



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
COMBINED BOARD AND COMMITTEES MEETING TRANSCRIPT
June 2, 2025

Acting Board Chair, Renee Gordon: Good morning. I am Renee Gordon and today I am convening the First Responder Network Authority's Combined Board and Committees Meeting as Acting Board Chair.

Welcome to my Board colleagues and the FirstNet Authority team and thank you to everyone who is joining us today. The Board is pleased to be meeting in Bellevue, WA in advance of this week's 5X5 conference hosted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, and the Public Safety Communications Research Division (PSCR), and the FirstNet Authority. Let's review the agenda for today.

We will start with an introduction from the FirstNet Authority and National Telecommunications and Administration (NTIA) leadership and proceed with the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) update from PSAC Chair, Chris Lombard, and updates from the Board's Advocacy, Finance & Investment, and Programs & Future Planning Committees. I would like to ask our Board Secretary to call the roll for the Board and confirm that each committee has a quorum. Madam Secretary, please call the roll and then read the Conflicts of Interest Statement.

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

Jennifer Watts: Michael Adkinson?

Michael Adkinson: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Billy Bob Brown, Jr.?

Billy Bob Brown Jr.: Present online.

Jennifer Watts: Thank you. Damon Darsey?

Damon Darsey: Present online.

Jennifer Watts: Alexandra Fernández Navarro?

Alexandra Fernández Navarro: Present and online.

Jennifer Watts: Thank you. Erik Gaull?

Erik Gaull: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Sean McDevitt?

Sean McDevitt: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Warren Mickens?

Warren Mickens: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Jocelyn Moore?

Jocelyn Moore: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Jeffrey Norman?

Jeffrey Norman: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Rasheid Scarlett?

Rasheid Scarlett: Present.

Jennifer Watts: Trisha Wolford?

Trisha Wolford: Present.

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

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Jennifer. Each member of the Board has before him or her the minutes of the March meeting of the Board. Are there any additions or corrections to those minutes? Hearing none, I will take a motion that we accept these minutes.

Erik Gaull: This is Erik Gaull, and I move that we accept the minutes.

Renee Gordon: Is there a second?

Billy Bob Brown Jr: Madam Chair, this is DHS Board designee, Billy Bob Brown Jr. I second the motion.

Renee Gordon: All in favor, say aye.

All: Aye.

Renee Gordon: Opposed, indicate by saying nay. Are there any abstentions? The March meeting minutes are accepted. Madam Secretary, please make the minutes available to the public following this meeting. First, I'd like to introduce Mike Cannon as the new FirstNet Authority, Executive Director and CEO. Mike, would you like to share a few words?

Mike Cannon: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to everyone here today and those with us virtually. It's great to join you from Bellevue, WA. At our last Board meeting, I joined you as the FirstNet Authority's Chief Counsel. In the months since we last met, I've stepped into the role of Executive Director and CEO. I'm still new to this role, but I'm not new to the federal government. I served in the Department of Commerce, DOC, for many years in addition to the Department of Justice, and the FBI, and I know the power of government when we work together. I look forward to bringing my past experience to this new role and helping to drive the FirstNet Authority and the network forward. I especially look forward to working with the public safety and all of you, as well as our colleagues at NTIA, DOC to continue to advance FirstNet Authority's mission. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Mike and welcome again. Next, I'd like to introduce Brooke Donilon, the Administration's appointee as NTIA Chief of Staff. Welcome Brooke. Would you like to share a few words?

Brooke Donilon: Thanks, Renee. I'm happy to be attending today's FirstNet Authority Board meeting as a new political appointee at NTIA. We look forward to collaborating with the Board and Mike Cannon moving forward. FirstNet is a critical tool for first responders nationwide and we want to see our nationwide public safety network succeed.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Brooke, and welcome again. Now we have an update from the Public Safety Advisory Committee Chair, Assistant Chief Chris Lombard.

Chris Lombard: Thank you very much, Chair Gordon. I'd like to welcome everybody to the Pacific Northwest. It's been a long, long time since we had any FirstNet meeting of consequence here. I think maybe only Jeff Bratcher might remember. I think it was pre-RFP before we had the last meeting of consequence up here in the Northwest. So very busy. Very popular region, so I know it's very hard sometimes to get the meeting space and whatnot, so I'm pleased that we were able to pull it off this year. I want to do just a quick reach out to Board member Alexandra Fernández Navarro. You were able to go to Hawaii, but you couldn't come visit me? I appreciate how long a trip going from one corner to the other corner must be, so we're sorry that you weren't able to attend, but wish you well down there. I'd also like to congratulate Mike Cannon in his new role as the Executive Director and CEO of the FirstNet Authority. Mike, I look forward to working with you as the Chair of the PSAC.

