



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 21, 2024
COMBINED BOARD AND BOARD COMMITTEES MEETING

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) held a public Combined Board and Committees meeting on Wednesday, August 21, 2024, in person and via Webex at 9:00 AM MST at the University of Utah’s Department of Public Safety in Salt Lake City, Utah. A video recording and transcript of the meeting, as well as the archived presentation, are available on the FirstNet Authority website: [FirstNet.gov](https://www.FirstNet.gov).

Board Chair Richard Carrizzo welcomed everyone and during this meeting, the Board discussed the proposed resolutions for network coverage enhancement and received updates from the Public Safety Advisory, Finance and Investment, Advocacy, and Programs and Future Planning committees.

Roll Call

Richard Carrizzo (“Chair”), Billy Bob Brown Jr., Joe Carlile, Brian Crawford, Alexandra Fernández Navarro, Kristin Graziano, Billy Hewes, Peter Koutoujian, Sean McDevitt, Warren Mickens, Sylvia Moir, Jocelyn Moore, and Paul Patrick participated.¹ A quorum was present for the Combined Board and Committees meeting.

Conflicts Statement and Reminder

Prior to participating in the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting, Board Secretary, Jennifer Watts, sent Board members the meeting agenda and Conflict of Interest guidance provided by the Ethics Law and Program Division of the Department of Commerce Office of General Counsel that applies to all Board members. All Board members responded prior to the meeting that they did not need to recuse themselves from participation in any portion of the meeting, therefore indicating no conflicts of interest, and the meeting proceeded.

Votes Taken

Prior to proceeding with the business of the day, Chair Carrizzo requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2024, Combined Board and Board Committees Meeting. Kristen Graziano made the motion, Peter Koutoujian seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes and to make them available to the public at the end of the meeting.

The Finance and Investment Committee voted to approve Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 37 – Recommendations on Coverage Enhancements.

¹ Billy Bob Brown, Jr., Richard Carrizzo, Renee Gordon, Warren Mickens and Jocelyn Moore attended virtually.

- Billy Hewes motioned to approve Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 37 – Recommendations on Coverage Enhancements, Joe Carlile seconded, and the Finance and Investment Committee unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

The Board voted to approve Resolution 119 – Network Coverage Enhancement.

- Paul Patrick motioned to approve Board Resolution 119 – Network Coverage Enhancement, Alexandra Fernández Navarro seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

Finance and Investment Committee Update

Committee Chair Brian Crawford reported that through July of FY 2024, the FirstNet Authority obligated a cumulative total of \$76.6 million and is tracking well within forecasted parameters of the FY 2024 Operational Budget.

Chair Crawford noted that early in 2024, the Board announced a series of strategic investments and technology upgrades starting this year to, over time, transition the FirstNet Network's Band 14 spectrum to 5G technology, upgrade its dedicated fleet of deployables and enhance mission critical services over the network. The Finance and Investment Committee members seek to unlock further and future benefits to public safety nationwide through additional Band 14 coverage enhancement investments that reflect public safety factors and network considerations as well as strategically maximize dollars and the impact on operations with the proposal of Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 37 – Recommendations on Coverage Enhancements.

Board Chair Carrizzo invited Programs and Future Planning Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore to provide additional comments related to these proposed investment activities. Committee Chair Moore noted that public safety's number one priority is coverage and this investment will build on the Board's previous and significant coverage related investments. The Board views coverage investments and the ability to enhance the network's footprint as a portfolio approach. In addition to the investments proposed today, the portfolio of past investments for public safety include in building coverage options, building out deployable capacity and alternative form factors, 5G priority access for public safety so the network is available wherever and whenever public safety operates, and over time, upgrading the terrestrial tower-based infrastructure and deployables from 4G LGE technology to 5G. The investment framework unveiled today focuses on how to continue to enhance coverage for FirstNet subscribers, including an estimated \$2 billion in coverage investments over the next 10 years, which will largely focus on Tribal, territorial, and rural areas. Additional investments will, over time, enable satellite direct-to-device capability for FirstNet subscribers. The goal is to enhance the experience of public safety wherever and whenever they access the Nation's only dedicated public safety network. All these investments are in addition to the 1,000 new Band 14 enabled sites deploying in 2024 and 2025 as part of the network evolution announcement earlier this year.

Board Chair Carrizzo led the Board in a vote on Board Resolution 119, Network Coverage Enhancement, to approve the material items for reinvestment into the NPSBN that would expand

and enhance coverage to subscribers of the NPSBN and directs management to take all actions necessary to obtain these services and to obligate the necessary funds through Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025.

The Committee members approved Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 37, and the Board approved Board Resolution 119.

PSAC Update

PSAC Chair, Chris Lombard, provided an update on the PSAC noting that while they had not met as a group, members continued to actively participate in special events, association conferences, and even adverse weather situations that required extensive public safety planning and response. There were fires in the western United States and hurricanes along the eastern seaboard; all were supported by public safety and FirstNet partners. Jasper Brunner, the FirstNet Authority's advisor to the PSAC Tribal Advisory Group (TAG), met with newly appointed member, Chairwoman Wendy Slater, from the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians representing Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association. Mr. Brunner also assisted TAG member and Chief of Police, Jess Hall, with the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa during a fiber cut experienced in Redcliffe, Wisconsin. FirstNet Authority staff also met with TAG Chairman Jared Godfrey earlier this month in Anchorage. For continued engagements, many of the PSAC associations, including TAG associations, will have their annual conferences coming up this fall. The PSAC is looking forward to a legislative update and hearing about push to talk use across the country.

