



District 4 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2024 | 5:30 p.m.
Sedgwick County Public Safety Building – 2nd Floor
714 N. Main, Wichita 67203

Board Members in Attendance: Alison Despard, Donald Gering, Jr., Susanne Hayes, Ariel Rodriguez, Helen Rolfe, Chris Stingo, Jordan Walker

County Representatives: Commissioner Ryan Baty

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Call to Order – Commissioner Ryan Baty
 - i. Commissioner Ryan Baty called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and took roll.
- b. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Ryan Baty
 - i. Board voted to approve the minutes

2. PUBLIC AGENDA

- a. The public agenda allows members of the public to address the District 4 Citizens Advisory Board.
 - i. None

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. 911 Services and Tour of Emergency Communications – Elora Forshee, Director of Emergency Communications
 - i. Commissioner Baty introduced Elora Forshee who has 20 years of experience in 911
 - ii. Elora Forshee went over the mission statement for Emergency Communications
 - iii. Discussed the history of 911 since it was incorporated in 1977
 1. Sedgwick County 911 is the largest in the state with 100 employees
 - iv. In 2022, 911 answered a little 570,000 calls, had 4,427 text sessions, 7.4 million radio transmissions
 1. Can text 911 the same way you would call
 2. Call when you can, text when you can't
 3. Calls and texts went up in 2023 but radio transmission went down
 - v. 76% of calls are for Law Enforcement, 13% for Fire and Fire First Responder, 11% for EMS
 - vi. Where we've been:
 1. Discussed the remodel and expansion of the 911 office and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system update
 - a. Commissioner Baty asked, where is the backup site?
 - b. Elora Forshee answered, WSU.
 2. Employee Advisory Board helps determine department policy to help with retention
 3. Instituted an automatic system to call back abandoned calls or open line cell phones
 4. Embedded a COMCARE Mental Health Worker in dispatch
 5. 911 Technology Coordinator brought onto the team

- vii. Where we are going:
 - 1. Retention is still huge
 - 2. Employee Safety
 - 3. Employee Pay
 - 4. Continuing Education, adding an Employee Development Coordinator
 - 5. Separating out Call Takers and Dispatchers
 - 6. Specialized Dispatching, hoping to launch this year
 - 7. Citizens Advisory Board being created
 - 8. Accreditation
 - 9. Increase Technology, how do we leverage new technology?
 - a. Commissioner Baty asked, what is the roll of AI in 911?
 - b. Elora Forshee stated, it is evolving quickly, very useful in training to create scenarios. Ability for AI to recognize that multiple calls may be related. Ability to create transcripts form 911 calls. There is a lot coming in public safety.
- viii. Over view of how the 911 system works
- ix. Over view of the training process – WSU is where the Training Academy takes place
 - 1. 8 weeks in academy, 8 weeks on the job
- x. Commissioner Baty asked, what information are they (the call takers/dispatchers) being provided via GPS?
 - 1. Elora Forshee answered, what we are looking for is a Phase 2 location from the cell phone, a good ping will allow to get an address
 - 2. Jordan LaMunyon asked, how does the right to privacy tracking opt out services affect the ability of 911 to track?
 - 3. Elora Forshee answered, when you call 911 you open up yourself to the ability to track you. If we don't get it from your phone, we have call the cell phone provider and attest that you called 911 directly. Have to attest there is a threat of life.
- xi. Over view of different certifications call takers have so they can give instructions to callers
- xii. Questions
 - 1. Chris Stingo asked, when you dispatch, do you find any challenges with having resources available?
 - a. Elora Forshee answered, not so much on the Fire side, EMS is rare to have resource challenges, Law Enforcement is the biggest challenge but they are biggest user of the system
 - 2. Jeff Blubaugh (member of the public) stated, I applaud you on the 92% employment level, what did it look like when you were only at 62%? Lots of over time?
 - a. Elora Forshee answered, yes, lots of overtime and staff stepping in to take on shifts. Quality Improvement Department helps make sure everything is working correctly
 - b. Jeff Blubaugh asked, what kind of estimate of average overtime hours would there have been at the 62%?
 - c. Elora Forshee answered, staff cannot work more than 12 hours a day and are required to take at least 1 day off a week. The most would be about 16 hours a week of overtime.
 - d. Commissioner Baty commented, they have a mental health room to decompress because their 12 hour day is not the same as most others
 - e. Jeff Blubaugh asked, where are we at with the OT today?
 - f. Elora Forshee answered, I would have to look at the numbers but we are much better. We do create overtime for training.
 - g. Elora Forshee commented, our call takers experience the worst. We have EMPAC and the mental health room, a peer support team, everything we can to help employees deal with everything.

3. Commissioner Baty commented, we want the government to focus on core services. 911 is a core services, but there are other services that are important quality of life services. But property taxes are high to the point of hurting people. How do you advice that we handle this?
 - a. Alison Despard commented, the reality is that not just anybody can walk into that room and do that job. They deserve to be paid more.
 - b. Jordan LaMunyon commented, you can't drastically cut quality of life without it leading to situations that require 911. What is our greatest need? Continuing education, enhanced recognition.
 - c. Commissioner Baty, let me ask the question another way, would you support a property tax increase to fund all the quality of life things at their currently levels in order to give public safety more?
 - i. Jordan LaMunyon stated, that has more of a negative effect, need to find another way to fund everything.
 - ii. Donald Gering, Jr. stated, I think under the core services, we need to find a way to reduce the calls to reduce costs. How do we fund things that work to reduce costs within the system.
 - iii. Ariel Rodriguez stated, look at what are other communities doing
 - d. Commissioner Baty stated, we're too dependent on property taxes. Those should be funding our core services
 - e. Chris Stingo stated, I agree 100% that core competencies need to be funded. There are alternate ways to fund non-core competencies through businesses, sales tax, other ways to generate revenue.
4. Commissioner Baty stated, cost of government is increasing, not because of frivolous spending, but because of compensation to stabilize public safety departments. Can we find savings in functional consolidation with departments like Parks and Rec or the Arts? We need to have a broad conversation on the public safety model here.

4. BOARD AGENDA

- a. The board took a tour of 911 in lieu of a Board Agenda.

5. ADJOURNMENT

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

*The next Citizens Advisory Board Meeting will be **Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**, at Sedgwick County 6th Floor Large Conference Room - 100 N. Broadway, Ste. 630, Wichita.*