It is an honor to be able to host everybody here in the city of Bellevue and again in this greater Seattle region and for this year's 5X5 conference, agencies such as my own with Seattle Fire Department were early adopters of FirstNet. This whole region actually was able to buy in very early with the coverage and the successes that we saw. Recognizing the value and the benefits of this great network. Seattle and the surrounding region, I think represent a FirstNet success story. We have the most FirstNet users in the state within this region. Next slide please.

Since our last Board meeting in March, the PSAC has continued to engage with public safety stakeholders to identify best practices and study and keep apprised of emerging technologies. Additionally, the PSAC has conducted briefings on innovative technologies, including tools to leverage network optimization as part of our responsibility to ensure that the Authority has a full range of options as it proceeds with the evolution of the FirstNet network. The PSAC is currently reviewing a comprehensive Emergency Management guide designed for all disciplines and will complete its assessment shortly. Our Tribal Advisory Group hosted an in person meeting concurrent with the March Board meeting in the Oklahoma City area and they continue to collaborate on national and regional tribal association outreach. Next slide please.

Later today, I'll be pleased to host an in-person meeting of the PSAC. We have a robust agenda for the group that includes FirstNet product and network updates, as well as ongoing discussions regarding specific technical areas where the PSAC can assist the FirstNet Authority. Looking ahead, we'll be convening a working group to assess how to better engage technology specialists that support public safety and study other areas where the PSAC can contribute. Over the coming months, we will collaborate with the FirstNet Authority on investment issues related to coverage enhancement and network evolution through virtual and ad hoc meetings and continue our work with the Tribal Advisory Group in support for the FirstNet mission. If there are no questions, that concludes my updated and I'll turn the floor back over to you, Chair Gordon.

Renee Gordon: Try this again. Thank you, Chief. We will now get an update from my favorite committee, the Advocacy Committee Chair, Chief Wolford.

Trisha Wolford: Thank you. We're your favorite? I mean this is everybody's favorite, right? Engagement?

Renee Gordon: All our favorites.

Trisha Wolford: Yes, this is the good work of getting to go and meet with our customers in the field. So, thank you again, Chair Gordon. I'm going to go through some second quarter numbers in this fiscal year and then we'll go through some public safety engagements and highlight some of our collaborations.

So, during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2025, our team has participated in nearly 300 engagements. We've reached more than 10,000 stakeholders in 49 states and territories. We've also hosted six public safety tours at our Boulder facilities. This has been for over 22 visitors, and it includes state and local public safety leaders along with leaders in academia. Through these engagements, we've gathered some unique feedback from about 300 plus folks and an idea of what our public safety professionals need when it comes to FirstNet and operational needs and

capability gaps. We figured out some of the following information that has remained consistent, that communication and direct feedback is key to being a continued investment to helping our public safety folks. Some of the feedback aligns in the same high-level themes we've discussed previously. And that's been pretty consistent when it talks about reliability. This has been a persistent topic, and it includes concerns about dropped calls and generator maintenance at sites. Now through adoption in the daily use of FirstNet solutions, our stakeholders also identified potential enhancements and some of their outstanding needs. These potential enhancements and needs feed back into our investment efforts, which will be briefed during the Programs and Future Planning Committee update. As always, we will continue engagements with public safety, and we remain committed to ensuring the public safety's unique needs are always met by FirstNet network.

Some public safety engagement highlights, and there's been multiple things that the team has been working on, but of course we'll just highlight a few here in recent months. The team has attended multiple national fire and EMS related conferences across the nation. This includes IAFC Fire Rescue Med, IAFC's Community Risk Reduction Conference, and the National Volunteer Fire Council Spring conference. The goal of these conferences are, as always, to hold fruitful discussions with association leadership and stakeholders and to host booths to be able to speak and actively demonstrate FirstNet capabilities. At this time, I'd like to introduce Board member, Erik Gaull, who attended the IAFC Fire Rescue Med Conference, to provide any thoughts he might have about the engagement.

Erik Gaull: Thank you, Chief. So, it was my pleasure to be able to attend the Fire Rescue Med Conference that was hosted by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. I did so back in early May, and there I was able to interact with not only Mike Varney and Kevin Nida from the FirstNet Authority, but also numerous first responders from across the United States and talk to them about their experiences with FirstNet. The other thing I want to point out is that our booth was side by side with AT&T FirstNet's booth and that was a real benefit. And we should make an effort to make sure that when they are going to have a booth that we should have a booth directly or as close in proximity to their booth as possible because it reduces confusion and helps explain the dot gov versus the dot net divide and otherwise, if booths are separated, it's a little harder for people that are attending a conference. They think 'oh, didn't I just see you on the other side of the conference hall?' So, I would make that as a recommendation. In the future, we should coordinate with them and have side by side booths.

