

## LEA COUNTY COMMUNICATION AUTHORITY

### Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

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

#### Call to Order

Vice Chairman Kevin Shearer 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 (*via telephone*), Lea County Emergency Management Director Lorenzo Velasquez (*via telephone*), Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer, Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton and Acting City Manager/Hobbs Fire Chief Manny Gomez.

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

#### ITEM01:

##### Action Items

##### Consideration of Approval of February 17, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Acting City Manager/Hobbs Fire Chief Manny Gomez moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 17, 2021. The motion was seconded by Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton. The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Fons yes, Gallagher yes, Helton 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 Lea County Communication Authority Board Members

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated the wind speeds over the next few days are expected to be 35-45 mph and with temperatures above 70 degrees, the chances of wild fires are high. He cautioned everyone to have their teams ready in the event there are wild fires.

Lea County Emergency Management Director Lorenzo Velasquez stated he is currently in Jal, New Mexico, with Nor Lea Hospital to administer COVID-19

vaccinations. He further stated once they have administered vaccines in Jal, they will move to Eunice, New Mexico, and then they will move the mobile vaccine site to Lovington, New Mexico. He thanked everyone for their cooperation in administering the COVID-19 vaccines.

Lea County Manager Mike Gallagher thanked Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez and Nor Lea Hospital for their hard work.

**ITEM03: Discussion Items**

**Discussion of Directors Report**

LCCA Director Angela Martinez briefly reviewed the Call Volume Report and stated the total 9-1-1 calls were 2,584 in the month of February, 2021. She further stated there were 17,864 administrative calls, for the total calls of 20,448 for the month of February, 2021. She stated there are currently six vacant positions at LCCA, one position is in the process of being filled and three dispatchers are in training.

LCCA Director Martinez stated periodically she tests the dispatchers and supervisors on various emergency responses to make sure everyone knows the proper procedures. After the most recent test, the dispatchers and supervisors used those emergency responses due to a missing person, a major grass fire, an issue in Lovington requiring emergency services, and an outstanding warrant for Hobbs being served in Oklahoma, all of which happened during the same afternoon. She commended the dispatchers and thanked all of the emergency services departments for working together. LCCA Director Martinez stated there were a few new officers at Hobbs Police Department who were not aware of the Code Red process and called LCCA during these incidents. She further stated she could assist in getting information to the new officers regarding the types of assistance offered by LCCA.

LCCA Director Martinez stated LCCA is still receiving calls for Hobbs Police Department (HPD) Online Reporting issues. She further stated she is not sure if citizens are having issues reporting or if they would rather handle the issues with a live person. She added, in order to be able to assist the citizens, LCCA dispatchers have actually walked through the online process and it seems to be working.

Hobbs Police Chief John Ortolano stated the HPD Online Reporting program does seem to be working; however, as with any new program there is a learning period and it will take at least 90 days for the idea of submitting reports online to catch on. It could be as long as six months before citizens are regularly using the HPD Online Reporting program.

LCCA Director Martinez agreed with Hobbs Police Chief Ortolano and stated she is expecting the same kind of learning period with the LCCA Auto-Attendant. She further stated the down payment for the Auto-Attendant has been paid and LCCA has created a telephone tree and is in the process of testing the system. She added once Auto-Attendant is ready to go live, they will use social media to distribute information to the public.

LCCA Director Martinez stated Telecommunications Week is April 11-17, 2021. She stated due to COVID-19, LCCA will not be hosting an appreciation barbecue this year but there are events scheduled each day that week to show appreciation to the dispatchers at LCCA.

LCCA Director Martinez stated the LCCA Preliminary Budget for FY 2022 will be presented to the Lea County Commission for approval on March 18, 2021. She added the budget numbers are the same as discussed at the last LCCA meeting.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez expressed his appreciation to LCCA Director Martinez for her guidance and forethought in making sure the dispatchers know how to correctly respond to multiple emergency situations.

In response to Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez' question, LCCA Director Martinez stated Code Red was last promoted on social media in 2020 when COVID-19 began to spread. She further stated there are approximately 39,000 citizens signed up to receive emergency alerts via text message, phone call and email. She added during the missing person alert, there were almost 12,000 calls, texts and emails sent before the missing person was located. LCCA Director Martinez stated she will make sure the information to sign up for Code Red is posted to social media again.

#### **Discussion of Crises Management**

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated the 2020 pandemic and resulting changes in how citizens are served has given organizations the opportunity to identify what changes to the way citizens are assisted have worked and what changes have not worked. He further stated this also gives organizations the opportunity to improve collaborations with other departments and organizations.

Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton agreed and stated there may be procedures already in place that just have not been written into a policy yet.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez has already begun discussing an All Hazard Response Guide. He further stated as leaders of the public safety organizations, the Board should be the ones leading this policy. He added he has asked the City of Hobbs department heads to analyze the changes made to the way citizens are assisted and determine whether the changes are working. Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated it is time to bring everyone's thoughts together and show the public that all of the organizations are unified.

Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez stated there is a current Emergency Operations Plan in use. He further stated the Emergency Operations Plan is a living document meaning it constantly changes with every new emergency. He added the Hobbs Fire Department (HFD) currently uses the Emergency Operations Plan.

Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer stated HFD uses Blue Card Command to establish Radio Discipline which is necessary to establish the roles of individuals

and organizations who are working individual scenes. He added HFD goes through training to follow these roles.

Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez stated Blue Card Command is a program established by the Phoenix, Arizona, Fire and Police Departments and used throughout the Country. He further stated the Blue Card Command program requires extensive training. In addition, he stated the Emergency Operations Plan needs to be updated with current information based on events that occurred in 2020.

Lea County Sheriff Helton stated the push to work out a plan for emergencies is reminiscent to the plans pushed out after 9/11. He further stated as time has moved on, the emergency plans formed fall back into what is comfortable.

Hobbs Police Chief Ortolano stated a key part of Radio Discipline is the communication between organizations. He stated it is important for all organizations involved in an emergency to speak the same verbiage so everyone responding to an emergency is clear on the actions and duties.

Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez stated he would email the existing documents for the Emergency Operations Plan to the Board members.

LCCA Director Martinez expressed her appreciation to HFD for their patience as LCCA learns to use Blue Card Command.

**ITEM04: Other Business**

**Set Next Meeting(s)**

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at the Lea County Event Center, Front Meeting Room.


**Adjourn**

Lea County Manager Gallagher moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The motion was seconded by Acting City Manager/Fire Chief Gomez. The vote was recorded as follows: The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Fons yes, Gallagher yes, Helton yes, Velasquez yes, Shearer yes, Gomez yes. The motion carried.

## Lea County Communication Authority

  
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