

LEA COUNTY COMMUNICATION AUTHORITY

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Lea County Event Center, Front Meeting Room, 5101 Lovington Highway, Hobbs, NM

Call to Order

Chairman Mike Gallagher called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Members present were Hobbs Police Chief John Ortolano, Hobbs Deputy Police Chief August Fons, Lea County Manager Mike Gallagher, Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton, Lea County Emergency Management Director Lorenzo Velasquez, Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer and Acting City Manager/Hobbs Fire Chief Manny Gomez.

Also present was Ms. Angela Martinez, Lea County Communication Authority (LCCA) Director.

ITEM01: Action Items

Consideration of Approval of March 10, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on March 10, 2021. The motion was seconded by Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer. The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Gallagher yes, Helton yes, Fons yes, Velasquez yes, Shearer yes, Gomez yes. The motion carried.

ITEM02: Comments

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Board

Lea County Emergency Manager Lorenzo Velasquez stated a large shelter has been placed at the Teen Center. He stated there are now two shelters in place at the Teen Center.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Manny Gomez thanked Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez for his work on placing the shelter at the Teen Center.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated the City of Hobbs will be issuing a proclamation for Telecommunications Week and will be organizing a meal in appreciation of the Hobbs Fire Department and the Hobbs Police Department.

Hobbs Police Chief John Ortolano and Hobbs Deputy Police Chief August Fons expressed their appreciation to the Lea County Communications Authority (LCCA) in observance of Telecommunications Week.

Lea County Sheriff Helton wished congratulations to the staff at LCCA for Telecommunications Week.

Lea County Sheriff Helton thanked Ms. Meghan Mooney, City of Hobbs Communications Director, for her assistance in setting up a Media Room for the Lea County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). He stated with this Media Room, LCSO will have a stationary location to record messages for social media and other broadcasts.

Lea County Sheriff Helton also gave kudos to Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez and his crews for the work they do in keeping Lea County clean and beautiful.

Lea County Manager Gallagher encouraged everyone to keep up the good work. He stated dispatch is doing great. He further stated LCCA has come a long way since its inception. He added that LCCA Director Angela Martinez is only the third director for LCCA.

ITEM03: Discussion Items

Discussion of Directors Report

LCCA Director Angela Martinez reviewed the Call Volume Report and stated the total 9-1-1 calls were 3,137 in the month of March, 2021. She further stated there were 8,813 administrative calls, for the total calls of 11,950 for the month of March, 2021.

LCCA Director Martinez stated there are currently five positions open at LCCA and three dispatchers in training. She stated there were two positions filled but the applicants did not complete the hiring process.

In response to an inquiry from Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez, LCCA Director Martinez stated in March, 2020, there were three open positions. These positions became a part of the hiring freeze. She explained that two more positions opened up as a result of COVID-19, leaving LCCA short staffed by five.

To answer a question from Lea County Sheriff Helton, LCCA Director Martinez stated applicants are not interested in working in shifts.

Lea County Manager Gallagher suggested the unpredictable school schedules might also be a factor in hiring new employees to work on shifts.

A discussion was held regarding schedules, possible incentives and shifts for the dispatchers and how many hours per week the dispatchers are allowed to work. LCCA Director Martinez stated the pay to start non-certified dispatchers in Carlsbad, New Mexico, is approximately \$22 per hour compared to \$16 per hour at LCCA for non-certified dispatchers.

LCCA Director Martinez stated she was contacted by Senator David Gallegos to speak as an expert witness for Senate Bill 403 (SB403) which proposes to reclassify dispatchers with the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). She further stated SB403 is currently in the Finance Committee. She added she is unsure of the final outcome but this is the furthest the bill has gone towards being ratified.

Lea County Sheriff Helton stated SB403 looks promising. He suggested speaking with New Mexico Representative Randall Pettigrew and possibly introducing the reclassification bill to both the New Mexico House of Representatives and the New Mexico Senate in the same session. He further stated with the support of the New Mexico Sheriffs and the Western States Sheriff's Association, the bill could go further towards reclassifying dispatchers with PERA to be included in the Public Safety category.

Lea County Manager Gallagher stated SB403 does not have the full support from the County Managers Affiliate. He explained some of the counties have concerns for how the passing of SB403 will affect Union employees.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez suggested further education of the county managers and elected officials to explain SB403 and how it would affect the dispatchers.

A brief discussion was held on how SB403 would affect the hiring of new dispatchers and the possibility of a mass exodus of seasoned employees if they are reclassified to a degree that they have a better pension through PERA.

LCCA Director Martinez reminded the Board of the barbeque on April 17, 2021, from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at LCCA to celebrate Telecommunications Week.

ITEM04: Other Business

Set Next Meeting(s)

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, at the Lea County Event Center, Front Meeting Room.

Adjourn

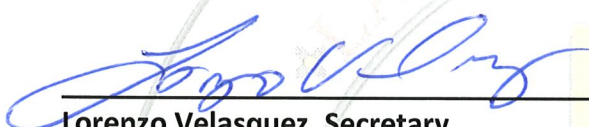
Lea County Sheriff Helton moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 a.m. The motion was seconded Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez. The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Gallagher yes, Fons yes, Helton yes, Velasquez yes, Shearer yes, Gomez yes. The motion carried.

Lea County Communication Authority

Present Via Public Service

Mike Gallagher, Chair
Lea County Manager

Sheriff Corey Helton, Member
Lea County Sheriff's Office


Lorenzo Velasquez, Secretary
Lea County Emergency Manager


Deputy Chief August Fons, Member
Hobbs Police Department


Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer, Vice Chair
Hobbs Fire Department

Manny Gomez, Hobbs Fire Chief, Member
City of Hobbs Acting City Manager


Chief John Ortolano, Board Member
City of Hobbs Police Department