



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 9, 2022, 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 9, 2022, via WebEx and in-person at 12:30 PM EST / 10:30 AM MST in Albuquerque, New Mexico. An audio recording and transcript of the meeting, as well as the archived presentation, are available on the FirstNet Authority website: www.FirstNet.gov.

INTRODUCTION

In his opening statement, Board Chair Stephen Benjamin welcomed all who virtually joined the first FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting of 2022. He mentioned that the month marked the 10th Anniversary of the federal legislation that created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) to establish a single, interoperable, nationwide network for public safety across America. Before FirstNet, priority and preemption were not available on any network, and first responders had to rely on commercially available products and services for their voice and data needs. The work that has been done to build this network so far has seen incredible growth in innovation, thanks to the FirstNet ecosystem – from apps and devices to new mission-ready innovations like portable cell towers that have been used to support a recent wildfire in Colorado, as well as vertical location services, or Z-Axis Technologies that can help map the 3D location of a firefighter in a building. The goal of the FirstNet Authority Board is to ensure that the network delivers on what public safety demanded and what Congress directed us to do with this network.

The main focus areas of the meeting were the approval of the November 17, 2021 Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes; updates from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Chair Christopher Lombard; updates from the Advocacy, Programs and Future Planning, and Finance and Investment Committees; a Finance and Investment Committee Resolution vote, a Programs and Future Planning Committee Resolution vote, and a Board Resolution vote; and closing remarks from FirstNet Authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Edward Parkinson.

Roll Call

Stephen Benjamin (“Chair”), Richard Carrizzo (“Vice Chair”), Billy Bob Brown Jr., Brian Crawford, Alexandra Fernandez Navarro, Kristin Graziano,¹ Billy Hewes, Karima Holmes,

¹ Kristin Graziano attended this meeting virtually and joined after the roll call.

Darrin Jones, Peter Koutoujian,² Warren Mickens, Sylvia Moir, Jocelyn Moore, Paul Patrick, and Tia Patterson.³ A quorum was present for the Board and Combined Committees meeting.

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 any portion of this 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 17, 2021, Combined Board and Committees Meeting. Alexandra Fernandez Navarro made the motion. Paul Patrick seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the November 17, 2021, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes to be available to the public at the end of the meeting.

The Board voted to approve the following committee resolution(s):

- Darrin Jones motioned to approve Programs and Future Planning Committee Resolution 13 - Committee Charter Revisions. Karima Holmes seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.
- Jocelyn Moore motioned to approve Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 30 – Committee Charter Revisions. Karima Holmes seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.⁴

The Board also voted to approve Resolution 112 – Committee Charter Amendments

- Billy Hewes motioned to approve Board Resolution 112, Committee Charter Amendments. Billy Bob Brown, Jr. seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

PSAC Update

PSAC Chair Christopher Lombard provided updates from the User Working Group; January Webinar; PSAC Membership; and the Tribal Working Group (TWG).

² Peter Koutoujian attended this meeting virtually and joined after the roll call.

³ Tia Patterson attended this meeting virtually.

⁴ This vote was taken incorrectly during the meeting. A non-Finance and Investment Committee member motioned to approve the resolution. The vote was taken again shortly after the formal meeting with Finance and Investment Committee members approving the motion (Jocelyn Moore) and seconding the motion (Karima Holmes).

In December 2021, PSAC *User Working Group* members participated in a Pilot Focus Group that supported the FirstNet Authority Roadmap, Voice Communications, and Secure Information Exchange domains. The goal of this engagement was to understand public safety needs for efficient sign-on, security needs, and the balance of these two opposing items that public safety can successfully operate within. Chair Lombard shared some takeaways from the focus group. Participants did not want an all-or-nothing type of system, but rather an order of operations. Participants emphasized agencies should seek the ability to customize operations to different levels. If required, the user needs to log in with their heads up. If the base authentication does not work, for example, device-to-device type communications or off-network communications, then there should be a fallback form of log-on so that users can still access those resources.

