



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION  
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY  
**MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 18, 2021 COMBINED BOARD AND COMMITTEES  
MEETING VIA WEBEX**

The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) held an open public meeting of the FirstNet Authority Board and its Committees. The meeting took place in-person and via WebEx on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, and began at 11:00 AM EST. An audio recording and transcript of the meeting, as well as the archived presentation, are available on the FirstNet Authority website: [www.FirstNet.gov](http://www.FirstNet.gov).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Board Chair Robert “Tip” Osterthaler opened the meeting by welcoming all who virtually joined the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) Combined Board and Committees meeting. In his opening statement, he welcomed new federal Board member designee, Ms. Tia Patterson. She serves as the Office of Management and Budget Associate Director for Housing, Treasury and Commerce and will be a member of the Finance Committee. Chair Osterthaler then invited Ms. Patterson to say a few words.

During the meeting, the Board focused on the review of the FirstNet Authority’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and 2022 financial priorities; a financial update to FY 2022 budget; approval of the May 5, 2021, Combined Board and Committees Meeting minutes; updates from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and the Advocacy, Network and Technology, and Finance Committees; a Finance Committee vote and Board vote; and closing remarks from the FirstNet Authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Edward Parkinson.

### ***Roll Call***

Robert “Tip” Osterthaler (“Chair”), Richard Carrizzo (“Vice Chair”), Billy Bob Brown Jr., Welton Chase, Neil Cox, Brian Crawford, Billy Hewes, Karima Holmes, Edward Horowitz, Darrin Jones, Paul Patrick, Tia Patterson, Matt Slinkard, and David Zolet.<sup>1</sup> A quorum was present for the Board and Combined Committees meeting.

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

Prior to participating in the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting, Board Secretary Janell Smith provided Board members with the meeting agenda and Conflict of Interest guidance provided by the Ethics Law and Program Division of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of General Counsel that applies to all Board members. All Board

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<sup>1</sup> David Zolet was not able to attend this meeting.

members responded prior to the meeting that they did not need to recuse themselves from participation in any portion of this meeting, therefore indicating no conflicts of interest, and the meeting proceeded.

### ***Votes Taken***

Prior to proceeding with the business of the day, Chair Osterthaler requested a motion to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2021, Combined Board and Committees Meeting. Paul Patrick made the motion. Karima Holmes seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the May 5, 2021, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes to be available to the public at the end of the meeting.

The Board voted to approve the following resolutions:

- Tia Patterson motioned to approve Finance Committee Resolution 28, Recommendation on Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. Edward Horowitz seconded, and the Finance Committee unanimously voted to approve the resolution.
- Matt Slinkard motioned to approve Board Resolution 110, Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. Billy Bob Brown, Jr. seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

### ***Farewells***

- PSAC Chair Todd Early announced that this would be his last Board meeting as PSAC Chair. He is retiring from the Texas Department of Public Safety at the end of August 2021 and ended by thanking previous PSAC Chairs, Harlin McEwen, Tom Sorley, and Paul Patrick for laying the groundwork. He also thanked CEO Edward Parkinson, Board Chair Tip Osterthaler, and Board member Edward Horowitz. Kenzie Capece will be in contact with the PSAC members about leadership transition.
- Previous FirstNet Authority Board Chair and current Governance and Personnel Committee Chair Edward Horowitz spoke on his experience on the FirstNet Authority Board for six years. He first joined when the objective statements were being solidified that led to the Request for Information and then the Request for Proposal. After a rigorous process, the selection of AT&T was made with a 25-year contract to buildout the network. Mr. Horowitz thanked past secretaries of DOC Penny Pritzker and Wilbur Ross for appointing him, and acknowledged the positive working relationships that he had with DOC and NTIA colleagues. He also went on to thank the FirstNet Authority staff stating that there were about 20 people when the organization started and now there's 240 plus.
- Network and Technology Committee Chair Neil Cox spoke on learning about the importance of diversity in business. He interfaced with the first responder community and government personnel and noticed that seven heads are better than one, with the Board makeup being one of the strongest things about FirstNet. The diversity of the Board brings together diverse minds and backgrounds that can develop amazing, powerful things. He went on to mention his participation in the first decision made to develop a nationwide network with \$7 billion and 20 megahertz of spectrum costing \$30 to \$50 billion to build it. In order to build the network with this funding, there was a lot

of debate on whether there should be seven regional networks instead of one nationwide network. One proved to be good.