Trisha Wolford: Thank you, sir. I also had the pleasure last month to attend the activities that are associated with National Police Week in Washington, DC. I was joined by Board member, Sheriff Mike Adkinson. For those of you that have never been to this week in DC, it is absolutely humbling and moving to see how we honor our fallen law enforcement officers from every agency of every type. It was a gorgeous, gorgeous ceremony. It was a little warm. I think we did our fair share of sweating. For those of you that understand wearing a wool class A uniform and sitting under the sun, but absolutely worth it to see the families that were honored and the impact of how FirstNet sponsors and supports that event. There was a huge showing from the team, and I couldn't think of a better reason for Board members to be out witnessing that and understanding the sacrifices of our law enforcement partners. So that was a tremendous event. We did meet and have some great discussions with a lot of agency heads and discussing some of

their future challenges and making sure we're staying in touch not only with our fire and EMS partners, but with our law enforcement partners. So, a very successful week and thank you, Sheriff Adkinson, for joining me and for doing that together.

For some of us that are not landlocked, it's hurricane season. I'm not sure that there's really a season to anything anymore. Wildland season is 12 months out of the year; I feel like hurricane season is 12 months out of the year, but for those of us not affected that live in the middle of the country, by hurricanes, we have been participating in several regional and national hurricane preparedness engagements. This also includes the Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference. There are many ways that this helps us, but particularly to recognize the importance of regional events and to have the perspective as regents prepare for this type of season. This also gives FirstNet the opportunity to engage with representatives from all levels of government, our volunteer organizations, healthcare organizations, and of course, our industry professionals. Our team presented at several of these events, including the National Hurricane Conference and best practices for requesting deployables, which are of the utmost importance when it comes to these major weather events across the country. I'll get close to wrapping it up here. It's a big Committee with a lot of commitments, but of course we have our coverage enhancement workshops and we're continuing with coverage enhancement workshops. We've successfully conducted 9 additional workshops since our last March meeting, and this includes 13 states and territories. That is an ongoing process and will continue across the states.

So, the slide that's up, yes, shows a sampling of some of the public safety feedback received from some of these workshops. We always look forward to more feedback from our customers. We have another 10 scheduled and are working with the states that are colored gray on the map to schedule within the next calendar year. Workshops are just one way that we collect feedback and if anybody has ever been to one of those workshops, there's actually a high level of value because you are with your public safety partners using these tools, using FirstNet, and talking about the wins and the demands and how it can be utilized in greater ways, so the public safety needs are what's covered majority at the workshop. We have multiple stakeholders that attend and specifically talking through coverage needs and how to make sure that the FirstNet Authority and the team can bring these processes to fruition and making sure that we are functioning for public safety partners. We're always using well researched data and guidance from public safety, the Authority, and trying to make FirstNet strategic investments over the next decade to help expand the network and the coverage. As a result, cell sites will be built across the Nation and this obviously improves reliable coverage and enhanced public safety to achieve our mission that is so incredibly important to our fire, EMS, law enforcement, first responders. So, I have no other information at this time, Chair Gordon, unless there are any questions for me or I'll turn it back to you.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Chief Wolford. We'll now receive an update from my favorite Committee [laughter]

Sean McDevitt: Because we have money? [laughter]

Trisha Wolford: Touché, I deserve that. [laughter]

Renee Gordon: Finance and Investment Committee Chair, Sean McDevitt.

Sean McDevitt: Thank you very much, Chair Gordon. And thank you to everyone, both here in person and joining us online. It's a pleasure to be here in the Puget Sound area for not just the natural beauty, but all the wonder and vibrancy of this area, economically as well and its importance. Chris, in your role on the PSAC as well. So, thank you for that. If we could go to the next slide, please.

During the first 7 months of Fiscal Year 2025, the Authority's obligated a cumulative total of \$45.6 million. As you can note, this is well within the budget parameters that are forecast for the year. We are running approximately 12% below budget, which we have been doing consistently since the first month of the year, which is, of course, October. As you all probably know, this is a combination of several things. The first is that there are some timing differences and timing delays and expenditures that were anticipated to come evenly throughout the year that are being a little more backloaded. Secondly, obviously, there's the impact of personnel and other actions as a result of following Executive Orders, which is continuing to keep us running as efficiently as possible. And then lastly, you know, it's a recognition that the Board and the FirstNet Authority's team and executive team are very conscious of the fact that all monies spent on the Authority that we can free up become additional monies that we can invest in furthering the network and furthering coverage expansion and in more capabilities. That concludes a very short Finance and Investment Committee report for the month. So, thank you Chair.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Sean. We will now receive an update...let me be corny...

Trisha Wolford: Let me guess - from your favorite committee?

Renee Gordon: That's right. Programs and Future Planning Committee.