In January 2022, *PSAC members participated in a webinar* where the FirstNet Authority shared updated on several roadmap efforts, including a readout on the Next Generation Public Safety Devices. Many PSAC members participated in focus groups last year as this effort kicked off; the team conducted 35 one-hour focus groups, both virtual and in-person, with nearly 130 different stakeholders. Feedback received included information on how agencies and responders continue to procure commercial devices like iPhones and Samsung smartphones, versus more ruggedized purpose-built devices for use on FirstNet, based on their familiarity. Focus group participants also highlighted the importance of a return on investment, as these smartphone devices are relatively inexpensive compared to their more ruggedized counterparts, and the desire to keep up with the rapid updates and technology seen in the commercial devices. In the next few months, the PSAC will participate in research efforts regarding the FirstNet Central ecosystem and data exchange among mobile applications.

Chair Lombard went on to introduce a *new PSAC member*, Jason Rhodes. Jason serves as the PSAC's National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials (NASEMSO) representative. He currently serves as the NASEMSO Secretary. In addition, he is the Chief of the Rhode Island Department of Health Center for EMS.

In 2022, the *TWG* held two meetings with updates from the PSAC, FirstNet Authority, and TWG members. TWG delegates are supporting the FirstNet Authority in refining and executing the 2022 Tribal Engagement Strategy.

Advocacy Committee Update

Committee Chairman Carrizzo spoke on the visit to the Laguna Pueblo reservation, which occurred one day before the meeting, and how he heard about and observed the firsthand challenges public safety faces in rural environments across this country. During this tour, the FirstNet Authority received a demonstration of some of the unique needs in Indian Country and took a closer look at the FirstNet deployables and other solutions that enable communications during joint responses with state police and county first responders. Chair Carrizzo went on to share examples of how the FirstNet Authority has been successful in collaborating with public safety over the last quarter and some of the greatest impacts.

The organization met with the *Western Fire Chiefs* in November 2021 to discuss the recently complete wildland case study and the impacts to the operations within their agencies. The Western Fire Chief Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) identified topics and additional

considerations that should be addressed as it relates to wildland fires. Some of these examples include developing and expanding education along with training for the COMLs. A follow-up meeting was held in Los Angeles last month to discuss successful updates from the November meeting and the FirstNet Firefighter Location Pilot Program.

The Fairfax County Pilot Program - Fairfax County's Federation to FirstNet provides an example of the benefits of identity federation to public safety agencies in the National Capital Region and beyond. This federation allows Fairfax County public safety users direct access to the data they need using FirstNet Single Sign-On. There will no longer be a need to log into multiple databases with different credentials, but simply sign into FirstNet to allow them access to the data they have been given permission to access. This feature would give additional public safety agencies an affordable and streamlined option for securely accessing their mission-critical data while also promoting the use of FirstNet Central. Fairfax County joins the ranks of Amtrak and others in the use of FirstNet's Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) solution. As we are nearing the finalization of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) partnership, Fairfax County will be the first to utilize their new federation to access CJIS data via the solution. Fairfax County's involvement is leading the way for other agencies and encouraging ICAM adoption due to the widespread influence held by both the FBI/CJIS, and Fairfax County.

The Major County Sheriffs of America Trial Program - The latest technology trial was a success thanks to the partnership of organizations working together to support public safety. These included the Major County Sheriffs of America and their technology committees, five participating member agencies, AT&T, Intrepid Response, and the FirstNet Authority. This law enforcement trial of mission-critical FirstNet technologies showcased Z-Axis, location-based services, Response for FirstNet, and the FirstNet Push-To-Talk program. One of our findings was that all departments found the technologies useful and found opportunities to use them to improve their daily operations. They also identified ways to enhance future versions of the solutions.

Aviation and Maritime - Our Stakeholder Collaboration Team stood up an effort to understand how the FirstNet Authority can enhance public safety's FirstNet experience for aerial and maritime operations. These efforts will further our team and AT&T's understanding of public safety's challenges and requirements, as well as provide additional content for coverage feasibility studies into the future.

Programs and Future Planning Committee Update

Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore yielded to Chief Network and Technology Officer Jeff Bratcher to provide updates on the current state of the program, including new devices and services that are planned to be offered in 2022.