## **MATTERS DISCUSSED**

### ***FY 2021 Accomplishments and FY 2022 Priorities***

CEO Edward Parkinson spoke about the FirstNet Authority's three key areas of focus in FY21. *Investments* were the primary goal to start a path to 5G, delivering an additional fifteen deployable assets, bringing the total number of deployables to over 100 in a variety of different forms. The FirstNet Authority held more than 1,200 virtual engagements with public safety to help improve the network and seek strategic input into public safety's network. As for the network, the Band 14 spectrum is now more than 90% built out with more than 2.5 million connections on the FirstNet system of 17,000 agencies as well as new services such as the Z Axis, High Powered User Equipment, FirstNet Push-To-Talk (PTT), etc. The Z Axis app is the first in the world to offer such a capability.

He went on to discuss the FirstNet Authority's FY 2022 key priorities. In the past 18 months, there was a growing need for secure mobile broadband access for all public safety personnel, with local incidents, weather events, and COVID-19. The FirstNet Authority will continue to focus on its engagement with stakeholders to direct planning and investments, and we'll advance the network based on feedback received. The Board took a step forward by taking up the FY 2022 budget to fund the operations and investment opportunities.

Mr. Parkinson concluded by noting that he would be holding AT&T accountable for their promise to public safety, taking information received and feeding it into the Roadmap and making strategic investments as a result.

### ***PSAC Update***

PSAC Chair Todd Early provided updates on the Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Strike Team; the Telehealth Strike Team; and the Tribal Working Group (TWG).

The PSAC is completing its tasking from the FirstNet Authority to provide public safety expertise on ICAMs influence on applications that are heavily used by public safety. The team has discussed the types of applications and best approaches for prioritizing potential new public safety devices to the FirstNet ICAM ecosystem by providing expert insights into the important application and database solutions, challenges, and other considerations for broad ICAM adoption.

The 2019 Telehealth Strike Team developed an introductory product that provided a mid-level view of telehealth and its ability to effectively be used by public safety. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services selected several telehealth agencies across the nation to pilot the *Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3)* model which was delayed to January 2021 due to COVID-19. The PSAC Telehealth Strike Team reconvened with the FirstNet Authority's blessing, and they developed a project statement. They will be working with stakeholders via survey to highlight success stories, lessons learned, future uses from using the technology at both ends of the telehealth process across the country, and to lead innovation of the FirstNet Network.

In 2021 the TWG continues to prioritize the creation of a Tribal Subject Matter Expert database for Roadmap data capture, an update of the TWG webpage on FirstNet.gov, and participation in magazine articles, placements, and podcasts. In addition, the FirstNet Authority attended the Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition Summit in June 2021 and had the opportunity to travel to the Blackfeet Nation to engage with the National Tribal Emergency Management Council's Robert DesRosier. Mr. DesRosier is a long-standing TWG member.

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

Committee Chairman Carrizzo congratulated and thanked PSAC Chair Todd Early on an outstanding job done and mentioned the PSAC will always be committed to continue the FirstNet mission for all public safety responders. He then went on to discuss the activities of the Advocacy Committee. In July 2021, the committee was able to participate in face-to-face conferences with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Fire Rescue International, National Sheriffs Association, Major County Sheriffs Association, and the Fire Department Instructors Conference. Additional planning for upcoming conferences is in the works with FirstNet Authority participation – EMS Today is scheduled for the end of August 2021, and both the International Association of Chiefs of Police and International Communications Expo are planned for September 2021. Chair Carrizzo then yielded to the Acting Chief Market Engagement Officer Jacqueline Miller-Waring to provide information on engagement accomplishments.

Ms. Miller-Waring went on to discuss the continuous collaboration with public safety and how the FirstNet Authority leverages input from public safety stakeholders. In the third quarter of 2021, the Market Engagement Team was successful in its continued effort to *Engage* with stakeholders for feedback on the network and ways to advance the FirstNet experience by participating in 463 public safety engagements, including 85 national events, reaching over 11,000 public safety stakeholders. The team was able to collect 564 feedback items ranging from operational needs to current uses of the FirstNet technologies, applications, and devices.

