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Transcript

FirstNet Board of Directors Webcast, Reston, VA, October 1-2, 2015

FirstNet Board Meeting

PHONE COORDINATOR: Standing by. At this time the call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect and thank you, you may proceed.

SUE SWENSON: Good morning, this is Sue Swenson and I just wanted to welcome everybody to the October 2nd FirstNet Board meeting for those of you in Reston and those of you on the Webcast. Unfortunately I am not in attendance in Reston as I'm attending to some family medical issues so I'm going to ask the Vice Chair, Chief Johnson to conduct today's meeting.

I will be participating, but I think it's much easier if Vice Chair Johnson actually conducts the meeting so with that Jeff, the floor is yours.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you very much, Sue, we miss you. And but we certainly respect that fact that you need to be there with your family and we appreciate all you do as it is. Being a fellow West Coaster, I recognize you got up early to make this happen and we appreciate that. It's very nice of you.

SUE SWENSON: Thank you, Jeff.

JEFF JOHNSON: I wanted to start today just kind of with a little bit of a personal reflection. This Board is going to talk about amongst other things procurement and rural coverage and things that matter a lot to the first responders of America.

We saw yesterday that horrible shooting in Oregon, and that is my hometown. I went to that college like most firefighters and cops, I got my technical degree ironically. I got my criminal justice degree, fire science degree at that college in Snyder Hall, which is the home of their criminal justice program. The exact spot where that shooting took place.

But this is the perfect example of why FirstNet is here. Is that we are not just here for urban America. This is a town of 22,000 people, and a campus that's really in wine country and yet we have this kind of horrific event happen there and it just reminds you, that that fire station— Engine 1134—two people typically work that fire station. They are a mile from the campus and they had 34 trauma system entries or fatalities upon arrival.

So I mean you have to look at that and just say this isn't, crime isn't—and horrible events aren't—just in urban areas. They're all across this country and FirstNet can't afford just to serve major urban areas. We have to be a nationwide network that serves all aspects and corners of this country. Because as we see, right, these things happen in all corners of this country.

So I told the sheriff and the chief, where's Chris, I told them yesterday, I hate to do this, but I got to compliment you guys. You know, we have this police-firefighter thing going on where I'm always explaining stuff to them, but the fact is the sheriff's department, the police department, Oregon State Police they did a heck of a job there yesterday. So hat's off to the profession.

With that, Sue already welcomed everybody. You know, I think it's clear to everybody FirstNet is engaged in trying to make this as transparent of a process as we possibly can. We are going to continue to keep our meetings open. And our work sessions open.

We do need to withdraw from time to time and go back in and hold executive sessions to discuss legal matters or procurement matters that may give someone an advantage or may disadvantage our procurement process so some of that took place this morning with some training. Some of it took place yesterday and we will have a very brief session today where we will once again do it. As I mentioned yesterday in the committees, in their meetings, we discussed some public and some private matters of how we're going to appropriately procure this network on behalf of public safety. And you will see hopefully some manifestations of those meetings today.

We do have I think starting we have three new Board members and I want to recognize David Mader who is the designee from the Office of Management and Budget and Mr. Neil Cox and Mr. Ed Horowitz who have joined the Board. I know we welcomed you yesterday but there are people on the call today that maybe weren't here yesterday and we welcome you and we welcome your service to this important cause.

I want to remind the audience that while we're pleased to have you in the room, we want you to do the best you can in coming and going, not slam the doors. If you have cell service, I'd ask you to silence your phone, but we all know if you're in this room, you don't have cell service so listen, you can leave it on and drain your battery if you want to. Mr. Secretary, would you be kind enough to call the roll please?

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Susan Swenson.

SUE SWENSON: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Jeff Johnson?

JEFF JOHNSON: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Barry Boniface.

BARRY BONIFACE: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Ron Davis?

RON DAVIS: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Jim Douglas?

JIM DOUGLAS: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Kevin McGinnis?

KEVIN MCGINNIS: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Annise Parker?

ANNISE PARKER: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Edward Horowitz?

EDWARD HOROWITZ: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Ed Reynolds? Ed can't be with us. Suzanne Spaulding?

SUZANNE SPAULDING: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Rich Stanek?

RICH STANEK: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Teri Takai?

TERI TAKAI: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: David Mader? Mr. Vice Chair, we have a quorum.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Each member...You didn't call Neil.

NEIL COX: You didn't call me.

UZOMA ONYEIJE I apologize. Ed Horowitz?

ED HOROWITZ: No, You didn't call Neil.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Neil Cox?

NEIL COX: Here.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: And Chris Burbank.

JEFF JOHNSON: And Chris Burbank? I don't know why you guys didn't hear your names. (Laughter)

UZOMA ONYEIJE: The record will reflect that you're here, Chris.

JEFF JOHNSON: Now we have a quorum. Each Board member has before you minutes of our last meeting in August and in June. I'd like to consider these in separate motions on each of the minutes so the Chair would entertain a motion to approve or amend the minutes that you have before you. And please articulate the meeting that you're making a motion on.

BARRY BONIFACE: So moved.

JEFF JOHNSON: On which month?

BARRY BONIFACE: June.

JEFF JOHNSON: Okay, we have a motion on June minutes? Is there a second?

SUE SWENSON: Second

JEFF JOHNSON: We have a motion and a second. Discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all in favor, say 'aye'?

ALL: Aye.

JEFF JOHNSON: Opposed, say 'no'? Any abstentions? Chair would entertain a motion on the August minutes.

SUE SWENSON: So moved.

JIM DOUGLAS: Second.

JEFF JOHNSON: Motion second, discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all those in favor of the motion say 'aye'?

ALL: Aye.

JEFF JOHNSON: Opposed say 'no'. Are there any abstentions of the motion? Both minutes have been accepted. Mr. Secretary will you please place those in the public record?

UZOMA ONYEIJE: I will.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you very much. I'd like to now call on Uzoma to provide the conflicts notification and explain to our audience as well as the Webcast audience greater detail about our work today.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: And I'm going to be doing an abbreviated version of this. Yesterday during our committee meetings, each of the committee members had indicated that they had no conflicts to the matters that we were going to be undertaking yesterday. The same matters are going to be discussed today, therefore we're ready to proceed.

JEFF JOHNSON: Excellent, thank you Uzoma. We have a lot of ground to cover in this Board meeting and we're going to kick that off while we have our CEO coming up later in the day. We're going to kick that off with a report from Chief Harlin McEwen.

Chief McEwen is the Chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee and they represent our direct input from the public safety community into FirstNet. They are our one and only advisory committee. Chief McEwen?

HARLIN MCEWEN: Thank you, Jeff. I really appreciate the invitation to participate in the Board meeting this morning. I first want to start too by saying thank you to the Board for your service and the support that you're giving us and the hard work you're doing to develop this network. It's really important the work you're doing, and we want to recognize that.

I want to then talk about the fact that under the leadership of Sue and Jeff, the PSAC has really flourished. We've really begun to be an intimate part of all of this work. We're working with the staff. We're working with the Board. I think that's very important and we wanted to acknowledge that. Secondly I want to acknowledge the relationship that we have with the staff.

We're just really starting to get to know the new CEO Mike, and we've had meetings with him this work. We've been working with TJ diligently for quite some time now and Amanda and Vicki who support the PSAC directly, so all of those relationships are really good and want to report that, you know, they're working well.