Mr. Bratcher spoke on the recent AT&T announcement that the FirstNet network now has more than 3 million public safety device connections serving more than 19,500 public safety agencies across the nation and the territories. AT&T has added 3,400 new agencies in the last year, and it's experiencing a 55% growth year-after-year. FirstNet continues to grow because of its cost-competitive, coverage-superior service with priority and preemption capabilities built-in, which is on 24/7. Expansion of the public safety dedicated coverage, which is enabled by the FirstNet

Authority's licensed Band 14 spectrum, is proceeding on an aggressive pace, hitting the 95% milestone for contractually required Band 14 spectrum deployment. The FirstNet Authority Program Management team is now in the process of finalizing this initial Band 14 deployment with AT&T to be completed in March 2023.

The network provided service to public safety users while they responded to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and an extremely active western wildfire season, tornadoes, and other extreme weather events. The communication needs for these challenges faced by public safety were supported by the deployment of over 800 FirstNet mobile asset deployments and network restorations in 2021 for both planned and emergency events requested by FirstNet public safety agencies at no cost to them.

As the network and user base expands, the FirstNet Authority is working tirelessly to ensure innovation is also a component in new public safety communication technologies and solutions. We work with AT&T to ensure a thriving and well-established ecosystem of communication devices and applications required by first responders. Our focus is on future investment in and growth of unique deployable coverage solutions that provide differentiated value propositions to public safety users. AT&T continues to evolve the FirstNet Push-To-Talk service, now in its third revision, and AT&T is currently testing a much-anticipated Apple iOS client for the FirstNet Push-To-Talk service.

On the *Devices* update, Mr. Bratcher explained that there are over 370 FirstNet devices in the ecosystem, and 440 on the NIST list of approved devices. More devices are being added monthly, and more than 35 new devices were approved in 2021. FirstNet Ready® means that the device has gone through the FirstNet device approval program, certification by AT&T and acceptance by the FirstNet Authority, has access to Band 14, and is compatible with the FirstNet dedicated core network. High-Power User Equipment has been introduced in a growing wave of public safety relevant Internet-of-Things devices. In addition, the next generation wireless capabilities and 5G are now part of the latest wave of FirstNet Ready devices, positioning public safety subscribers to take advantage of the generational shift in wireless capabilities. These devices enable first responders to have access to the latest commercial off-the-shelf technology via FirstNet and enabling them to take advantage of cost savings and maximize the value of every public safety dollar.

As for the *applications* update, there are over 190 applications in the FirstNet Application Catalog, supported by over 3,000 registered developers that are part of the application developer program focused on FirstNet key features and capabilities in building those into applications in the catalog.

Lastly, Mr. Bratcher provided an update on *Deployables*. The FirstNet deployable fleet is a service available on a 24-by-7 basis at no cost to FirstNet subscribing agencies and driven by ongoing direct consultation with public safety. To meet the usage demand, the FirstNet Authority approved the investment last year to expand the size and diversity of the existing fleet of dedicated deployable network assets to over 100 assets. These dedicated deployable assets are now available to FirstNet public safety users in all 50 states, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia. In 2021, FirstNet closed with an astounding 800-plus deployable and network restoral requests from users. Some of those events include snow events all over the nation,

tornadoes in Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri, as well as the Boulder County, Colorado Marshall Fire on December 30, 2021.

Finance and Investment Committee Update

Committee Chairman Brian Crawford spoke on the FirstNet Authority's FY 2022 operations budget execution results for the first three months ending on December 31, 2021. The cumulative \$22.7 million of obligations is within the boundaries of the FirstNet Authority's operating budget forecast, and the Finance team expects that trend to continue. Regarding investments, the current balance of the FirstNet Authority's Reinvestment in the Network Enhancement Fund is \$76.3 million.

Closing Remarks

CEO Parkinson thanked all new Board members for joining the Board, the FirstNet Authority staff, and previous Board Chairs and members for their dedication to public safety. Going into 2022, he mentioned looking forward to the potential programmatic reauthorization, spectrum re-license at the Federal Communications Commission, as well as continuing the evolution of the technology and network. CEO Parkinson went on to mention a few FY2022 priority items - the contract oversight of AT&T and continued engagement with public safety to advance the network and improve the culture.

Board Adjourned

Chair Benjamin requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Richard Carrizzo made the motion, Kristin Graziano seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.