



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
COMBINED BOARD AND COMMITTEES MEETING TRANSCRIPT
September 17, 2025

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Good morning. I'm glad to see all these bright shiny faces this morning. I am Sheriff Mike Adkinson, and this is your FirstNet Authority Board and Committees Meeting. I am currently the Acting Vice Chair and Acting Chair of the FirstNet Authority Board. I'm taking over for former Acting Chair Renee Gordon. Renee recently completed her term, and we want to take a moment to acknowledge her contribution to the FirstNet Authority, her hard work, dedication, and a great attitude in trying to do this and carry out this mission in a manner that is consistent with her level of professionalism. So, we certainly want to thank Renee again for everything that she has done serving public safety and the FirstNet Authority.

This morning we're going to do a couple things. This is a combined meeting, and we will have our Public Safety Advocacy Committee here with Chief Lombard. We're going to turn that over to him in just a second, but before we do that, I want to ask Ms. Watts if she will take the role. Let's make sure that we have a quorum.

Jennifer Watts: Thank you, Chair. I will mark you as present.

Jennifer Watts: Billy Bob Brown, Jr.?

Billy Bob Brown Jr.: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Mark Calabria?

Jennifer Watts: Damon Darsey?

Damon Darsey: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Alexandra Fernández Navarro?

Alexandra Fernández Navarro: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Erik Gaull?

Erik Gaull: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Sean McDevitt?

Sean McDevitt: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Warren Mickens?

Warren Mickens: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Jocelyn Moore?

Jocelyn Moore: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Jeffrey Norman?

Jeffrey Norman: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Rasheid Scarlett?

Rasheid Scarlett: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Trisha Wolford?

Trisha Wolford: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Chair, we do have a quorum for the Board as well as for all four committees. Now I will read the conflicts statement. Prior to participating in the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees Meeting today, the Board members have reviewed the agenda as well as the conflict of interest guidance provided by the Ethics Law and Program Division of the Department of Commerce, Office of General Counsel regarding the conflict of interest standards that apply to the Board members. All Board members have responded prior to today's meeting that they do not have a conflict and will not need to recuse themselves from participation in any portion of this meeting. Thank you.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Very good. And I would also be remiss if I didn't welcome those who are joining us online here in, we're physically in Reston, Virginia, but we know many of you may be dialing in from other locations and that just showed my age that I said dialing in. Certainly, there's a euphemism that'll be lost in a couple of years I'm sure. We're also going to have committee reports from our individual committee Chairs as well. But before you Board, you have meetings or excuse me, minutes from the previous meeting. And so, I would ask if there is a motion to, if you've had the opportunity to read minutes and approve them, I would ask there would be a motion to accept.

Damon Darsey: Sheriff, this is Damon Darsey and I make a motion that we accept.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Is there a second?

Warren Mickens: This is Warren Mickens I second the motion.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: OK. All in favor, say aye.

All: Aye.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Likes or unopposed? OK, outstanding. So, the August meeting minutes are accepted. Madam Secretary, please make the minutes available to the public following the meeting. And at this point we're going to turn this over to Chief Lombard, who will give us a Public Safety Advisory Committee update.

Chris Lombard: Thank you very much, Sheriff. I, on behalf of the PSAC and myself, would like to also congratulate you on moving into this new role and we wish you all the best and we'll look forward to working with you. With that, we'd also like to recognize again both me personally and on behalf of the PSAC, Renee Gordon's service and her support for the PSAC and all that she did in in her tenure and that roll some through some very confusing and trying times. Kind of keeping the ship going in the right direction. Next slide please.

As you know, the PSAC held its in-person meeting in conjunction with the 5x5 Conference in Seattle in June. Many of you were there and we thank you for coming out to Seattle and participating in the PSAC meetings. We received at that meeting a very informative leadership update from FirstNet AT&T as well as an investment update from the FirstNet Authority. At our bi-monthly meetings in August, virtual meetings, those that we had report outs from individual PSAC members who have engaged with the FirstNet Authority on coverage enhancement workshops, specifically in New York, California and Florida. Excuse me. We also received an in-depth briefing from FirstNet Authority on pre-planned event support. Several of several of our Tribal Advisory Group members also attended 5X5 in June, which we were very encouraged by that. To see them starting to engage in some of the bigger PSAC events. They engaged with both the FirstNet Authority leadership and public safety leaders from across the Nation. I'm pleased to announce that a new representative has filled a vacancy for the Inter-tribal Emergency Management Coalition, which further strengthens the expertise available to our team there. Next slide please.