So the PSAC has just recently expanded from 40 members to 42 members. We just added the National Volunteer Fire Council and the NLETS which is the Nationwide Law Enforcement Network that supports criminal history exchanges and wanted persons and stolen property and vehicles and so on.

The addition of those two we think are very important to making sure that we are all, you know, inclusive into this work and we're very happy to have them join. As you know the PSAC is primarily driven by the five-member executive committee.

Right from the very beginning the Board recognized that there needed to be in addition to the 42 members, a smaller group that was representative of all of the disciplines, we have, so I represent as the Chairman the law enforcement discipline from the International Association of Chiefs of Police. We had Chief Niles Ford who is the Fire Chief in the City of Baltimore who represents the fire service.

Unfortunately he got called back yesterday or he would be here today. As you can understand they're having flooding and all kinds of problems over there. We have with us today Tom Sorley sitting behind me. He represents the US Conference of Mayors, works for the Mayor of Houston and has been very helpful representing local government, and he in that role doesn't represent just the mayors but the counties, and the League of Cities and the other local government entities.

Then we have Paul Patrick who is the EMS Director from the State of Utah who represents the EMS community and Jimmy Gianato who is the Emergency Manager for the State of West Virginia representing state government. So it's very well-balanced so we have local government, state governments, police, fire, and EMS. I think that's a well-rounded five-member executive committee.

Amanda briefed the Board. Most of you were there yesterday in the committee meetings about some of the work that we're doing and I don't want to repeat that but we've been engaged in addressing priority and preemption which is very important in that scheme of things. What we try to explain is that in the commercial networks we do not have priority preemption. We will have to manage our own priority and preemption in this network with our own resources and so we're heavily engaged in how do we do that? In other words not every police officer, not every firefighter will have priority during certain events. You will have to manage that within the network.

The second task is public safety grade and that's basically focused on site hardening. How many of the cell sites that we use in the network—the new FirstNet network—will need to be hardened more than others, so that we have the kind of reliability that we need during hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes and all of those kinds of things.

The third is that we're dealing with user equipment and of course we're dealing with both the option of FirstNet devices that will be actually offered by FirstNet possibly and the bring-your-own-device approach where people will want to use their own device and we will have to have certain requirements—security requirements and other requirements—that perhaps allow that to happen.

So those are the three tasks. We expect that we're going to be dealing with some new tasks starting this fall, and they're under consideration right now. The executive committee met all day here Wednesday. We had great briefings with the technical staff, with Jeff Bratcher and his staff, with Amanda and Dave Buchanan, the people dealing with all the different aspects.

So we had a good day-long session as I said. At the end of the day we had a great session with Mike Poth and with TJ Kennedy. The last thing or couple of things that I wanted to mention, when I talked about the executive committee I just want to make the point that we think that executive committee's made up of very special, talented people.

And Tom Sorley who's here today I just wanted to make the point that he's going to be honored at the Radio Club of America annual awards dinner in Cupertino in November with the DeMello Award which is a very prestigious public safety award. And that's recognition of his many years of service in this arena so I think that was something very special that I wanted to mention.

The last thing I wanted to mention is the two working groups that we currently have. We have an Early Builder working group. The Early Builder working group is the five entities which this Board has granted spectrum agreements with. That's the State of New Jersey, Adams County, Colorado, State of New Mexico, Los Angeles (L.A. RICS), who am I forgetting? Texas. Oh, how could I do that?

How could I do that, Mayor, and Houston, Harris County, Texas. I'll never forget that one. But the five of them are all doing some great work and we're learning early lessons from them and you will eventually be hearing more about some of those early lessons as a Board because it'll be important for you in your decision-making. And we think that's important and we've brought that working group together so that they interplay with each other and don't make mistakes that, you know, others are learning about. And the last one is our Tribal working group and that's a tough bunch of people because we have 500 and some tribes in this country that are recognized federally.

And we have brought together some very excellent people from the tribal community to try to represent their interests. That's my report Mr. Chairman and I think that my bottom line is that we're doing well. We feel good about it and we hope you feel good about it.

JEFF JOHNSON: Any questions for Chief McEwen? Tom, hey congratulations, that is no small achievement and nothing better than being recognized by your peers. Right? It's one thing that people don't know what you do recognize you but when people truly know, then it's more meaningful. So congratulations. Harlin, thanks for your leadership, thanks for all the work you do.

This committee is uncompensated, and you guys have to be working at this darn near full time if not full time. And it is an amazing gift to public safety that you're making. I also wanted to reflect briefly on your comments about priority and preemption.

FirstNet is now as we move toward communicating what we're doing to, you know, the more boots-on-the-ground levels of public safety, we're going to be talking more about capacity, because as you know priority and preemption is a capacity issue, so sometimes I think people don't understand how big of a pipe this is, how big of a network this is. And when we talk about priority and preemption, you know, we're kind of if you're talking freeway sense, you know, we're imagining that the freeway is jammed with traffic and priority and preemption is how you get in the commuter lane.

This network is such an enormous freeway that sometimes I worry that people focus on priority and preemption because they think it's always going to be congested. But the fact is and no one knows this better than you, Harlin, this is an enormous network with enormous capacity and capability.

But if it fills, priority and preemption is very critical to making sure that this network differentiates between those that have to talk and those that don't. Harlin, I'm really glad you brought that up. Thank you Tom, thank you, thanks to EC and the rest of the 42 members of the PSAC. Mike, it's time for a CEO report. Welcome and, we're looking forward to this.

MIKE POTH: Thank you very much, I really appreciate the Board, all the energies and efforts. This is I can assure the public and everyone else this is a very, very active Board. They have done some incredible amount of heavy lifting in the 46 days that I've been here.

So this is actually my 46th day. And it's exciting, it's awesome. One of the things as we all know when we come into a new organization, you always wonder, you know, how do I fit in, how is the organization going? Well, I can tell the Board as I'm sure you know that this team is focused. They are

driven. They are passionate and so that's an easy thing to do. Sometimes as leaders we have to kind of encourage, motivate, incentivize our employees. I don't have that issue. I'm actually having to I don't want to say throttle back some of the enthusiasm to make sure that we're getting everything done as quickly as possible, but with the right continued focus because we are here for public safety.

The organization is growing. It's growing appropriately, and there's a lot of incredible work that you've heard. You've heard from our technical teams, our user advocacy and we would stack those up against anyone in the profession public or private sectors. So those are good things and we have a lot of momentum, a lot of initiative.

So what I wanted to do just briefly is give you an update. I'm glad that Chief Harlin said that he enjoys me. I didn't know what I would say. That would have been a little awkward if he said it doesn't appear to be working out, because the PSAC is a critical component of what we are trying to accomplish so thank you for that, Chief.

As everyone has seen and known, the strategic roadmap has been the guiding principles and guiding road for us to get an RFP issued. But FirstNet as everyone knows was not envisioned or built just to issue an RFP. We have a lot of other additional responsibilities and we're covering a lot of different things.

In addition to the RFP, our consultation meetings, it's not just presentations. Its consultation, hearing from our stakeholders as to what we need to be doing. The PSAC engagement that the Chief had talked about and the focus on continued growth. You've heard yesterday we've had two industry days, getting a lot of feedback. And we're actually going to be increasing our vendor communications to make sure that all the possible partners in this endeavor are informed, so that they can come with the most creative innovative approach and solution for the public safety network. That's why we're here. We want to make sure that we are successful in that.