Advocacy Committee Updates

Committee Chair Sylvia Moir reported that during the third quarter of FY 2024, the FirstNet Authority held over 350 public safety engagements and reached over 15,000 stakeholders from across all 56 states and territories. The team hosted 12 public safety tours at the Boulder facility to demonstrate FirstNet capabilities to 51 visitors during the same quarter. Through these engagements, the team gathered public safety's feedback on the use of FirstNet as well as the agency's respective operational needs. Committee Chair Moir noted that public safety's direct feedback is key as we continue network expansion and enhancements. Feedback has been thematically consistent quarter to quarter from those who need, use, and deserve this network, and include demand for high-speed data connectivity for real time situational awareness data for first responders, and the need for real time video to monitor everything from wildfire activity to highways and large events.

Highlighting some of the Advocacy Committee's public safety events, the Committee Chair mentioned involvement in pre-event planning for both of this year's Democratic and Republican National Conventions. FirstNet Authority staff provided on-site planning and support to local, state, and federal public safety stakeholders as part of the network experience engagement program. Onsite event coordination with our FirstNet Partner, AT&T, ensures needs are met to support public safety operations. The team attended this year's Association of Public Safety Communications Officials annual conference where there were 12 track sessions dedicated to FirstNet.

The team also participated in the Fire Rescue International 2024 hosted by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). This conference is an important venue to engage with fire and emergency services leadership across all specialties. The team updated the IAFC Board and presented brief FirstNet updates to more than a dozen committees and sections. Board Chair Carrizzo shared how incredible it has been to watch the changes that have occurred from the Authority's incipient stages to where it is today at IAFC and other conferences.

Chair Moir highlighted one of the FirstNet Authority's most significant engagements, the 5X5 Summit, which it cohosts annually with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Public Safety Communications Research Division. Over 600 attendees representing 28 states and territories plus 13 countries were present at the conference in June in Chicago, Illinois. The packed three-day agenda had 38 breakout sessions and deep-dive discussions providing an unparalleled focus on first responder communications as well as unique opportunities to foster connections among seemingly unlikely collaborators for the greater good. This year's Chief Harlin McEwen Public Safety Broadband Communications Award winner was Chief Chris Lombard. Five Patriot Award winners were recognized for their use of FirstNet to make their community safer. The recipients were Deputy Commissioner Robert Barbera from New York City; Virginia State Coordinator Sean Talmadge; San Bernardino Fire Chief Dan Munsey; Dallas, Georgia, Police Chief Joe Duvall, and Deputy Fire Chief Robert Simmons from Redstone Arsenal. This year, the 5X5 conference was fortunate enough to have the Oakbrook Police Department, Chicago Fire Department, and the Chicago Police Department conduct outdoor technology demonstrations and engage and share their innovative uses of various technologies with the attendees.

Programs and Future Planning Committee Update

Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore reiterated that FirstNet continues to see great momentum and growth. More than 28,500 public safety agencies and organizations across the Nation are FirstNet subscribers. Since June the network grew to over 6.1 million connections that include federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies. In the upcoming years, the Authority is focused on improving coverage, evolving the network to 5G standalone, and giving users innovative ways to improve their situational awareness and operations.

Closing Remarks

Chair Carrizzo thanked the Utah Department of Public Safety at the University of Utah for hosting the meeting, and the public safety representatives from the Washington County Central Fire District, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah County Emergency Management's Office, Utah County Sheriff's Office, and the Salt Lake City Fire Department for their discussion with the Board earlier in the week on communications challenges for public safety in Utah. The Chair remarked that with the Board's actions, the Authority will continue the work in delivering the network the public safety has asked for and needs and will continue to address their top priority, which is more coverage, coverage, coverage, and will continue to focus and plan coverage enhancements on the areas that need it most with a strong focus on territorial, Tribal, and rural plans.

FirstNet Authority Executive Director and CEO Joe Wassel remarked on the importance of the Board's approval of these resolutions as we think about FirstNet 3.0 and moving the network forward for public safety.

He bid a farewell to departing Board members Richard Carrizzo, Brian Crawford, Billy Hewes, Sylvia Moir and Paul Patrick, and emphasized the breadth of experience the Board holds with over 500 years in combined service in public safety and titles like mayor, commissioner, sheriff, undersheriff, firefighter, director, and chief. He thanked them for their service on the FirstNet Authority Board and commented that as they pass the torch to the incoming Board with more work to be done, they've set the stage for the FirstNet Authority to move forward. Mr. Wassel stated that he was excited about working with the Department of Commerce and NTIA to improve public safety communications for the United States.

Chair Carrizzo then opened the floor for departing members to address the full Board with some final words.

Board Adjourned

Chair Carrizzo requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Billy Bob Brown Jr. made the motion, Sean McDevitt seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.