The PSAC and the Tribal Advisory Group, or the TAG, will continue to follow the respective bi-monthly/monthly meeting cadences, as well as host ad hoc working group meetings as needed. We're standing up two working groups, one to recommend best practices for engaging public safety facing information technology offices and officers, and a second to develop updated materials to facilitate productive engagement on site planning. That's one of the things that we heard back from both the Authority and from AT&T, our FirstNet partner, that a lot of the lease arrangements seem to be getting held up or being in a holding pattern and it's very slow. So we're working with a lot of our government folks on the PSAC to see if we can come up best practices to kind of speed up some of those processes. Over the coming months we will collaborate with the FirstNet Authority on investment issues related to coverage enhancement and network evolution. Operationally focused PSAC members have engaged, and will continue to engage, with the FirstNet Authority's Innovation and Investment team to provide specific feedback and input on various topics there. We will continue our work with the Tribal Advisory

Group including conducting coverage enhancement workshops with them and with a strictly tribal audience next month. If there are no other questions, that concludes my PSAC update and I'll turn the floor back over to you, Chair.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Thank you, Chief Lombard. Any questions for Chief? OK. At this time we'll ask Chief Wolford, the Chair of the Advocacy Committee, to give us an update on the many goings on of the Advocacy Committee.

Trisha Wolford: Thank you. Good morning. We are going to do an update on fiscal year 2025 third quarter and then also some highlights from recent engagements of our public safety folks. You can go to the next slide, please. Thank you.

So, during the third quarter of fiscal year 2025, the team participated in over 300 engagements. That is reaching more than 11,000 stakeholders in 51 states, territories and federal agencies, along with our tribal communities. We hosted three public safety tours in Boulder with a total of 15 visitors. This number may seem low, but that is because we are doing upgrades to the facility and there were certain times throughout the quarter where we could not accept visitors.

So, through numerous other engagements, we received nearly 300 items of feedback from our public safety community. Feedback is normally happening in categories of operational needs, capability gaps, and then some FirstNet user cases. So, through all that direct feedback, we continue to see a very common theme of coverage and reliability, both of which are extremely important to this group and certainly to our public safety community. So, the team will go out and they'll capture everything that is successful when implementing cell phone booster pros, talk about specific coverage needs, and then through their coverage enhancement workshops, they will receive additional feedback. Because reliability is so important and such a persistent topic, the team has captured some positive feedback about the network reliability during hurricane and other natural disasters.

So, through targeted discussions at our 5x5 conference in Washington, stakeholders were able to express satisfactions in the FirstNet Central enhancements. And then they also help us identify any additional needs. So, there is a daily use and adoption of FirstNet devices, our high-power user equipment, and then again, stakeholders are weighing in and providing, you know, any type of enhancements we can do and any type of feedback. While we're doing that, simultaneously there are also public safety enhancement highlights that happen through all types of engagements. In June, we hosted the 5x5 Conference that I spoke of in Bellevue, and beautiful weather, I think probably the best weather we have seen in Washington state, but it was a fantastic conference. So, we hosted and coordinated 47 breakout sessions, a lot of deep dive discussions, and then a lot of that was, you know, from coverage to unmanned aerial systems, location-based services, covering a vast amount of topics. The venue had 60 technology demonstrations from different industries, academia, public safety organizations and then all while overview of cutting-edge technology. Many distinguished leaders throughout the country were in attendance and specifically our public safety partners were in attendance with us.

We also attended APCO, the premier event for 911 professionals, along with public safety communications. This was close to my hometown in Baltimore, Maryland. And this is a great

opportunity for us to host sessions, 12 different sessions, throughout the conference. And then again, any opportunity that we can give to our public safety folks to engage in these topics. Lessons learned. All types of responses and anything that our public safety folks can bring back to us in fruitful discussions, along with their leadership, and then the stakeholders. So, we continue to be out and engaged and trying to learn from as many of our public safety partners. I do know that we had a Board member in attendance and on the APCO for the 911 profession, along with public safety. So, I'll turn that over if Erik would like to provide any comments to our APCO visitors.

Erik Gaull: Thank you, Chief. Yes, I thought the conference was extremely well attended. There were literally several thousand people there. One of the recurring themes that I heard in both talking to APCO professionals who were attending the conference and listening to the presentations was of the the reliability of FirstNet and the serviceability that it provided to 911 professionals. And and I thought that that our participation there came off extremely well with our booth and the proximity also to to the folks at at the 911 or the— AT&T booth as well, I thought the synergy there was was excellent.