I had the opportunity within this first 46 days to go out to Boulder and got presentations by the technical team and actually demonstrations of Band 14 technology gizmos and gadgets that in the lab they were doing different things to show preemption, to show all the things that we envision and hope and it does work and it does exist. So that was not only interesting but very enlightening that the roadmap exists. It's going to happen and we just need to continue to press on.

We have to ensure that we're practicing, in addition to the roadmap, good governance and here's the FY '15 strategic goals that the Board has approved last year. And I wanted to just give you a quick update. We are hitting all these goals. We're successful in these goals from the acquisition building, building strong partnerships with those local, state, tribal, and federal agencies. The entrepreneurial culture of innovation is through the roof.

Everyone is trying to come-up with different solutions, different approaches. Sometimes when I first got in to the organization, one of the first days I had meetings with the staff and the employees and I said I need your help getting to yes. Well, that was an understatement. I never have had a problem.

They're already at yes, and they already are having that approach of that innovation, whatever it takes to, you know, meet the mission and grow this business and it is a business for public safety.

We are underway, establishing best practices. Our financial processes under the leadership of our CFO, our procurement, our human resources capital approaches you heard yesterday the endeavors to get the right people, and we are taking pass on people that aren't the right fit. We're not just content to just get people in to meet a hiring goal. It is critical that we have the right people in the right seats and we have that and so a lot of things are going.

But in order for us to continue to thrive and to provide the leadership to the public safety, helping them with this network, helping our partners, it is truly a public/private partnership, we need to continue to grow our processes, our governance and tighten-down different things as we are going so fast to not only have a successful procurement, but have the organizational structure to support it for years to come on behalf of the public safety, our partners, and the government.

So we've completed the strategic goals for '15 and I'm happy to report we were able to successfully achieve all of those. But we're not done. So now we're focused on the five year strategic plan and some people say well how can you have a five year because you don't exactly know what your public/private partnership is going to be? It doesn't matter. Some things have to happen and are absolute knowns. So the team is working very hard on laying out our next five-year strategic plan. We're going to have the establishing key indicators with performance targets not only just for the organization but for ourselves.

You heard about the core values and our rules of conduct. Well, it starts with me. I told the organization you have to hold me accountable and they really have embraced that more than I had hoped, but they are doing it and I expect the Board as you already have to hold me accountable. So this is a good news story at this point, a lot of work but there is going to be bumps in the road.

We have a lot to do, lots of obstacles, lots of twists and turns. And it takes the great leadership of this Board, the great leadership of our teams that we have to successfully navigate the terrain over the next three to five years and we're going to lay out a plan and goals that we will come back to the Board and brief in the very near future.

But thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. It's exciting; it's thrilling every day to come in. I'm obviously meeting new people, in all different walks of life and everyone is very focused and passionate for this and that's an easy thing to be a part of so thank you.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you Mike. Any questions or comments for Mike? I was startled by your come in comment. I didn't think you ever left. This team, I don't care what hours of the day or night it is, it seems like we're always there. I'm wrapping up a 10:00 dinner meeting on the West Coast and I'm getting texts and e-mails from the office and then I'm up at 5:00 to get on a conference call which they've been up and prepping for.

You know, speaking of the entrepreneurial culture and kind of reflecting on our desire not to act like just a federal agency, I guess, you guys are not and we appreciate it and embrace it. Including the members of this Board, that are set on making sure that because we have a service to offer that we have to act in a way that will resonate with our customer and that is public safety. So I thank each of you for the extra hours you put in. As we sit here, we have employees that are constantly watching and engaged even when they don't have to. It is something fun to watch.

We are going to go into a very brief executive session. We have just a little wrap up to do on yesterday's work. For those of you in the room, I don't anticipate we'll be gone longer than 20 to 30 minutes at the most. Twenty minutes is our target, so stay close. We will be back and we'll bring this meeting back up live.

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Operator, if you could transfer us over into the private room please.

PHONE COORDINATOR: You may proceed.

JEFF JOHNSON: Now that we've reconvened the Board meeting, I want to give you a pick up we've had from external, and that's apparently the in-room volume does not reflect what people are hearing online so they've dialed-down the volume in this room and they would like us to speak a little closer to our mics when we speak.

So, now that we're reconvened, yesterday the Board meeting convened two joint meetings of its committees. Following each meeting the Board moved into closed session to discuss legally sensitive issues which I mentioned earlier related to the management's proposed acquisition approach and the final statutory interpretations of several provisions of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act.

The discussion included vigorous debate, as a matter of fact I was reflecting this morning with another Board member. I don't think I've ever seen this Board as engaged and opinionated, passionate and fervent about the packet of issues we discussed yesterday. This was no roll and gavel tap meeting. It was really healthy. The discussion resulted in recommendations by the committees on management's proposal for consideration by the full Board which is before us today. We now want to have the management team present in this public session its proposed approaches for Board consideration and vote.

We will begin with the presentation of management's proposed final statutory interpretations. Although I don't like the word final because I don't think it's going to be final, right? There is always a twist or a turn or an adjustment or further consideration. I think what we're really talking about is here's where we are today and this is the best decision we have as we move forward in our procurement approach and strategy, but those interpretations will be given by our Counsel Jason Karp. Then we'll hear from our CEO Mike Poth and FirstNet management's proposed acquisition approach. And after each of the presentations FirstNet Board will have an opportunity to discuss it and/or make formal motions.

So with that, I am going to turn over to Chief Counsel Jason Karp who will give our audience a sense of what we discussed with respect to interpretations of our enabling legislation and what that means for the RFP. Jason?

JASON KARP: Terrific. Thanks Mr. Chair. I appreciate it and thank you to the public and to the Board. I think we've had some terrific debate over the last day on many issues and, you know, we've got some critical decisions that we're making and this is kind of one element of that that really I think is going to impact us both operationally and from the perspective of getting an RFP out at the end of the year and giving offerors the kind of certainty that they need in order to give us sound proposals. So I want to take you through just a little bit. I'm going to run through this I think relatively quick. Obviously any questions are always welcome, but it should be pretty straightforward.

I'm going to start with just for the benefit of the Board and the public just a little bit of history about our rulemaking proceedings and the actions that FirstNet has taken to date.

And not to get too legalistic about it but, you know, you're always in danger when you give, you know, the lawyer the clicker here. The most executive agency and rulemaking and proceedings and actions taken by agencies are governed by the Administrative Procedures Act, we call it the APA affectionately. And it governs federal agency action and it sets forth kind of the rules, the legal framework for how rules are made, and provides various rights and obligations of the government and parties who may be seeking redress.

The unique thing about FirstNet, and the reason I raised it, is because by statute FirstNet is exempt from the application of the relevant rules of the APA, so we don't have to follow those procedures, but and that gives us a lot of flexibility as an organization in terms of how we want to move forward with these interpretations. And the Chief noted it, you know, we've got to make the best decisions and the best timing that are appropriate for us, and our Act really gives us the flexibility to do that so I think that it's really important to note.

