

911 Board continues to work on duties, resolution

By Karen Krien

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The county 911 Dispatch Board members were still trying to figure out what their duties as a board were when then met on Thursday, May 15. In the end, there was still no decision but it appeared that they would be an advisory board only, trying to solve problems that might come up in dispatch.

The city had rejected the first resolution prepared by the county attorney. The city attorney had re-written another and the board went through it, taking out different sentences and re-wording some. The resolution will be corrected and addressed again.

Andy Beikman, chairman and representative for the commissioners, said he felt that the board should be an advisory board only. The director, Carol Gamblin, is hired by the commissioners as are the dispatchers. Mrs. Gamblin should prepare the budget and present it to the commissioners. This omits any need for a 911 board financial committee.

Mrs. Gamblin also does the hiring and, again, since the commissioners will pay the salary, they will approve any new dispatcher. Natalie Knodel, board member, felt that the board should at least be informed if there is a new dispatcher and who the person is.

Mrs. Gamblin said she is working on policies and procedures for the board. Chrissy Conger, Sherman County 911 Dispatch director, was present and said policies and procedures are constantly changing.

She added that the board in Sherman County resolves any issues that come up in the dispatch office. She prepares the 911 budget and presents it to the commissioners, and, also does the hiring and firing.

Mrs. Conger said that the board is good to have in case there are problems. She recommended that Mrs. Gamblin document everything.

Key to courthouse

Jim Walters, city police officer, ask about a key for the courthouse so they can enter after hours. Mr. Beikman said this matter had been addressed at the commissioners' meeting earlier that day. Their decision had been to not give the police department a key because no one is allowed in the dispatch office and, the sheriff's office is adjoining the dispatch office and often papers are left on the desks.

Mrs. Knodel, who also represents the St. Francis City Council, did not think it was right that the officer was not allowed in the dispatch room.

The matter was brought up about the sheriff's office and the dispatch office being as "one" office. It was

again made clear that the offices are two separate spaces. The dispatch office was put in that location (west of the sheriff's office) because there was no other place to put it. There is a door which closes the dispatch room off from the sheriff's office.

Someone asked that didn't the sheriff's officers stand at the door and visit with the dispatcher? Mrs. Gamblin said, "not to her knowledge — dispatchers were not to do that."

Back to the matter of a key, Officer Walters said, you mean, if I get a domestic call at 2 a.m., I can't come listen (to the rerun of the call)?

Mrs. Gamblin said that dispatchers are not allowed to give out that information — that it needs to be obtained with a subpoena because it is considered confidential information. Officer Walters said he disagreed.

Mrs. Gamblin said that the dispatcher is to give the officer all information when they are called.

Mrs. Conger said she did give that information to officers when they were asked.

Mrs. Gamblin said a lawyer said she was not supposed to do that — that she would be liable as it is

confidential information.

No key was given.

Tornado siren

Mrs. Knodel said J.R. Landenberger, St. Francis city superintendent, had ordered the equipment for the tornado siren and it should be installed no later than Friday (the day after the meeting).

Radio failure

Janelle Bowers, emergency medical service director, asked the sheriff if he was able to use his radio when in the basement of the hospital. She had reported at the last meeting that she and the other technicians

were unable to. He said he was able to and wondered if her radio was working properly.

They talked about a base system for the hospital. It was noted that, at one time, the hospital had a base system but no one knew what had happened to it. Mrs. Bowers will talk to the hospital administrator about it.

Weather radio

Mrs. Knodel asked Gary Rogers, emergency manager, if people are able to receive the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) station. Mr. Rogers

said no, that St. Francis is in a low spot but plans to install a transmitter in the very near future.

Volunteer assistance

George Harper, board member and St. Francis Fire Chief, said the firemen are volunteer and almost all have jobs that they leave when they are called. He said they are always willing to help whenever needed but, he asked that the emergency medical technicians need help, they call the law enforcement to assist. If they are unable to help, then call the firemen. Mrs. Bowers said she would keep this in mind.

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