Trisha Wolford: Thank you, Sir, appreciate that. Since we're doing a cross-country tour, we've been to Washington state on our West Coast. We fit Baltimore, Maryland. We're gonna go South and head to Orlando, Florida, where a conference near and dear to my heart, International Association of Fire Chiefs, hosted their Fire Rescue International and CEO Mike Cannon delivered the FirstNet Authority update to the board. So, thank you, Sir. We appreciate you attending our board meeting and providing that update. There was also a lot of engagement with fire and EMS service leaders who come from across the Nation and internationally. So, it's nice to be able to engage from the Authority along with our public safety figures. There were lots of targeted focus groups and then also feedback from many of our public safety members. So, I know that there is a really a great aspect of being able to engage with such a large industry. It is listed as International Association of Fire Chiefs, but we represent almost 15,000 fire/EMS. The discipline is very wide. Because I was there at that conference, the showing of the FirstNet Authority and the engagement level - the collaboration is just really fantastic. It's definitely a friendship partnership and not just a working relationship. So, the trust that has been built in that community, that I can see is really quite fantastic.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: And we certainly want to congratulate Chief Wolford on being elected President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. So, congratulations.

Trisha Wolford: Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate that. It was a it was a productive and a fun week.

So, I'm gonna run through some recent events. There's some great photos on the screen here of some of our recent events. Again, continuing the tour, we'll go back north from Florida and we're gonna end up in North Carolina and South Carolina. I was honored to be able to meet with U.S. Representative Richard Hudson, along with Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Technology, Ariel Roth, and her team. We all converged in North Carolina to speak with members of the North Carolina 911 Board, Alamance County Office of Emergency Management, also, Alamance County Chamber of Commerce, FirstNet Authority, AT&T. This

was a really nice, I'll just call it groundbreaking event for infrastructure upgrades to the cell tower sites throughout Alamance County. So, it's definitely a celebration. We were there all afternoon and really had a great time just engaging with those folks and of course we met at a local fire station, so we got lots of great feedback from our fire and EMS personnel who are just wonderful hosts to everyone. U.S. Senator Ted Budd joined representatives from Swain County, 911, the North Carolina 911 Board, FirstNet Authority, and AT&T to have a different celebration, but of a similar kind. And this is the cell site delivering improved connectivity in Bryson county, or Bryson City, and then rural Swain County. This is something that, Sheriff Adkinson, I believe you attended. I'm sure a successful event. Any thoughts?

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: No, it was outstanding. We were lucky enough that Executive Director Cannon and Tom Shull were able to attend as well. We had great conversation with the 911 folks, with Senator Budd, his office. It was interesting that this tower was, you know, really in a remote location. Tough location to get to and it just shows the capabilities of people dedicated to bringing enhanced coverage to places that are that are difficult. They're difficult to get to. And I thought they did an excellent job. It was a great partnership and it was important to get that feedback from our local partners as well too. Mike, did you have any thoughts about it?

Mike Cannon: No, I agree. It was a wonderful trip, a lot of good back and forth with the locals there and the Senator and I think very worthwhile. And again, this tower was in a very, very remote area. It was amazing. They were able to get it up there and, but that's what you do when people are committed to a mission. So yeah.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: I will tell you, I told the Senator that he could send me some Zillow listings. It's not a bad, not a bad look up there. [laughter]

Trisha Wolford: Well, I would say we felt the same at our location, just the work they were doing to make sure that those first responders had communications and had the capabilities. So very focused and very successful.

We have one more engagement and this is U.S. Representative Russell Fry. Representatives from Marion County Sheriff's Office, FirstNet Authority, and AT&T to celebrate 5G wireless infrastructure upgrades on cell phone sites in Marion County and Dr. Darcy, who attended that also, if you have any comments?

Damon Darsey: I did. Near to my heart - rural part of South Carolina. Sheriff Wallace was a great host. Representative Fry made some comments that I think are important. This network is a public private partnership - under budget and on time and I think that was something he echoed multiple times. And how important it is for us to give these guys some education and I got great feedback from Sheriff Wallace, positive and negative, both of which have been sent up the chain. So, thank you for allowing me to go and allowing me to talk about it.

