferences that provide from 20 to 24 hours.

After discussion, Chief Martin made a motion to grant 2 elective credits for approved courses that are at least 16 hours in length. Mr. Adcox seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Discuss Instructor Certification:

The Board reviewed the list of telecommunicator instructors. There are 51 instructors on the approved list and 34 of them have taught courses during the last 3 years. Several of the instructors have retired or let their instructor certificate expire.

The Board reviewed a list of 21 instructor applicants. Some on this list have been instructors in the past. The Board has authorized maintaining in the range of 50 instructors. After discussion, Mr. Adcox made a motion to allowed the staff to work with the instructor applicants and their agencies and to approve those applicants that meet instructor requirements. Mr. Hennessey seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Review Board Budget and Policies Dealing with Reimbursements:

Mr. Davis provided the Board with an overview of the funding for the telecommunications program. The budget is submitted a year in advance for the Legislature's review. The section of the budget that pays for the reimbursement of training expenses to telecommunicator agencies is called "Subsidies, Loans and Grants". The amount approved for this section remains around the same amount each year. Some years less than the approved amount is reimbursed, some years more than the approved amount is reimbursed. This amount depends on the amount of training each year, the amount of new telecommunicators hired, and the number of agencies that participate in the training program. We now have more training and more participants than ever before, and the cost of delivering this training has risen over the years.

Two other factors that have affected our budget are agencies not properly documenting reimbursement requests (which causes a delay in processing) and with the departure of Alan Gray, we only had one staff member for almost a year. These reasons caused a delay in issuing reimbursements. In the past fiscal year, more funds were needed than were approved and the Accounting Division coded a transfer of funds improperly to Subsidies, Loans and Grants that reduced our spending authority by approximately \$65,000.00.

In the past, since our fund is a special fund, these issues would not have been a problem because we had the authority to escalate our budget to cover these reimbursement requests. We have always had more than enough funds to cover all expenses. The problem that we ran into was that the Legislature discontinued the escalation authority in that fiscal year.

Since we ran out of spending authority, many reimbursement requests were held until the beginning of this current fiscal year. The payment of past year requests caused a significant decrease in the funds available for this fiscal year and the Legislature did not allow escalation of the budget for this year.

We have begun working with the budget office to request that the Legislature approve additional funds for subsidies, loan and grants. If this request is not approved, we will shortly be out of funds to reimburse recently attended training and future training for this fiscal year. If we continue to train, and pay for this years training out of next years fund, the money won't be there to reimburse the agencies for the next fiscal year's (beginning July 1, 2016) training.

A request for an additional employee and more funds for subsidies, loans and grants have been requested in the budget request for the next fiscal year.

The Board and guests discussed how to advertise courses that may not be reimbursed until next fiscal year. It was decided to wait to the next meeting before taking any action to see if more funds are made available.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Conference Agenda; Request for Approval of APCO Conference; Review Conference Rules and Requirements:

APCO has proposed to hold their conference in Tupelo in April. They submitted their agenda which includes 20 hours of continuing education courses. The staff recommends that the conference be approved allowing 2 credits of 10 hours each for the telecommunicators completing the full conference. Mr. Hennessey made a motion to approve the recommendation and Mrs. Hokamp seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Mrs. Hokamp noted that there have been inquiries from telecommunicators that can only attend one day of the conference. She made a motion for APCO to be able to charge \$150.00 to a telecommunicator completing an eight hour day plus \$13.00 for lunch. Mr. Hennessey seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Presentation of New Courses; Request for Approval: Incident Dispatcher-Tactical (Staff); Spanish for Dispatchers/911 Call Centers (Staff); Fire Communications Course (Trebja Rodgers):

The staff presented an out of state course from First Contact 911, LLC of California. The course is "Incident Dispatcher (Tactical), 16 hours in length. This course was taught about 5 years ago. Madison P.D. hosted the course. Madison has requested the approval of the course and is wanting to host the course again. The focus of the course will primarily be to provide a 911 Telecommunicator with the specialized skills in documentation that a Tactical Incident Dispatcher will need when working with a Tactical Incident Commander, Hostage Negotiation Team or the Tactical Operations Unit. The course was well accepted the first time it was taught. Chief Martin made a motion to approve this course and Chief Buford seconded the motion. The motion was amended by Mr. Adcox to approve the course for a three year period. Mrs. Hokamp seconded the amendment. The motion and amendment were approved without opposition.

The staff presented an out of state course from the Southern District U.S. Attorney's Office. This Office hosts numerous courses for law enforcement throughout the state. The course is "Spanish for Dispatchers and 911 Personnel", 16 hours in length. An out of state company, Spanish Language Consultants, will be presenting this course. The cost for the course is \$125.00 which includes lunch each day and a comprehensive training book. This course will be held at the Bass Pro Shop in Pearl on March 8 - 9. Attendees will be taught how to understand how to immediately ascertain the type of call at the initial onset. Chief Martin made a motion to approve this course for a three year period and Mr. Adcox seconded the motion and it was approved without opposition.