It also means we don't have to do this, right, but we're doing this for a variety of different reasons. You know, we have, as the folks know published now three public notices and sought comment. We've

received somewhere in the neighborhood of I think close to 200 comments altogether throughout these proceedings. It's been very vigorous and really the goal was to provide the stakeholder community, the vendor community information about our thinking, about where we were going on key interpretations of the Act, to give them information. But just as much to seek feedback from them. I mean, this has been a very iterative process for us. It's been very informative. There are a lot of issues that these folks have tremendous expertise on and we really wanted to get the benefit of that.

As you know, we also have consultation obligations under the Act and those run fairly broadly and although we talk about consultations with the states which we do on a regular basis, we have broader consultation obligations under the Act more generally with a large constituent population.

These public notices give us the opportunity to reach all of those folks and everyone has an equal opportunity, whether they're a public/private citizen, a corporation, a vendor, a state, government agency, can all participate, respond to our comments, respond to our conclusions and provide us their impact.

So this has been a hugely beneficial process for us, and I just thought it was important to kind of level-set and remind everybody what we are doing and why we did it.

So just to kind of get to the meat of it, basically where we are now is we intend to release, and I'm very proud to announce to the Board and assuming that you approve our ability to move forward on this, approximately 64 kind of decision points that we have been considering over the past several months really since last December or maybe even September - on a variety, a large variety of issues related to the Act, and really spanning kind of the gamut of different topics that are germane to the RFP.

We'll take you through a little bit in more detail on the next slide but I wanted to highlight a couple of things that for example we're addressing in these public notices and important for the public to know. For example the definition of rural which is something we raised in our first public notice and this is really an important issue, you know, and we got a lot of very, very good feedback on it.

The truth is with almost all of these interpretations including rural, we got a tremendous amount of support from our stakeholders on what we were trying to do, but there was some confusion and we wanted to clarify some of that. And I think it's important to clarify it here. So when we talk about rural coverage and we talk about definition of rural, and as you know the Act mentions rural I think about three times in strategic places but it never defines it. One of the many gifts that the Act keeps on giving to FirstNet.

And so it was really important for us to try to provide some delineation there, but what I want to be clear about is when we define rural, we're not defining coverage. And this was some confusion that we saw in the comments. Whether you're rural or you're considered not rural, that does not determine whether you get coverage or you don't get coverage. The key is, you know, and you'll hear more about this as we move throughout the day, as everyone knows rural is absolutely part of FirstNet's deployment strategy and requirement under the Act. And every phase of our building, every phase of our deployment, there's going to be rural build-out milestones and the definition of rural is really a guidepost for us to help make those determinations on coverage.

How do we determine what that milestones are going to be, not whether there's going to be coverage or not, and I think that's a really important distinction and we make that clear in the final document that we hope to release.

The one clarification we did make, we did ask the question about whether there should be a bottom boundary of rural versus wilderness where, you know, the sparsity of population is so great it shouldn't be considered rural anymore, and I think the feedback on that was relatively universal that the answer

is no. And we listened to that and we've decided that that's not an artificial boundary we're going to create. So I think that's important.

The second issue that I wanted to highlight was kind of this concept of existing infrastructure and use of existing infrastructure. This has been a big topic since the day FirstNet began. It's been an evolution quite frankly in how we've looked at it and how FirstNet intends to leverage existing infrastructure. Again we've made very clear in our special notice and our draft RFP documents how we're going to be encouraging our partners very heavily to bring existing infrastructure to the table.

The Act requires use of existing infrastructure to the extent it's economically desirable to do so in many forms so commercial infrastructure, wireless infrastructure, state and local government infrastructure, as we've all talked about. And each of those has their pros and cons, has their costs and benefits in terms of how we might be able to leverage them at different points in the deployment. So we've clarified kind of in our analysis of what the law requires and the concept of economic desirability and while the first piece of that phrase is economic and cost, the truth is economics are driven by many, many different factors.

And we wanted to clarify that when we think about economic desirability whether it's us or a potential partner, we have to consider a lot of different things beyond just what does it cost, time to deploy, use, hardening, you know, whether it's an appropriate piece of equipment for what we're trying to do, interoperability, compatibility. There's a lot of things that we need to think about, you know, when we talk about existing infrastructure and I think folks, it's easy to lose sight and say hey, you know, we know that, you know, this government, this area, this locality has all this available infrastructure, but the reality is, you know, we have to look and analyze each piece of it and determine what's the right strategy for moving forward.

And as we're looking, you know, at moving forward now we're really doing this through the RFP process so we're going to be encouraging the potential partners who come to the table to leverage that infrastructure to the extent they economically can do so, so we've made some clarifications there. That's from our first notice.

In our second notice I highlight a couple of issues. One, generally our network policies. And we're not making any change here, but I think it's worth highlighting because it's such a critical element to the deployment of the network and to so many other issues that we touch on. Our network policies are something that are going to be deployed really on an ongoing basis and they're going to change and they're going to be variable for a long period of time and they're critical.

One of the things we clarify and we can kind of confirm our conclusion is particularly in a situation where a state chooses to deploy its own radio access network as we commonly know as opt-out. We've preliminarily concluded in the original notice and we confirmed that our network policies have to apply across the board whether a state assumes that responsibility or whether it's FirstNet's responsibility and that's key. That's key for interoperability and to ensure that we have one nationwide network no matter who is responsible for the deployment of pieces of it. That, you know, public safety when they cross state boundaries are getting the exact same user experience and in State A as they are in State B.

And as we know, public safety and public safety incidents don't stop at the state border. So this is a critical element to our deployment, and I think and an important clarification that we want to make sure that as offerors are coming to the table, they understand how this is going to work.

And then finally the last piece I wanted to confirm and kind of talk a little bit about is the concept of how the self-sustainability of FirstNet, the need to leverage fees and revenue generated by the network for the national deployment. And one of the conclusions we had made originally in the second notice was that where states assume responsibility for the radio access network, they also get the

benefit of the associated spectrum in that particular locality, and being able to leverage and monetize that spectrum with whatever partner that they're going to use in their deployment.

The issue we have there is one where we need to ensure that any revenue that's generated, particularly in very highly dense, populated areas that will generate significant value for the excess capacity available, that that money is appropriately reinvested back into the network, and we believe the statute requires reinvestment back into the network bar none, period.

But secondly that it's reinvested in a way that benefits the entire nation. That we don't want the national deployment to in any way suffer because a particularly rich state that is able to generate significant revenue because of their population densities retains that revenue to create essentially a higher quality radio access network in their state than what we have in the other localities around the country.

And this is really important because as we all know the majority of our country is rural and the majority of our country is going to be very expensive to build out some of this infrastructure and so it's critical that we are leveraging the high-density, high revenue-generating areas in order to be able to pay for the deployment nationally.

We think that's absolutely what Congress intended. We think that's the intent of the Act and what the Act says, and we've reiterated that conclusion in the proposed documents that we hope to release. So those are kind of the key points there. I can take a breath if anyone's got any questions or comments and then we'll kind of move on.

JEFF JOHNSON. Jason, I think I really appreciated the way you said that. You know, we're responsible for building this nationwide network for public safety, and that doesn't mean seven of 56 states, territories and commonwealths. It means all 56, right?

JASON KARP: That's right.

JEFF JOHNSON: And that means we're going to have to take resources from areas that produce more, and share them in the places that don't produce enough to build a network. I think that's not a point that should be lost on anybody. That's our responsibility. Congress had plenty of opportunities to say this is for this state or this state. But they didn't. They said this is a nationwide network and that's our charge. So I really love the fact that you're calling attention to that. Thank you.

