



# Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network

January 8, 2021

**Subject: Requesting Support of Legislation for the Enhanced Structure of the GHC 9-1-1 System**

Dear Mayor Russell Herron,

On behalf of the Board of Managers of the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Communication Network (GHC 9-1-1), we respectfully ask for your support of our effort to continue to enhance our 9-1-1 system. Attached is a draft resolution for your city to consider adopting. If you choose to adopt the resolution we encourage you to send it to the members that represent your city in the Texas Legislature and a copy to us. We plan to ask the Texas Legislature to allow GHC 9-1-1's Board of Managers to set the 9-1-1 wireless fee in the same manner as the Board currently sets the wireline fee—as part of the annual budget.

When established in 1983, the mission of GHC 9-1-1 was to implement and administer 9-1-1 emergency service—emergency call delivery—for all cities wholly or partially within Harris County and for the unincorporated area of the county. With the enactment of SB 621 by the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature, GHC 9-1-1's territory was expanded to include all of Fort Bend County. Today, GHC 9-1-1 administers service for 49 cities, two counties, and over 150 police, fire, and emergency medical agencies. There are 39 fully equipped 9-1-1 answering points within GHC 9-1-1's service area.

The 9-1-1 system in Texas is funded by emergency service fees assessed on wireline and wireless services. The wireline fee is set locally by the boards of the local 9-1-1 jurisdictions and by the Commission on State Emergency Communications for those areas in the state's system. The wireless fee of \$0.50 was set by the Legislature in 1997 and is one of the nation's lowest fees. Over the past 23 years, it is essential to note that wireline calls have plummeted, and wireless calls account for approximately 90% of the total annual 9-1-1 call volume in Texas.

As telecommunications technology continues to change rapidly, the 9-1-1 communications community constantly is faced with the challenge of keeping up with current advancements to enable users to access 9-1-1 with a fee adopted more than two decades ago. Just as our Board responsibly sets the rate for the fee charged on wireline phones, we believe it is time we should be allowed to do the same for wireless.

As Chairman of the Board of Managers and Executive Director, we stand committed to continue providing the most advanced, state-of-the-art 9-1-1 emergency call network to your constituents in Harris County and we urge you to support our legislative effort. We are available to discuss this issue or any other as it relates to 9-1-1 emergency communication.

Sincerely,

Russell Rau  
Chairman

Lavergne Schwender  
Executive Director