

**SALINE COUNTY 911 BOARD MEETING  
DRAFT MINUTES**

**February 29, 2024**

The Saline County 911 Board met at the OEM Building on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 9 a.m.

**Board Members Present:**

Benton Mayor Tom Farmer  
Benton Fire Chief Russ Evans  
Bryant Police Chief Carl Minden  
Bryant Fire Chief JP Jordan  
Bryant Interim Mayor Rhonda Sanders  
Saline County OEM Director Jerry Cohen  
Saline County OEM Fire Service Coordinator Stuart Duke  
Pafford Ambulance Operations Manager David Chreene  
Benton Police Chief Scotty Hodges

**Board Member Absent:**

Saline County Judge Matt Brumley  
Saline County Sheriff Rodney Wright

**Others attending meeting:**

Communications Manager Staci Winberry, Assistant Communications Manager Deanne Owen, Bryant Police Asst Chief JW Plouch, Bryant Fire Asst Chief Brandon Futch, Bryant Fire David Slack, East End Fire Chief Darrell Fagan, Pafford Ambulance John Gray, Pafford Ambulance Director of Communications Joshua Whisenhunt, Pafford Ambulance Assistant Director of Communications Crystal Gray, Dispatcher Keisha Jewitt

The Saline County 911 Board meeting was called to order by Saline County OEM Director Jerry Cohen at 9:00 a.m.

Saline County OEM Director Jerry Cohen presented the minutes to the board from the last meeting on February 1, 2024. A motion was made to approve the minutes by Bryant Fire Chief JP Jordan and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Pafford Ambulance Operations Manager David Chreene. Minutes approved.

This will be Bryant Fire Chief JP Jordan's last meeting on the 911 board. The board would like to congratulate Chief Jordan on his retirement. Bryant Fire Asst Chief Brandon Futch has been named the new Bryant Fire Chief which will take effect on March 1, 2024. Congratulation to Chief Brandon Futch on his promotion.

Consolidation Update: Communications Manager Staci Winberry gave an update on the consolidation of Bryant dispatch with Saline County dispatch. Staci contacted Eric Stricklin with ACIC, he will switch the Bryant ORI over starting next week. AT&T is also ready for the cut over. The switch over from Bryant to Saline County is scheduled to take place next Monday, March 5, 2024 at 10:00 am. The only things still needing to be done is to finish up Spillman with the live CAD, which they are working on now and the cameras from Bryant PD. Everything else should be ready to go.

Combiner Update: Saline County OEM Director Jerry Cohen gave an update on the combiner. We thought we were going to have a problem and a possible delay but the combiner that was needed to be installed for the Bryant radios is in port somewhere and may be the end of March before it gets here. We were able to identify 4 talk groups that we normally don't use very much in communications. We changed

those radios in dispatch, 2 radios for police department and 2 for fire department. This was completed last week. Bryant fire test has been done every morning and everything is testing ok. Bryant will have a dispatcher in the communications room the 1<sup>st</sup> week around the clock to help make sure everything goes smooth. Just waiting on the combiner to be delivered and we will get the 8 radios put in as soon as possible so the switch over will be complete.

AWIN update: Saline County is installing 2 new towers. OEM Director stated that the property lease is about to be signed in Salem. Salem tower will be located on Hwy 298 just before Hwy 9. East End is ready to go and hopefully the construction will start within the next month. It is located behind the East End fire department. We do have an issue with the AWIN tower located outside the OEM building. It does not meet the weight ratings to be able to install the extra microwave units on. The county is currently working with Motorola on a remediation to that. It is in the base plate in the 1<sup>st</sup> section of the tower along with the bolts in the ground that hold the tower up. The tower is approximately 175 ft tall. We need 130 ft for the top dish and 120 ft for the other dish. This will be the link from Salem to OEM, OEM to Magnet, Magnet to Bauxite site and state police headquarters. The site from Salem gets their signal from Lake Winona tower. Once this is complete, it should help Saline County a lot and everyone will benefit from it.

EMS Service: Pafford Ambulance service came to the county wanting to discuss them taking over their dispatch with a one button transfer to the dispatch center in Hope, AR. This was brought before the Saline County Intergovernmental Council a few weeks ago. They voted to go with the change. It will now be up to the 911 board whether or not to accept it. Pafford Director of Communications Josh Whisenhunt spoke to the board about Pafford dispatching their own ambulances. He introduced Pafford's Assistant Director of Communications Crystal Gray, together they will be available to answer or help out in any situation involving MEDCOMM Communications Center. Mr. Whisenhunt presented the 911 board a packet of information about their center, what is available at their center, training to their employees and how they would be able to handle situations with that one button transfer to the center in Hope, AR. All the equipment that is located in the Saline County dispatch center will remain in place. If Saline County should have to dispatch Pafford's ambulances due to emergency situations they would still be able to do so. With Pafford dispatching their own units, it should decrease the work load for Saline County dispatchers. A motion was made by Bryant Police Chief Carl Minden to have Pafford ambulances be dispatched by their dispatch center (MEDCOMM) located in Hope, AR. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bryant Mayor Rhonda Sanders. Motion carried. The switch over will take place on March 1, 2024 at 8:00 am.

Bryant Mayor Rhonda Sanders stated that a press release was done yesterday with one of the news stations about the consolidation between City of Bryant and Saline County. The 911 board would like to say thank you to Mayor Sanders for working so hard to make the consolidation work between the City of Bryant and Saline County. This should be Mayor Sanders's last meeting on the 911 board before the new Bryant Mayor takes office.

Benton Police Chief made mention that he contacted the 911 dispatch center yesterday or day before with a call about a vehicle stopped on the interstate in the construction area of I-30. He stated that the dispatcher was very nice and did a great job but was advised by the dispatcher that he would have to contact State Police. He would like for the 911 Director Staci Winberry to be aware of this and let the dispatchers know that the dispatcher should transfer the call to State Police instead of the caller to hang up, find a number, then to contact State Police direct. If it is within the City of Benton and there is a delay with a state police unit immediately dispatch a City of Benton unit to the scene to help with traffic flow to keep the person in the vehicle from getting hit. Bryant Police Chief Carl Minden also agreed with this for the City of Bryant. Director Winberry will make the dispatchers aware of this.

A motion was made to adjourn by Bryant Police Chief Carl Minden and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Saline County OEM Fire Service Coordinator Stuart Duke. Meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.