Trisha Wolford: Two great phrases - under budget and on time. I love both of those. We'll move to coverage enhancement workshops and a beautiful diagram up there on the screen illustration. Successfully conducted 30 coverage workshops, and they're traditionally these are being conducted throughout the week, and these are for our stakeholders to be able to engage, to

be able to talk about the level of detail of coverage, prioritizing input. This is really great for some of our local folks that thankfully don't have to think about coverage because they know it's happening. But this is a great way to be able to get updates. There are another 14 scheduled, and of course we're working in all the states. So, you can see for those of you that are online, there's some color coding there. States colored gray on the map are scheduled within the calendar year. And the workshops are just another way that we collect feedback and then we're able to answer questions and engage with our public safety folks to see what their needs are and to make sure we're meeting their needs. So, all of this is using well researched data and guidance from public safety. FirstNet Authority will then make strategic investments based on what we can learn from a lot of these coverage enhancement workshops. As a result, cell phone sites are being built across the Nation. Things that we're seeing when we're out doing our engagements - North Carolina, South Carolina. So, all of this is to provide reliable coverage and be able to enable public safety to achieve its mission. This goes back to my previous key points when we talk about reliability and coverage arcing and these are the things that we will continue to stay focused on.

I do want to say a quick thank you to Brad and the team for the support for the Advocacy Committee and the continued work that comes with the coverage enhancement workshops, which comes with public safety engagements. All of the information that the Board needs to really get out there and connect with public safety officials. Acting Chair Adkinson, I have nothing further unless you have questions for me.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: No Chief, it's quite a quite a lot of ground covered literally and figuratively. So now Finance Committee report. Sean McDevitt. Sean.

Sean McDevitt: Thank you, Sheriff. It's great to be with everyone today. Thank you. During the past 11 months of the fiscal year 2025, the Authority has obligated a cumulative total of \$76 million. This is well within the forecast parameters of our fiscal year 2025 budget. As you can see from the chart, this continues a year-long trend of, excuse me, of being consistently under budget. The Board and the FirstNet Authority are remain laser focused on ensuring that the delivery of this network provides maximum benefit for public safety entities that rely on the Nation's public safety broadband network for all of their mission critical voice and data needs. The Authority continues to be very financially prudent and fiscally responsible with the operational funds so that the maximum amount of financial resources we have can be reinvested back into the network to expand coverage and to evolve the technology. This concludes the Finance and Investment Committee report. Thank you, Sheriff.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: You know the most important thing about your report is you know where our money's at. Everything else is secondary. It's all good. Now turn it over to Future Programs and Planning Committee Chair, Rasheid Scarlett. Rasheid.

Rasheid Scarlett: All right, thank you. Next slide please. All right, we've continued to see strong momentum in the evolution of the FirstNet network through investments and other projects. And as the Chair of this committee, I'm encouraged by the progress we're seeing and deeply grateful for the contributions of our exceptional committee team members, members of the Board, and AT&T and as we work to maintain our strong trajectory.

So, on the screen or or wherever you're looking on on your papers, we're gonna actually walk through each of these bullets because these are a few focus areas that the the committee's working on and I wanna talk to each of them. So, as it relates to adoption and usage, we recently saw the network surpass 7.5 million connections as public safety's adoption and use of the network steadily grows. This milestone reflects the confidence first responders have in the FirstNet's capability in FirstNet's capability. And as Chief Wolford previously mentioned, the network continues to engage public safety through coverage enhancement workshops to discuss identified areas of coverage needed with public safety. Their feedback is critical as we determine coverage investments for new site builds. Our efforts have included urban, rural and tribal areas in the states as well as in the territories. AT&T has delivered 1,000 new site builds 9 months ahead of schedule, all with Band 14 as the first phase of our overall coverage enhancements. This achievement demonstrates our commitment to expanding reliable coverage where public safety needs it most.

Our in-building program has funded the deployment of thousands of in-building solutions since June 2022 at no cost to public safety. Indoor coverage is always a challenge. Public safety had identified the need for the better network access where they work and operate and we listened. As we continue to evaluate the, evaluate and incorporate the emerging technologies, we're upgrading our deployable fleet to 5G and adding LEO backhaul to our deployable assets like SATCOLTs and COWs. Additionally, we're working to finalize our investment to enable the FirstNet network to support satellite to device technologies. This LEO integration represents a significant step toward our goal of truly seamless nationwide coverage, particularly in remote and rural areas where traditional infrastructure faces challenges.

