

LEA COUNTY COMMUNICATION AUTHORITY

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, May 19, 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. Hobbs Police Chief John Ortolano 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 and Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer.

Members absent were Lea County Sheriff Corey Helton 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 April 14, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Hobbs Police Chief John Ortolano moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 14, 2021. The motion was seconded by Lea County Emergency Management Director Lorenzo Velasquez. The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Gallagher yes, Fons yes, Velasquez yes, Shearer yes. The motion carried.

ITEM02: Comments

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Board

Hobbs Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer thanked LCCA Director Martinez and the staff at LCCA for all the work they do. He stated over a three-day period there were six calls involving persons that were already deceased. He further stated the dispatchers at LCCA are the first responders to these calls, and they are the ones coordinating with upset family members. Hobbs

Fire Battalion Chief Kevin Shearer expressed his appreciation to the direction given by dispatch.

Lea County Emergency Manager Lorenzo Velasquez stated he is coordinating a training exercise for June, 2021, which will be a simulated airplane crash at the Lea County Regional Airport.

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 2,994 in the month of April, 2021. She further stated there were 14,345 administrative calls, for the total calls of 17,339 for the month of April, 2021.

LCCA Director Martinez stated there are currently seven positions open at LCCA and two dispatchers in training. She stated she has received seven applications and will begin interviewing soon.

LCCA Director Martinez stated she has been a part of discussions regarding a Health and Behavioral Crisis Hotline known as "988". She explained this hotline, which proposes to go live in 2022, will be available to callers who are having mental crises or are suicidal. She further explained the purpose is to send a counselor to assist the caller instead of a police officer. LCCA Director Martinez stated "988" will have its own dispatch center in Lea County and another in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She further stated "988" expects LCCA dispatchers to evaluate the caller to determine if a call should be transferred to the separate dispatch center for "988".

LCCA Director Martinez stated it has been confirmed that the Public Safety Telecommunications Academy (Academy) has not heard of this program or any training for the dispatchers.

Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez stated as part of the Lea County Health Council, he has heard of the "988" program but only as it pertains to the medical side, not how dispatch or public safety will be involved.

Hobbs Police Chief Ortolano stated the Hobbs Police Department (HPD) and the Hobbs Fire Department (HFD) will be partnering with the Guidance Center of Lea County to launch the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response program. He further stated there will be training for HPD and HFD.

There was a brief discussion regarding the funding of the "988" program, the training and coverage of service for the "988" dispatch center. LCCA Director Martinez stated she hopes to have more information after the meeting scheduled with the dispatch center directors and New Mexico

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) on May 28, 2021. She added she will update the Board with new information.

LCCA Director Martinez stated Academy will begin October 4, 2021, and go through October 27, 2021.

LCCA Director Martinez stated dispatch is working with HPD regarding the Hobbs Animal Adoption Center (HAAC) calls. She further stated Captain Shane Blevins is running the HAAC operations and it seems to be going smoothly. She added dispatch is learning the codes used by HAAC and HAAC understands there is no dedicated dispatcher for their calls.

LCCA Director Martinez stated the Hobbs Senior Center has requested and received their own radio channel. They, too, have no dedicated dispatcher but they have a common emergency key that will allow them to contact LCCA if there is an emergency at the Hobbs Senior Center.

In response to Hobbs Police Chief Ortolano's question, LCCA Director Martinez stated the radio traffic is much better. She stated there are still occasions where the officer does not speak directly into the mic and has to repeat themselves, but the radio traffic has improved.

ITEM04: Other Business

Set Next Meeting(s)

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

Adjourn

Lea County Emergency Manager Velasquez moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. The motion was seconded Hobbs Police Chief Ortolano. The vote was recorded as follows: Ortolano yes, Gallagher yes, Fons yes, Velasquez yes, Shearer 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

DC Fons was present But forgot to Sign 6/9/21 ARM

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