The Board agreed that both of these courses from out of state vendors would not involve the 100 mile rule.

Mrs. Trebia Rodgers with the Southern Training Institute presented her course, "Fire Communications" for approval. This is an 8 hours course. Mr. Bell and Chief Martin has reviewed the material and were very pleased with the material, but did make some recommendations. Mrs. Rodgers agreed to make changes to the material based on their recommendations. Mr. Adcox made a motion to approve the course, if she adds a lesson plan and makes the recommended changes. This course will be taught as a pilot program before final approval. Mrs. Hokamp seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Certification Eligibility Hearing - Tabbatha Grant:

The Certification Section of the Board of Emergency Telecommunications Standards and Training reviewed an application for certification that was submitted from the Tate Co. S.O. This application showed that Tabbatha Grant had been hired as a telecommunicator and this agency was requesting that she be certified. The staff determined that based on policy, after a review of the Board Committee, she was not eligible for certification. According to submitted documents, she was in violation of policy because she entered a plea of guilty and was ordered to make payment of a fine for a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude (Embezzlement).

She was advised of this denial and requested a hearing before the Board.

The Chairman addressed Ms. Grant concerning the rules and regulations of the hearing and asked if she understood her rights. She stated that she understood and was ready to proceed with the hearing. Ms. Grant and Mr. Davis were sworn in by the Court Reporter.

Mr. Davis presented the Board with a 10 page document that explained the reason for the denial of her eligibility for certification. This document included court records that showed that she entered a guilty plea to Embezzlement and was order to pay a fine. She received an Order of Non-Adjudication and was placed on probation for 5 years with the condition that if she followed all requirements of the order that the case would be dismissed.

Ms. Grant explained that she worked the register at Wal-Mart and she advised her supervisor that something was wrong with the register and she was told just to continue and finish with the customers in line. She said that she knew that two other employees were not ringing up all purchases, she didn't know if they were doing it on purpose or not. She was later questioned about this situation and was asked about the other employees and she didn't tell on them because she didn't know if they were purposely not ringing up merchandise for people. She believes that Wal-Mart took it out on her and charged her and no other employee. She was told that this would not hurt her job as a telecommunicator. She had nothing further to say other than she has not had the charge expunged because of the cost.

The Board asked Ms. Grant questions, she responded to the questions and finished her statements to the Board.

The Chair entertained a motion. Chief Martin made a motion to go into closed session. Mr. Adcox seconded the motion and it was approved with no opposition. The guests were excused from the room.

In closed session, the chair entertained a motion. Mr. Hennessey made a motion to enter into executive session to consider the allegations and evidence produced during open proceedings. Mrs. Hokamp seconded the motion and it was approved without opposition.

At the conclusion of executive session, the guests were invited back to the meeting. The Chair announced that all member of the Board who were present before deliberations are present now. The Chair entertained a motion. Mr. Hennessey made a motion to come out of executive session, Chief Martin seconded the motion and it was approved without opposition. Chief Martin made a motion to come out of close session, Mr. Hennessey seconded the motion and it passed without opposition. The Chair announced that during closed session, the Board voted unanimously to enter executive session to consider the allegations and evidence produced during open proceedings to consider the possible issuance of an appealable order.

The Chair then announced that after deliberations in executive session, the Board voted unanimously to declare that Ms. Grant was eligible for certification.

Presentation by Chuck Tate, Director of Vicksburg/Warren 911 - 100 Mile Rule and Reimbursements:

Mr. Tate stated that he became the Director of Vicksburg/Warren 911 about a year and a half ago. He wanted to address the Board about reimbursement issues, but some of those issues have already been addressed. He mentioned having problems getting enough courses within 100 miles of his agency. The Board recommended that he host courses in Vicksburg and others that spoke about this rule to do the same. With the number of instructors available, there should be no agencies that would have to travel over 100 miles for training. The Board issues no reimbursements for training over the 100 mile rule unless a legitimate reason is presented and travel is approved in advance.

Director's Report:

The staff is reviewing the approved EMD basic courses to be sure their material is current. The staff will reveal these findings at the next meeting. Mr. Davis also reported that in the past 6 months, 160 new telecommunicators have been certified and 126 telecommunicators have been re-certified.

Schedule of Next Meeting Date, Time and Location:

The Board was invited to the APCO Conference in April to hold the next meeting. The Board agreed that the next meeting would be on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. on April 19th at the Conference in Tupelo. Mrs. Hokamp made a motion to approve \$109.00 per night as the hotel conference rate. Chief Martin seconded the motion and it passed without opposition.

Adjournment:

Chief Martin made a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Mr. Hennessey. The motion passed without opposition at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Director, Office of Standards and Training