Rasheid Scarlett: If you didn't say it was your favorite at that point, my feelings were gonna be hurt. Well, thank you, Chair Gordon. Next slide, please. We've continued to see strong momentum in the evolution of the FirstNet network through investments and other projects. And while this list might seem long, I'm proud to share that this is just a few of our focus areas within the Programs and Future Planning committee. So, we've recently, I'd like to share that we've recently seen the network surpass 7 million connections as public safety's adoption and use of the network steadily grows. And as Chief Wolford previously mentioned, the team continues to engage public safety through coverage enhancement workshops. These workshops give us the opportunity to discuss identified areas of coverage need with public safety. Their feedback is critical as we determine coverage investments for new site builds. Our efforts have included border, rural, and tribal areas in the states as well as in the territories. AT&T has delivered 1000 new site builds 9 months ahead of schedule, all with Band 14 as the first place in our coverage - in our overall coverage enhancements.

Our in-building program has funded the deployment of over 10,000 in building solutions since June 2022. All at no charge to public safety. This was a need that public safety has identified for the network. And as we continue to evaluate and incorporate emerging technologies, we're upgrading our deployable fleet to 5G and adding LEO (Low Earth Orbit) backhaul to our Sat

Colts (Satellite Cell on Light Truck). Additionally, we're working to finalize our investment to enable the FirstNet network support satellite-to-device technologies, a topic that will be discussed further at 5X5.

Our partners at AT&T are mobilizing and staging assets in preparation for hurricane season. Last year, requests were fulfilled responding to hurricanes such as Beryl, Helene, and Milton. We continue to represent the voice of public safety in 3GPP standard activities meeting with international partners and participating in important discussions like the early stages of 6G standards. The team is looking at potential investment opportunities from our recently completed maritime and air to ground trials and starting new trials looking at ways we can leverage AI for various public safety use cases. Additionally, the team is looking into ways to continue to innovate with our deployable form factors. Next, the team continues to work together as we prepare the launch of our new 5G standalone core. Keeping FirstNet at the forefront of modern technology, but only after proper vetting and testing of the technology. Next, the team continues to look at ongoing enhancements to FirstNet Central, building on the recent investments and enhancements that were delivered earlier this year based on public safety feedback. And then lastly, the team is keeping a close focus on our ongoing mission critical product developments as public safety's interest and usage continues to grow. We've seen great progress over these last few months, and I look forward to continued momentum in the months to come.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Rasheid. As we close out today's meeting, I wanted to thank you all for sharing these important updates. It's clear that we continue to make major strides forward for the network and public safety. I'm excited to see what the next few months will bring as we continue to evolve and expand the network, and I look forward to connecting with leaders in the field at this 5X5 Summit. These conversations will be invaluable as we look to the future. Thank you to my fellow Board members and thank you to Bellevue for hosting us for this quarterly Board meeting. Now, I'm going to turn it over to our Executive Director and CEO, Mike Cannon, for closing remarks.

Mike Cannon: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to echo you and thank our hosts here at Bellevue. Chris, thank you for your hospitality. Who welcomed us with open arms for both the Board meeting and the 5X5 Summit. As we close today's Board meeting, I want to reflect on some of the key developments that we reviewed today. First, network adoption continues to grow with more than 7 million connections and 30,000 public safety agencies and organizations on FirstNet. This demonstrates public safety's trust in the network and that they see the value in a network that was built to their specifications.

The FirstNet Authority continues to make progress with evolving the network to 5G and ensuring first responders have the same unique capabilities and features on 5G such as priority and preemption. We recently crossed a major milestone with the completion of 1000 new cell sites by our network partner AT&T ahead of schedule too. Expanding coverage for public safety is a key priority of ours and we will continue to do so with the help of public safety through our coverage enhancement workshops that we talked about today. These are all significant developments as we move beyond the initial build out of FirstNet and continue to improve and upgrade the network for public safety.

As I step into this new role, I'm committed to working with the Board, NTIA, the Department of Commerce, the Administration, and the staff to ensure continued success with the FirstNet Authority and the FirstNet network. I also look forward to partnering with our PSAC, as well as stakeholders and public safety, industry, and government, many of whom will be here this week at the 5X5 event. And I want to say a big thank you to the FirstNet Authority staff who have been getting me up to speed on everything FirstNet - our plans, projects, priorities over the last month. It's clear to me that to succeed in this role, all of us will need to work together, in this room and beyond, to continue to achieve success in this mission space. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Renee Gordon: Thank you, Mike. We are now prepared to adjourn this meeting. May I have a motion to adjourn?

Damon Darsey Hey, this is Damon Darsey, remote. I move to adjourn the meeting.

Renee Gordon: Is there a second?

Jeffrey Norman: Jeffrey Norman. I second that motion.

Renee Gordon: All in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Renee Gordon: Opposed indicate by saying nay. Are there any abstentions? Thanks to all of you who have participated in the Combined Board and Committees meetings and the audience who joined us today. This meeting is now adjourned.