JASON KARP: Thank you, Chief. And I appreciate that and the reality is as we all know, is Congress gave us very limited resources to do this. They gave us a pool of cash, which is fantastic and is a great down payment, but as we all know is not sufficient to build out a nationwide network in and of itself.

And it gave us the spectrum. And we've got to leverage those, you know, as most efficiently as we can to create an efficient network and to reach public safety across the nation and that's critical. So this is some of the kind of the highlights.

On the next slide I just kind of point-out what we've laid-out for the public and for the Board are the overall topics that we are addressing in the public notice. As you can see it really spans the gap of different issues that potential RFP will rely on.

And the key was we really wanted to get certainty on issues that we felt the RFP and the proposers had to rely on in order to make a proposal and just pointing out some, you know, we had some technical requirements here where we talk about the definition of core and RAN which is critical. You know, we mentioned rural and existing infrastructure.

We talk a little bit about the fees and fee structure and what the Act allows there. You know, we talked about covered leasing agreements, and how that's going to work and that the complexities associated with that so it's really a very broad swath. There's a lot of decisions here, a lot of content here I think for everyone to digest.

I mean, I think for the most part, you know, we've stayed pretty true to the original interpretations that we made. We've tweaked where we felt appropriate or where we received feedback and we noted a couple of those things as well, but hopefully this will give everyone a very clear roadmap for moving on.

You know, one thing I will mention as we know, we have issued three public notices. For the most part the issues that we're addressing here are on the first two public notices. We're still doing work on the third. There's a lot to evaluate there. We're in the middle of consultation to talk about users and public safety entity and kind of where that's going to go.

You know, obviously the Act itself has the definition of public safety entity in it. You know, I don't think there's any question in terms of the guidance we've given, you know, and what is I think clear by statute that, you know, entities whose primary mission is going to be public safety, plain and simple.

They're getting access to the network. I don't think anyone has a dispute on that, that topic. I don't think there's any question about that, so and I want to reiterate that we have no question about that at all. But we do want to still kind of look at this issue to understand what kind of further guidance may be appropriate, you know, going forward as we operationalize that.

And then finally just in terms of next steps, to do this we plan on publishing two kind of separate notice documents that we would release to the public in the upcoming days assuming that the Board approves our approach, corresponding to the first notice and the second notice.

Of course, you know, we're going to rely on these final interpretations as we finalize the RFP and hope to provide guidance for offerors so that they are able to put in very sound and feel very comfortable about the proposals they're going to make. And of course as always we reserve the right, you know, to issue further public notices as we need to if we feel that additional clarification or consultation is necessary.

So, with that, you know, we would ask the Board to consider the recommendation for moving forward on going final on these interpretations, and open it for discussion and certainly hope to get your vote.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you, Jason. Appreciate the enormous amount of work you guys did and more importantly probably is for all the people that have been engaged with FirstNet to provide their insights, learning and questions which lead us to these times right here. These come from our future users and from people that'll be touched by this network.

At this point the Board is now ready to consider a resolution. Uzoma, would you mind reading the operative portion of the resolution?

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Now therefore be it resolved that the Board authorizes management to take such reasonable actions as are necessary to publish management's responses to comments and final interpretations on certain provisions of its enabling legislation discussed in the first and second notice.

JEFF JOHNSON: That you, Uzoma. The chair would entertain action on this resolution?

((Crosstalk))

KEVIN MCGINNIS: I move the resolution.

JEFF JOHNSON: Kevin. We have a motion. Second? Mayor do you second?

ANNISE PARKER: Yes.

JEFF JOHNSON: We have a motion and a second on the resolution. Is there any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all those in favor of the motion signify by saying 'aye'.

ALL: Aye.

JEFF JOHNSON: Opposed say no? Any abstentions? Ok. The motion passes. Thank you very much. We're now moving into a discussion on acquisition plan and acquisition plan resolution but before we do that, we need to first turn to the Chair of our Finance Committee, the esteemed Governor Jim Douglas.

JIM DOUGLAS: Mr. Chairman, the bylaws provide for a recommendation from the Finance Committee as we move forward on an acquisition approach, and most of our colleagues were at the committee meeting yesterday and had an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

But I can report to the Board the consensus of the committee that we move forward on the basis that we'll be described in just a few minutes. I think what you articulated at the outset of our meeting this morning, Mr. Chairman, was the best case for the importance of a nationwide approach to building out a network to serve the public safety needs of our nation and indeed the public. This is a network that needs to be available in each and every part of our country. And as we move forward in seeking and securing a partnership, it is critical that it be a nationwide solution. So the Finance Committee is recommending the approach that we'll discuss in just a minute and hope that the Board agrees.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you, Governor. So next up we have Mike and James who will walk us through the discussion on the acquisition plan. This is the second important decision that the Board will address today, so Mike if you'll fill us in.

MIKE POTH: Great, thank you Vice Chair. FirstNet exists to ensure that the network meets the mission of public safety every step of the way. What we're doing with public safety and the American people expect and need us to do, every day in the news we're reminded of this need.

We will accomplish this critical mission through a public/private partnership letting the private sector do what they do best, to rapidly deploy a nationwide network. First off, FirstNet we are on schedule for the issuance of the RFP. We continue to make significant and timely progress towards releasing this but there's still much work to do over the next 90 days, a lot of work to do.

Through our ongoing review, we've affirmed in our consultation and feedback have also provided that these original 16 objectives are still relevant and still the critical foundation for the offer that we are going to put out.

They're the right foundation for the national public safety broadband network. So how are these objectives just a reminder to the Board how these objectives feed into and what will ultimately be an award and a contract so we have the statement of objectives those 16. Those are going to translate into RFP requirements that will need to be addressed by the offerors.

So the offerors will be offering us a statement of work including the contractor work breakdown schedule and that becomes their proposal and we hope to have a lot of opportunities to discuss with the vendors between now and their submission of how this is going to happen to make it the most competitive innovative solution, so that we have proposals in the best interests of public safety.

Once they've submitted, those statement of objectives is still our foundation for our discussions and deliberations with FirstNet and the offerors. Once we come to those objectives become the basis of the award and the award becomes the basis of the contract that we will execute with our partners.

Now with the release of the special notice in April, FirstNet sought feedback from the states, public safety industry in several key areas to shape the final RFP. We read, considered, discussed and debated as you all mentioned, you debated significantly with us yesterday, all the inputs received on the special notice and draft RFP documents.

This included a description of the acquisitions approach, nationwide partner, or multiple regional partners. FirstNet evaluated the feedback through the lens of our objectives, sustainability and coverage to include key rural telecommunication provider considerations, so that we may ultimately deploy the best network possible for public safety.

We believe that gathering the information at this early stage would allow FirstNet to make a decision with a maximum amount of input from our stakeholders. We've incorporated the guidance from our stakeholders' responses into multiple sections of the RFP.

Today we are seeking also Board approval to firm up the foundation for the RFP by approving two additional key structural elements including the acquisition approach and evaluation factors including addressing rural telecommunication provider partnerships - I'm struggling with my clicker - there we go.

After careful analysis and weighing the pros and cons, the FirstNet management recommends to the Board that the acquisition approach should follow a nationwide provider solution approach. The nationwide solution approach will assure a comprehensive network solution for public safety.