In an effort to *Develop* the FirstNet network, the Market Engagement Team conducted 26 focus groups along with one-on-one interviews with stakeholders focusing on FirstNet solutions and FirstNet Authority Roadmap priorities. In addition, the team conducted 11 nationwide webinars on various topics. For example, the team hosted a webinar that explored the current state of mutual aid communications and the need to improve public safety's understanding of FirstNet solutions dedicated to enhancing mutual aid and situational awareness. Other Market Engagement Office virtual engagements focused on Emergency Management and the Subscriber Paid Program. Interviews were also conducted to support and inform the wildfire case study and capture feedback regarding FirstNet Push-To-Talk from known users.

The Market Engagement Team continued to evaluate *Investment* opportunities across the Roadmap priorities including Coverage, Mission Critical Services and Situational Awareness. With the investment funding approved by the FirstNet Authority Board, the team supported the addition of 15 new assets to the dedicated fleet, including new form factors to provide flexible, on demand coverage, to include 10 Satellite Cell-On-Light-Trucks (SatCOLTs), two Compact Rapid Deployables (CRDs), and three communications vehicles. The Market Engagement Office is also looking at additional ways to invest time and resources. For example, at the SAFECOM National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC) joint

session, the team received support to facilitate the development of a mutual aid framework that addresses talk group organization and governance that ensures first responders can communicate efficiently and effectively when jointly responding to an event. During the week of August 23, 2021, the NCSWIC SAFECOM Working Group will collaborate with key partners and stakeholder champions to define needs, determine best practices, and enlist existing Land Mobile Radio (LMR) mutual aid governance structures to establish, promote, and manage a new broadband-based mutual aid framework. Of the eight individuals on the initial working group, four of those members are members of the PSAC.

Lastly, for *Collaborate*, the development of new materials based on public safety needs are in the works. The FirstNet Authority developed Location Based-Services videos to be used as on-demand or quick introduction to concepts. One of the videos using Location-Based Services provides information on how these services are critical to public safety during responses to in-building incidents, planned events, and active assailant incidents. In addition, Mobile Field Kits were also created that consist of equipment that can easily be shipped or transported to stakeholder engagement locations. The kit is equipped with software and equipment to allow the Market Engagement Team to conduct hands-on demonstrations that function as a Mobile Experience Center that can be utilized at a wide range of stakeholder engagement events. The field kit was used at the APCO Conference to demonstrate the Push-To-Talk capabilities through hands-on interaction with devices and the network. Live demonstrations of group calls, private calls, sending attachments, and other capabilities are also being conducted by the team.

#### ***Network and Technology Committee Update***

Committee Chairman Cox provided an update on the progress of the committee since the May 2021 Combined Board and Committees meeting. A committee briefing was held a few weeks prior that enabled the committee to receive an overview from the FirstNet staff of the spectrum landscape in the United States and provide strategic guidance to the FirstNet Authority to focus on a host of spectrum initiatives and opportunities. Chairman Cox yielded to Chief Network and Technology Officer Jeff Bratcher to provide updates on the ongoing momentum in the network deployment; differentiated devices available for public safety users; innovative applications and solutions to operational issues faced by first responders; and recent growth in type of coverage and assets that benefit public safety.

Mr. Bratcher spoke on the recent AT&T announcement that the FirstNet network now has more than 2.5 million connections serving more than 17,000 public safety agencies in the United States. This represents a growth of approximately 15% in FirstNet connections with over a thousand more agencies from the briefing provided at the May Board Meeting. AT&T remains ahead of their contractual deployment dates outlined in the 25-year contract for the Radio Access Network build-out and Band 14 coverage. FirstNet supported and deployed over 750 assets for both planned and emergency events for public safety. Due to the recent wildfires and increased COVID response efforts, this will most likely increase this season.

Next, Mr. Bratcher provided *technology* updates on the FirstNet Authority and AT&T working to ensure innovation is a component in the new public safety communications technologies and solutions that are being enabled and provided on the FirstNet network. Examples include the thriving ecosystems that deliver devices and applications required by first responders as well as

investments in and growth of unique deployable coverage solutions that enable all FirstNet subscribers to bring the network with them to locations needed to perform lifesaving missions.

On the *devices* update, Mr. Bratcher explained that there are now 335 FirstNet devices in the ecosystem, of which over 80% directly support the licensed Band 14 spectrum - this is a gain of 28 devices since the last quarter. Driving growth in this area are new smartphones, tablets, rugged handhelds, laptops, and a growing wave of public safety-relevant Internet of Things (IoT) M2M-Broadband. In addition, fifth generation wireless capabilities are being included in the latest wave of FirstNet Ready devices, positioning the subscribers to take advantage of the generational shift in wireless capabilities. This is in support of the investment approved last year to ensure that the FirstNet network is 5G ready. FirstNet users that have 5G enabled devices can access the AT&T 5G millimeter wave spectrum bands and access to recently announced sub-6 gigahertz 5G spectrum.