The team continues to work together as we prepare the launch of our new 5G standalone core, keeping FirstNet at the forefront of modern technology, but only after proper vetting and testing of the technology. The team continues to look at ongoing enhancements to FirstNet Central. Building on our recent investments and enhancements that were delivered earlier this year based on public safety feedback. As it relates to mission critical, the team is keeping a close focus on our ongoing mission critical product development as public safety's interests and uses continue to grow. And despite the luck we've had earlier, early in the season, our partners at AT&T are mobilizing and staging assets in preparation for hurricanes. Last year's requests were fulfilled responding to several hurricanes such as Helene and Milton. FirstNet deployables were on on site this summer supporting our first responders communications in the South Central Texas response in the South Central Texas response to devastating floods along the Guadalupe River. In addition to deployables, the FirstNet team stood up additional network capacity, including a rapid macro site deployment to support, firstly - to support long term public safety operations. Consistent with prior seasons, our response operations groups also continue to connect connect state and local public safety responding to wildfires such as the Rattlesnake Fire, which has burned over 17,000 acres in Washington State and the Dollar Lake Fire in Wyoming, which has burned more than 13,000 acres in the Green River Lakes area of the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

We continue to represent the voice of public safety in 3GPP standards activities, meeting with international partners and participating in important discussions like the early stages of 6G

standards. As it relates to innovation trials, we're always searching for better ways to meet public safety's communications needs. The team is looking at potential investment opportunities from our recently completed maritime and air to ground trials and starting new trials looking at ways we can leverage AI for various public safety use cases. Additionally, the team is looking at ways to continue to innovate with our deployable form factors. So as Committee Chair, I prioritize not only hearing about the NPSBN successes, but learning about how we are measuring them. Our Committee, with leadership and input from Jocelyn Moore, Alexandria Fernández Navarro, Sean McDevitt, Billy Bob Brown, Jr., Warren Mickens, and Erik Gaull have been committed on a series of briefings and dashboards to better visualize the trend the performance to trend the performance of the network, set expectations of success and look at key ways of performance indicators and metrics to ensure that public safety has the best and most consistent performance possible in the nationwide mobile network. We've seen great progress over these past few months, and I look forward to continued momentum as we look ahead. Thank you.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Thank you, Rasheid. At this point I'm gonna ask Executive Director, Mike Cannon, to go ahead and give us his brief. But I wanna say again, thank you to our committee Chairs for taking the time, for doing this work, and to present this out here this morning. Mike.

Mike Cannon: Thank you, Sheriff. This is our last Board meeting of the fiscal year, and I wanted to close it out by thanking our outgoing Acting Board Chair, Renee Gordon, who recently departed the Board following the completion of her three-year term. As the Director of the City of Alexandria's Department of Emergency and Customer Communications, Renee is an innovative FirstNet user herself and brought an important perspective to the Board and leadership. We thank her and wish her the best of luck. To the Board, I want to thank you all for joining us here in Reston, at our headquarters this week. We've had a productive and collaborative few days. And I look forward to continuing to work with the Board to shape the future of FirstNet. I also want to thank you all for approving our budget at last month's special Board meeting. The FirstNet Authority management team and staff are ready to hit the ground running on day one of fiscal year 2026. This year, the FirstNet network has widely was widely used across the country in response to weather events, all type of emergencies, as well as planned events and our staff work closely with public safety throughout the year. We heard some great updates today on the success of our coverage workshops in the field and with public safety. Getting their feedback will be a key priority going forward. Also, the FirstNet Authority has been addressed in the recent reports from the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and taking these findings very seriously. Both NTIA and the FirstNet Authority have already taken corrective actions to address the issues identified in the report. We appreciate the OIG's continued oversight over the FirstNet Authority and the nationwide public safety broadband network. As we begin the new fiscal year, I'm confident that we will continue to accomplish much on behalf of public safety. The FirstNet Authority will continue to drive the needle forward, innovating and evolving the network so it meets public safety's needs. Thank you again. I look forward to the months going ahead. I'll turn it back over to you, Sheriff.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Thank you, Sir. Any comments for the good of the order before we make a move to adjourn as we get close to the end of the meeting here? If not, I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

Alexandra Fernández Navarro: This is Board member Fernández Navarro. I move to adjourn.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Is there a second?

Jeffrey Norman: Jeffrey Norman. I second that motion.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Outstanding. All in favor?

All: Aye.

Michael Adkinson, Jr.: Opposed? Being none, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you.