This solution is responsible for all 56 states and territories and inherently will deliver a more consistent package of products and services to public safety. The nationwide solution approach results in an overall economy of scale which reduces overall cost and complexity. But we also recognize this approach that the supply chain risk associated with a single supplier.

A nationwide provider solution approach may make it more difficult to adopt some solutions for small businesses. This approach does not mean that there's no meaningful role for rural telecommunication providers or small business. In point of fact, we have listened and intend to incorporate measures in the evaluation criteria addressing the roles of rural telecommunication providers and small businesses and what they will play.

Nationwide offerors will be evaluated on numerous factors from coverage and capacity, products and architectural factors, pricing, business management factors, past performance, and the use of existing infrastructure as Jason had discussed earlier.

We believe that by recommending these decisions now, this promotes proactive partnership discussions well in advance of the RFP, and it encourages the highest level of small business and rural telecommunication providers' engagement. Remember our overarching goal is to maximize the efficiency of the nationwide network for public safety.

We also intend to build in to the award a mechanism to ensure that the innovation and service enhancements can be adopted on a timely basis. So today we're asking for Board approval of a resolution to allow both the updated acquisition approach and this evaluation criteria be folded into the RFP artifacts.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you very much Mike. The Board is now ready to consider a resolution whether to endorse the acquisition plan. Uzoma once again would you please read the operative portion of the resolution?

UZOMA ONYEIJE: Now therefore be it resolved that the Board approves the acquisition approach and directs the management team to take all actions necessary to implement the approach in accordance with the principles as presented by the management team to the Board.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you Uzoma. So at this time the Chair would entertain action on the proposed resolution.

TERI TAKAI: So moved.

JEFF JOHNSON: We have a motion.

ANNISE PARKER: Second.

JEFF JOHNSON: And we have a second. Thank you, Mayor. The floor is now open for discussion on the resolution. Mayor?

ANNISE PARKER: Starting from the premise that we laid out earlier that this first and foremost it is designed to serve public safety nationwide in an even a manner as possible, that would tend to push us to - I'm sorry, closer to the microphone - that it seems to me that that would tend to push us to a nationwide solution rather than a regional solution.

But it is not intended at all to step over - we don't have the - why don't we put up the slide that kind of shows the - there we go - it is not intended at all to be a single answer but because they have to, however we choose a provider partner for FirstNet, they will be expected to leverage existing local infrastructure. They will be expected to provide coverage in areas where currently no existing infrastructure exists, and they'll also be working through and with the state authorities because the state authorities have their own decisions to make in this.

So this, even by making this decision, we're still expecting a lot of I would say cross-pollination on all of those areas and it will require multiple entities coming together to make this work.

MIKE POTH: You're absolutely correct, Mayor. That's the only way that this truly will work and that's why we keep emphasizing, it is a public/private partnership and that just isn't, the public part isn't just FirstNet, it is all the states, it is all the local communities, it is public safety and it is on the private side all the other entities out there to be able to enable that. So not only do we think that that's the only way, we're also taking additional measures in the evaluation factors to ensure that all those objectives—the 16 that we have—are met, and that we can evaluate to get the right solution and offeror at the table that will ultimately pull this off for us, and with us.

JEFF JOHNSON: Suzanne?

SUZANNE SPAULDING: Thank you. I want to pick up on your very opening remarks about this approach is designed to let the private sector do what it does best and let FirstNet do what it can do best. There was a remark this morning; Chief your remarks were wonderful this morning.

I would only take issue with one small phrase when you made reference to, you know, we're not a typical and maybe you said federal agency. And as a federal partner, a designee for the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Undersecretary for an organization with the responsibility for strengthening the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure against both physical and cyber risks,

I have to stand up first for federal agencies and for the tremendously talented and dedicated public servants that populate those agencies, but also to recognize the public interest commitment that has been made by every member of this Board and of the staff of FirstNet.

And I will say in the business that I'm in, we work in a partnership with the private sector every day and it is a struggle every day to make sure that we are letting the private sector do what it does best and that we are bringing to the table our comparative advantage is the way I talk about it.

But part of that is that we have the responsibility to make sure that the public interest is being met each and every day. There are very patriotic people in the private sector, but that is not their primary responsibility to take care of the public interest; it is ours. And so one of the key roles that is going to have to happen with any offeror here is aggregation of a variety of capabilities across the country. Some of those will be regional capabilities, some of those will be broader capabilities and the question that we wrestled with and discussed at length was who's in the best position to really make sure that that aggregation happens in an effective and an efficient way and ultimately that's probably the private sector's areas of expertise and sweet spot.

But it is our responsibility that we've very cognizant of, and will observe and ensure happens to make sure that as that goes forward, the RFP spells out the public interest imperatives, and that those are observed every step along the way and that is for public safety and for the American public.

And so I just, you know, I want to reassure folks that that is an appropriate role for a federal entity, even one as creative and innovative as FirstNet.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you, Suzanne. Kevin.

KEVIN MCGINNIS: Thank you. I am just entering my second term on the Board and for a few years before that try and help public safety make sure this Board came into existence, so there's some appeal to this approach to getting the job done that appeals to my need for speed and efficiency.

Now I'm also very much in favor of getting something put together that'll work, that's not just put together quickly and I think that this truly embodies what we talked about all along from 2006 and before through the enactment of the Act to today of a nationwide approach to this network.

I think that this type of approach is more achievable. It puts it in single hands, or a public/private partnership but with a focus. I think that there are less opportunities for failure, points of failure. I think that we have much greater opportunities for economies of scale and the streamlined operation.

Now and so I'm very much in favor of this way of doing things. Having said that, I'm also a rural guy. And you all have given me the responsibility of interacting with the tribes and I know there's concern out there about getting stomped on by a larger operator of this network. And I am convinced that tribal telecoms and rural telecoms can be served well by this approach, if we build into it the appropriate checks and balances. And I'm very convinced and I'm sure I'm going to be watching that very carefully as we build it to do so.

JEFF JOHNSON: Appreciate it. Further comments from the Board? Barry?

BARRY BONIFACE: I guess, you know, the one thing I think that we talked a lot about and people have hit on it. Listen, partnering is hard. And it's not an easy thing and it's not easy to create those kind of win-win relationships. I think that the conversation a lot of that we had was that forcing partnerships at the FirstNet level was not the way to go about this, but to move this back into the hands of people that are used to partnering. I mean every national solution that's out there today, I don't care what it is, whether it's providing long-distance service, there are partnerships that have been created to deliver those outcomes.

Ultimately what we've decided here in my mind with this approach is that that partnering is better left in the hands of the people that are used to doing it on a day-to-day basis, rather than being forced from us.

So I applaud the management team and going through the work and the hard work associated with coming up with this ultimate approach, but I think from my perspective I think it's the right approach. We left things in the hands of the right people.

JEFF JOHNSON: Yes. Neil, and then back to the Mayor.

NEIL COX: Yes, just to highlight what Barry said, there will be partnerships, but I think the timing of this is very important because it gives our potential partners time to go and form those relationships so I think the timing of this is very important to get it out now and to make this very clear for our potential partners.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you, Neil. Mayor.

