



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION  
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY  
**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 15, 2023, COMBINED BOARD AND COMMITTEES  
MEETING IN PERSON AND VIA WEBEX**

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) held an open public meeting of the FirstNet Authority Board and its Committees. The meeting took place on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, via WebEx and in person at 8:30 AM CST in Austin, Texas. An audio recording and transcript of the meeting, as well as the archived presentation, are available on the FirstNet Authority website: [www.FirstNet.gov](http://www.FirstNet.gov).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Board Chair Stephen Benjamin welcomed all who joined the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting in person in Austin, Texas, and virtually via WebEx.

Board Chair Benjamin shared that the FirstNet Authority’s 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary is approaching and announced that currently there are more than 24,000 public safety agencies using the network and 4.4 million connections.

During the meeting, the Board approved the November 16, 2022, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes, received a Public Safety Testimonial, heard updates from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC), Advocacy Committee, Programs and Future Planning Committee, and Finance and Investment Committee, and heard closing remarks from Board Chair Benjamin and Acting FirstNet Authority CEO Lisa Casias.

### ***Roll Call***

Stephen Benjamin (“Chair”), Richard Carrizzo (“Vice Chair”), Billy Bob Brown, Jr., Robert Brown, Brian Crawford, Alexandra Fernández Navarro, Renee Gordon, Kristin Graziano, Billy Hewes, Peter Koutoujian, Warren Mickens, Sylvia Moir, Jocelyn Moore, and Paul Patrick were in attendance. A quorum was present for the Board and Combined Committees meeting. <sup>1</sup>

### ***Conflicts Statement and Reminder***

Prior to participating in the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting, Board Secretary Janell Smith provided Board members with 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

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Moir participated virtually.

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 Benjamin requested a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2022, Combined Board and Committees Meeting. Robert Brown made the motion. Billy Bob Brown Jr. seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the November 16, 2022, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes to be available to the public at the end of the meeting.

### **MATTERS DISCUSSED**

#### ***Public Safety Testimonial***

Eric Baker, a Systems Analyst with the Texas Department of Public Safety, shared that the State of Texas issued FirstNet devices to all its troopers in 2022. Mr. Baker noted that West Texas is a remote area where network connectivity is challenging. However, through high-end power user equipment, this challenge was improved. The State has been working with the University of Texas at Austin and the FirstNet Authority to develop new deployable assets. Mr. Baker also summarized interests and involvement in location-based services, the team awareness kit, and push-to-talk services.

Vice Chair Richard Carrizzo opened the discussion and asked if anyone had questions for Eric Baker. Sherriff Kristin Graziano, Mayor Billy Hewes, and Sheriff Peter Koutoujian asked questions of Eric Baker.

Sherriff Kristin Graziano asked about law enforcement officers' experience using FirstNet. Mr. Baker responded that officers use FirstNet in several ways including cell phone calls, text messages and running queries from their Mobile Data Terminals (MDT).

Mayor Billy Hewes asked about the future needs of FirstNet. Eric Baker responded that the use of drones, priority and preemption availability while using video, and managing data and analytics are future needs that need to be considered. Mr. Baker expressed the State's desire to work with the FirstNet Authority to find a solution.

Finally, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian asked if Texas is thinking of ways to use or need additional data, or what new data Texas might need to plan for the future. Eric Baker responded that multiple cameras, microphones, and GPS receivers are data points that are not currently leveraged. Therefore, there is a need to analyze data using current devices. Also, there is a need for enhancements in data and technology in wearables so law enforcement officers can maintain focus on threats while having connectivity and the ability to receive critical information.

#### ***PSAC Update***

PSAC Chair Chris Lombard reviewed the November 2022 PSAC meeting, where the PSAC had the opportunity to interact with FirstNet Authority staff and leadership in-person.

Lombard noted the PSAC's Tribal Working Group has also resumed in-person meetings, and the

PSAC continues to meet virtually bi-monthly. The PSAC is working to renew current members or nominate new members for its 2023-2025 term, and updates on new members will be provided at the next Combined Board and Committees Meeting. The next full PSAC gathering will be held June 2023 in San Diego, California.

### ***Advocacy Committee Update***

Committee Chair Richard Carrizzo shared that during the first quarter of FY 2023, there were 306 public safety engagements and the team reached 8,000 stakeholders and collected feedback on operational needs, use cases, and current challenges. The Public Safety Immersive Test Center provided tours to 96 participants, including departmental leadership, local and state public safety, international visitors, and federal partners.

In November 2022, the team travelled to the IAFC Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) Symposium in Florida. During this engagement, there was a tropical storm and power was lost, but the event carried on, and our team's FirstNet phones did not lose operability. The team met with the VCOS Board of Directors to discuss future support, share information, and receive direct feedback on FirstNet.

The team also participated in the winter legislative session at the Major County Sheriffs of America, met with the Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Sheriffs' Association, and leaders from law enforcement associations, and attended the Super Bowl and the Management Gulf Open in Scottsdale, Arizona.

### ***Programs and Future Planning Committee Update***

Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore shared that March 2023 will mark 6 years since the 25-year contract was awarded to AT&T for the construction, deployment, and operation of the FirstNet network. Since November 2022, the number of connections to the FirstNet network has increased by 400,000 to a total of 4.4 million connections. There are now over 560 FirstNet Ready devices available to the 24,000 public safety agencies that are using FirstNet for mission-critical communications. In the coming months, FirstNet Authority is anticipating the completion of FirstNet Band 14 spectrum deployment.

### ***Finance and Investment Committee Update***

Committee Chair Brian Crawford noted that the FirstNet Authority continues to maintain sound financials and presented operational budget execution for the first 4 months of fiscal year 2023. The FirstNet Authority is slightly below the budget forecast, but within reasonable operational variances.

### ***Closing Remarks***

Chair Benjamin thanked the Board and the FirstNet Authority for their work and noted that a candidate has been selected for the FirstNet Authority's CEO position and is completing administrative and security paperwork.

Acting CEO Lisa Casias reiterated that the initial 5-year build-out of Band 14 remains on track for completion in the first part of the calendar year, and the FirstNet Authority will continue to grow and advance the network using public safety feedback and through its investments.

***Board Adjourned***

Chair Benjamin requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Renee Gordon made the motion, Alexandra Fernández Navarro seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.