Moving on to the *applications* update, there are now 172 applications and user solutions in the FirstNet Application Catalog with an increase of 10 in the past quarter. New solutions for public safety align to the FirstNet Authority Roadmap domains with a recent announcement in the *Voice Communications* domain that includes a second 3GPP standards-based mission critical Push-To-Talk solution that will also interoperate with existing LMR systems. This is due to release later this year by Motorola Solutions on the FirstNet Network build by AT&T. Mr. Bratcher emphasized that enhancing *Situational Awareness* has been a key element within the FirstNet Roadmap. One of the new additions in the application catalog provides easy to use streaming software that allows multiple users to access live stream video and data from drones, submersible robots, dash cams and other IoT based devices. In the *Secure Information Exchange* domain, a leading mobile virtual private network solution has also been added to help accelerate, optimize, and secure mobile device traffic directly to the FirstNet dedicated core network and provides resilient connectivity both inside and outside coverage areas. In the *User Experience* domain, there was an announcement and availability in the catalog of a highly secure group notification and messaging service that integrates seamlessly with a wide range of notification applications.

Lastly, Mr. Bratcher provided an update on *Deployables*. The FirstNet deployable fleet is a service available on a 24-by-7 basis at no cost to FirstNet subscribing agencies and driven by ongoing direct consultation with public safety. In order to meet this demand, the FirstNet Authority approved the investment last year to expand the size and diversity of the existing fleet of dedicated deployable network assets to now over 100 assets. These dedicated deployable assets are available to public safety FirstNet users in all 50 states, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia. Last quarter there was an expansion of the number of SatCOLTs and two new innovative deployable form factors. First, the communication vehicle that is used for emergency deployments or planned events provides connectivity via Band 14 spectrum on FirstNet and/or Wi-Fi similar to a SatCOLT and is equipped with a generator that can run for multiple days before refueling. The vehicle also provides a lavatory, microwave, mini refrigerator, sleeping bag, air-conditioned command space for two first responder personnel with multiple monitors, television, charging station, and large exterior screen and speakers for briefings and situational awareness. Second, the micro SatCOLTs, or Compact Rapid Deployables (CRD), are available to agencies to purchase, own, and manage.

### ***Finance Committee Update***

Committee Chairman Brian Crawford gave an update on the FirstNet Authority's financial execution and planning and budget development for FY 2022. The FirstNet Authority is within its targeted operational boundaries for the current FY 2021 budget approved by the Board. The focus on spending what is needed to achieve mission goals is forecast to produce underburn balance at the FY year-end which will be available to fund future investments benefiting public safety. The financial plan for Fiscal Year 2022 provides the necessary confidence that the FirstNet Authority will end with cumulative administrative expenses below the cap mandated by the FirstNet Authority's establishing legislation, and the operational budget that is below the FY 2021 budget total. He then yielded to the FirstNet Authority Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kim Farington.

Kim Farington provided an update on cumulative obligations through July of \$60.3 million with the indication that actuals are under budget through nine months of FY 2021. The total budget for FY 2021 is \$83.5 million. The FY 2022 budget begins in October 2021 with three major bucket allocations being requested – *Operations*, *Investments*, and *Reserves*. For Fiscal Year 2022, the Operations budget request is \$79.3 million, the reserve allocation request is equal to one year's operations budget, \$79.3 million, and the National Public Safety Broadband Network Investment request is \$40.7 million.

### ***Closing Remarks***

CEO Parkinson thanked the Board for its continued leadership and support for the FirstNet Authority, as well as special thanks to Edward Horowitz and Neil Cox for their time on the FirstNet Authority Board, who guided him in the role as acting CEO. He spoke on the accomplishments of the organization and its unique place in government – taking a \$50 billion problem with only \$7 billion to start with and its growth to over two and a half million connections in every state and territory to date. He again stated that the business model created by the FirstNet Authority is now being followed and copied around the world. Countries are now looking to deploy FirstNet type systems and looking at the FirstNet Authority on how to get this done. He then yielded to Chair Osterthaler.

### ***Board Adjourned***

Chair Osterthaler requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Darrin Jones made the motion, Neil Cox seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.