ANNISE PARKER: When I spoke earlier, I was referencing really partnerships at the local level, partnerships at the state level, but this approach also anticipates partnerships at the nationwide level, not just the partnership between FirstNet and the private sector, but private sector partners coming together to make a proposal to us.

JEFF JOHNSON: Yes.

ANNISE PARKER: So it's horizontal and vertical partnerships I guess is what we're talking about to follow Barry's remarks.

JEFF JOHNSON: Excellent. Thank you, Mayor. Further comments?

SUE SWENSON: Chief, this is Sue. I have just a brief comment if I could. I don't know if somebody else is in line before me.

JEFF JOHNSON: No, you're up, Sue.

SUE SWENSON: Okay, you know, I really agree with what everybody is saying and I think we talked a lot about the approach. I think one of the challenges we have as we've said so many times what we're doing is so unprecedented, I think we have to keep in mind while we have, you know, certain guidelines to follow from a federal perspective and I really appreciate Suzanne's comments, you know, protecting the public good here. I think we're going to have to be creative in terms of the process itself so we have a, you know, an acquisition approach and process and I think, you know, to really make this effective and, you know, we still have to sort of figure out the details is we're going to have to be able to sit down and really talk with people and I'm sure we're going to figure that out.

But I think it's important for people who are listening to understand that, you know, we're going to have to be creative in that perspective too, because that's the only way we're going to be able to achieve what we're talking about here is to be able to have those important conversations with many people to achieve the outcome. So I just wanted to add that to it. I know that's not the focus of today but I think it's an important component to actually realize the outcome we're talking about. Thank you, Chief.

JEFF JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Sue. Further comments? Chief?

CHRIS BURBANK: If I may as one who represents ultimately the final end user of this product, I see the challenge before us is one of availability and accessibility and I see that in three different

arenas. One that it has to be available to all agencies no matter big or small and that product has to be equal in its capabilities. It also has to be available from a cost perspective because if we are outpricing again either large or small, it is not a feasible project for public safety to accomplish and then last is the timeliness and that is one of the things that I think is so important as we look at a nationwide approach that the timeliness and the availability that comes from that for all agencies. Again it is such a daunting task to say we are going to address the majority of agencies in this country that are five to 10 people in size, and we're also going to address those agencies that have 30,000 employees working for them. And that's why I believe that a nationwide approach is probably the best to accomplish those three areas.

JEFF JOHNSON: Further comment?

Just kind of putting my wraps on this, I understand I just fundamentally, that is, we get as the chute gets narrower and narrower on clarifying how we're going to procure, you know, we are going to upset some people and, you know, there's going to be some people that, you know, see their opportunity tarnished or evaporate altogether, or they're going to see a bright light shown on it, and they're going to say wow, this is perfect for us.

I understand that, and I expect to hear from people that love this and people that are bothered by it, but with that said, we don't forget our purpose. Our purpose is not that purpose. Our purpose is to deliver a nationwide network for public safety. That's our purpose and to do so in a timely fashion.

And to do so at a price that we can afford in the smallest and most underfunded agencies in this country, but with enough capacity to serve the biggest and sophistication to serve the biggest demands placed on this network.

That's our charge. And I think just inherently when I look at rural America which is from where I come, there are people operating rural networks that will help us. How do I know that? Because they're the only ones in many of these places, so if we're going to cover it, they're going to end up at the table here.

But I also know that in the densest part of this country, people I just spoke of aren't there. They're not in the densest parts of America, some of the largest most sophisticated telecom companies in the country are.

It is really going to be the marriage of those two strengths into one bid and one picture that hopefully wins favor, because at the end of the day that we cannot do our job without the small rural telecoms and we can't do our job in my opinion without a nationwide strategy to get this done. We just can't do it.

I actually applaud this Board and I applaud this staff. For the insight to say what we're saying today to say it three months before our RFP is going to be released so that those people that need to create partnerships and need to create teaming that they have the time to do it.

You want a shot? Here's three months' notice about how to create a shot, how to bring your assets and capability to the table, and how to pair that with somebody that is going to bring us a nationwide deployment to serve public safety.

I really applaud the lack of surprise. I applaud the transparency, and I applaud the clarity that I think this brings. I also want to thank staff for having the foresight to make sure that we're building factors into our assessment tools on the RFP that are going to make darn sure that we don't build out urban America and get to rural America when we can.

We're not going to do that, because the evaluation tools on the RFP are going to address that. And they're also going to address things such as adequacy of rural coverage and how much rural coverage do we have so I don't know how much better you can do if for public safety we have a nationwide crafted approach.

It's going to require that the small rural telecoms play, or we can't achieve our goals. And we build those evaluation criteria into the process by which we'll select the eventual winner. And we do so with enough time on the front end that people can team—go to firstnet.gov and find our teaming site—you can team and you can partner and you have adequate time, information, capacity to do so. That's where I land on it. Ed?

ED HOROWITZ: Thank you. This is hard to follow. I just would like to add an overarching thought here which we discussed in a lot of detail which is to make sure that we also create an environment in which innovation can permeate and let's call future-proof the network as it gets built out.

So I know that Mike and the team are going to incorporate, you know, any mechanism whereby innovative products whether they be developed by small businesses or large businesses or locally, can be, you know, evaluated and subsequently deployed if that's what the market is demanding.

And I think that's also something that comes with a nationwide approach, where you have an innovation that can know at its destination that the potential market for it is nationwide as opposed to being restricted into one specific geographic area for example.

JEFF JOHNSON: I'd like to, I guess impose upon staff a little bit. Could you talk a little bit about how we're going to ensure that all participants understand the opportunity that lies here, I mean, so I mean I mentioned the teaming so, I mean, what do we have in terms of outreach communication, etcetera, what are we going to do to make sure everyone has access to the information?

MIKE POTH: Well, I'll start and then have TJ follow up. We are as I mentioned earlier continuing to reach out. The consultations continue, and they're going to be ongoing. You heard a lot of details about that, and we're also the vendor engagements with the community so that we can ensure that they're getting all the information they need to put together the best possible offer.

And as many possible offers as possible that are competitive, innovative, thought-provoking and to get to those ultimate 16 objectives. That's the whole reason we made an objectives-based approach because we want to hear getting back to our original things, let's draw on the experts of what they do best, have them tell us the best way to accomplish this goal. TJ?

TJ KENNEDY: Thanks Mike. I think the key going forward is two-fold. One, next week we're meeting with all the 56 state and territory points of contact, and we're bringing everybody into Colorado and we want to sit down and we're going to dive into this for two full days. And then we're going to talk through the details of this acquisition approach.

And we're going to make sure that we're not just talking, we're listening and having that engagement and I think that is what we want to continue to go forward with over the next year, not just before the RFP but leading up to the RFP during the question-and-answer periods and making sure that everyone has the same information, and that we're sharing that information very openly and freely as we move forward.

On the second side of that is this need to really engage with partners and having the ability to have conversations, to be open and be able to answer questions. This is complex, and we've tried to make it as straightforward as possible when it comes to a nationwide approach, but making sure that we're ensuring that we're going to leverage rural infrastructure.

We're going to leverage those providers in the private sector and industry to do what they do best while at the same point having public safety engaged and having FirstNet engaged on public safety's behalf to ensure the delivery of a mission critical public safety grade network.

And as we do that, we need to make sure that we're talking to both sides, that we're doing this in a win-win fashion so that private industry can bring solutions, can have teammates and can deliver on the public safety network. So it's a ramped up engagement.

We're not necessarily just doing these one-day discussions. We have folks that are across the country engaging both at a local level, at a city and county level, at a statewide level and a regional level and we're going to continue to ramp that up over the next year. Many different events related to public safety associations and making sure we're engaging at the association level.

And I think over the next year you're going to see an ongoing change that we also want to engage with firefighters, paramedics and EMTs, police officers in making sure that they understand what this network is that's coming, and that we're going to meet their needs because at the end of the day that's what matters.

JEFF JOHNSON: Mike and TJ, thank you very much. Further comment before the Board before I ask for action on the resolutions? Suzanne?

SUZANNE SPAULDING: Now Chief, just to amplify on those points and the hope and expectation that we'll have some robust competition in this. You know, it's obvious this is something that has never been done before and therefore it is not a given that traditional approaches or just traditional players should think about participation in this effort. And we really are going to beat the bushes to try to get some innovative and perhaps non-traditional approaches to this, I think.

TJ KENNEDY: I want to react to Secretary's Spaulding's comment that there's no doubt we're trying to get as many players to the table and not just large players. We're trying to make sure that at every level they are coming together with unique approaches in many cases teaming and providing alternatives and that we're there to answer the questions because it's complex, back to that point. And so over the next three months as we lead up to the release of this RFP, it's about making sure we have good competition coming to the table.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you TJ, and to the Secretary's point, right, and not just size diversity but maybe people that have never been providers before. Maybe people that haven't been in this space but can build this space. Our outreach is much broader than the major wireless carriers and the rural telecoms.

It is a much broader look than that, because public safety wins when we get the most creative and motivated people to build this for public safety. As long as we're holding those standards and we're holding the end product as an accountability tool, we're never going to take our eye off which I think is absolutely critical. Any last comments before I ask the Board for a vote?

TERI TAKAI: Jeff, can I just add one comment to what you just said? I think one way to visualize what your comments really means is if we think two to three years down the road after in fact we have made a successful award and after in fact we're beginning deployment, I just want to have a visual that we all understand that that does not mean the role of this Board or the role of the FirstNet organization changes in any way.

It just means in fact that we have a partner that is delivering the capability to do in fact what this Board is driving and in fact what the FirstNet organization is driving and I think that's an important visual as we think about what this is going to look like after the award is made, and again after the award is made successfully and we have a partner that deploys.

And I think that perhaps gives us a view of again, how we're going to be active in making sure that we're driving the innovation that we're driving as you said the standards but that we're also driving the evolving world of public safety and ensuring that we can keep up with that demand.

JEFF JOHNSON: Well said Teri, thank you very much. At this time I'm prepared to call for a vote. We had a motion, we have a second and we have wrapped up our discussion on the motion. So at this time all those in favor of the motion as proposed signify by saying 'aye'.

ALL: Aye.

JEFF JOHNSON: Opposed say no. Any abstentions? Excellent, the motion carries. Mike, CEO, recap, the last word's yours.

MIKE POTH: Thank you. Thank you very much Board for all your energies and efforts and your adoption of our two proposals. We really appreciate that. That will help a long way in moving this forward. So as we think about the next 90 days to the RFP release, there is a lot of work to do.

There are certainly the mechanical parts of the successful proposal and acquisition, and you can see them listed here and the timeline. But I also want to caution all of us, we are on schedule, but we may slip the schedule if need be to get this right.

There's no indication that there is a problem, but I want to make sure we are not going to have, you know, just to push out an RFP until we are sure that you are comfortable and that everyone is comfortable with the approach and the direction we're heading.

So I just wanted to highlight some of the activities that are going on that we will be seeking Board input along the way and formal Board adoption and approval in the December timeframe. Next we're going to incorporate the final interpretations and the nationwide and evaluation approach into our RFP artifacts so it will be hugely helpful.

And as TJ mentioned, as we have in the past, we're going to step-off with consulting with public safety industry and our federal partners to make sure that we're collecting all the possible data and getting this right. As you know, we can't emphasize enough we need innovation, we need robust solutions, timely, creative ways to get this network deployed as quickly as possible.

The thing that, as we get through and I catch myself on the 46th day thinking about the mechanics of what we need to do to accomplish to get things out, I also remind myself and I'm absolutely biased, you know, public safety in my humble opinion is the world's greatest profession.

And the men and women that are doing that are counting on us whether they're federal, state, local, you know, within the US, international, and they're counting on us and the people that they serve are counting on us to get this done. Congress and public safety fought to make this happen so it's incumbent on us to get it right. And this is a huge step in that process.

I really support the Board. I appreciate as Teri echoed as I started my conversation this morning, FirstNet was not born to just issue an RFP and go away. We are moving out. There's a lot of things that have been accomplished and I really appreciate the Board's leadership and insight and tenacity in helping us get this right. Thank you.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you very much Mike. Sue, are you still on the line? I'm actually glad she's not, you know, and here's why.

SUE SWENSON: Actually I am. I just had to step out of...

((Crosstalk))

JEFF JOHNSON: Darn it! I was just going to say nice things about you and I thought you would have been embarrassed so yes, go ahead.

SUE SWENSON: No, no, I was just going to say I appreciate you letting me participate via conference call today. We're at the hospital this morning so I had to step out of the room for just a moment but I think the Board has done a terrific job.

I think management has done a terrific job, and I can't remember who said it earlier, but we wouldn't be here today if weren't for all of the great input, feedback as well as criticisms and, you know, constructive feedback from the people who helped us get here.

So as someone said, we still have a lot of work to do, but this is an important step so that the folks who are going to help us build this very important network, can be in a position to sit at the table within a reasonable period of time to have the appropriate discussion. So while I'm very pleased with where we are and again thanks for your tolerance for letting me participate via phone today.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you, Sue. Well be prepared to get embarrassed because, you know, I think the one person I wish was here was Sue, and I wanted to just publicly acknowledge Sue's contribution to getting us to where we are today. She epitomizes the word tireless and epitomizes the word visionary, and it's the combination of those two things that makes her such an effective Chair. The insistence that we get this right and that we be inclusive. And that we break glass when we need to and that we build really a first ever. And she's very aware of that. I think the architects of this legislation were wise to blend commercial and public safety disciplines, because it's obvious to me day 1 and obvious to me two-and-a-half years later, how critical it is that we have got that mix because we both have perspectives the others don't have. Even over time, we overlap a bit.

They're still unique skillsets and insights. And Sue for you and I it's a daily, if not multiple times a day conversation. I just want to publicly thank you for all you do for us.

SUE SWENSON: Well, I appreciate that, and you should be embarrassed too because of the partnership that I have with you. I think this just shows that there can be a sense of public/private partnership because we've found that it can work and there's every reason why that can extend beyond that so too you know I appreciate everything we do every day as well.

JEFF JOHNSON: Thank you. At this time, after a fantastic Board meeting, I want to entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

BARRY BONIFCE: So moved.

NEIL COX: Second.

JEFF JOHNSON: Got a motion and a second. Discussion of the motion? Hearing none, all those in favor of the motion signify by saying 'aye'.

ALL: Aye.

JEFF JOHNSON: Opposed, same sign? The meeting's adjourned. Thank you very much.

PHONE COORDINATOR: Thank you. This does conclude today's call. You may disconnect your lines. Have a great day.

END