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

May 5, 2021

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Good morning, everyone. Today, we're convening for FirstNet's Combined Board and Committees meeting. Thank you for joining us virtually for our second Board meeting of 2021. I want to take a moment to reflect on the past year. There have certainly been challenges, starting with the reality that everyone has been impacted by COVID-19, both personally and professionally. This time last year, while many of us were turning to and were learning how to work virtually, and stay at home, and manage children and family issues, and take care of everything that we could without having to go out and expose ourselves to COVID-19, it's useful to remember that public safety professionals we serve reported in person for duty.

As always, they have been on the front line of our response to the pandemic because they cannot stay at home. Public safety operations are highly dependent upon secure, reliable, mobile communications. At the FirstNet Authority, we're proud to contribute to the effectiveness of public safety and to support their missions in these extraordinarily challenging times. Public safety has not only used a national public safety broadband network for day-to-day and emergency communications during the response to the pandemic, but they also showed how innovative they can be by adapting it to serve in their new operational environment. This includes connecting field hospitals and drive-thru testing sites to protecting their mission critical workforce by enabling 911 dispatchers to work remotely. Now, public safety is helping to rapidly distribute the COVID-19 vaccines and have turned to FirstNet to support vaccine distribution activities and facilities in many states, as well as supporting mobile operations to deliver the vaccine to those who cannot go to vaccination sites.

Our goal over the last year has been to continue to work closely with public safety to gather best practices and lessons learned so that we can continue to advance FirstNet to meet responders evolving communication needs. That work has included tracking successes and building upon successes, but also working together with supported and supporting agencies, as well as AT&T, on challenges so that we can continuously learn and improve the network.

The national bombing that impacted FirstNet users on Christmas day is an example of how we've been able to work together to continuously improve the network and address resiliency challenges. The FirstNet Authority has conducted an after-action review of the event, and I recently led a team back to Tennessee and Kentucky to follow up with our earlier visit with public safety stakeholders who were most impacted by the blast and the subsequent service

outage. These discussions were very helpful and productive to the development and completion of our after-action review of the event, and we're grateful for the cooperation of the participating agencies.

As we've moved forward into this year, we've also had seen the introduction of advances for the network begin to come to fruition, including initial 5G services for FirstNet. As of April, first responders in some cities have been able to access 5G on FirstNet. We're excited to bring initial 5G capabilities to the network and to see our investments in the next generation of public safety communications begin to show results. I look forward to discussing this further in other network updates subsequently in the agenda today.

With that, let's turn to the business of today's meeting, first with the agenda. Today, we will vote on revisions to the FirstNet Authority Bylaws and the Public Safety Advisory Committee Charter. We will also receive a Public Safety Advisory Committee update from PSAC Chair Todd Early, and we will receive Advocacy, Network and Technology, and Finance Committee updates. But first, some housekeeping items. I would like to ask our Board Secretary to call the roll for the Board and to confirm that each committee has a quorum. Madame Secretary, please call the roll and then read the Conflicts of Interests statement.

Janell Smith:
Sure, I will mark you as present, Chair. Rich Carrizzo?

Richard Carrizzo:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Billy Bob Brown, Jr.?

Billy Brown, Jr.:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Welton Chase?

Welton Chase:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Neil Cox?

Neil Cox:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Brian Crawford?

Brian Crawford:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Billy Hewes?

Billy Hewes:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Karima Holmes?

Karima Holmes:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Edward Horowitz?

Edward Horowitz:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Darrin Jones?

Darrin Jones:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Paul Patrick?

Paul Patrick:
Present.

Janell Smith:
Matt Slinkard?

Matt Slinkard:
Present.

Janell Smith:
David Zolet?

David Zolet:
Present.

Janell Smith:

Mr. Chair, we have a quorum for the Board, as well as for all four committees. Now, I'll 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 all 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.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:

Thank you, Madame Secretary. Each member of the Board has before him or her, the minutes of our February meeting. Are there any additions or corrections to those minutes at this time?

Seeing none and hearing none, I will take a motion that we accept these minutes.

Matt Slinkard:

Mr. Chair, this is Matt Slinkard. I move that we approve the minutes.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:

Is there a second?

Welton Chase:

Mr. Chair, this is Board Member Welton Chase. I second the motion.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:

All in favor, say "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:

Aye.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:

Any opposed, indicate by saying "Nay."

Are there any abstentions?

The February meeting minutes are accepted. Madame Secretary, please make the minutes available to the public following this meeting.

We will now move to a discussion about proposed updates to the FirstNet Authority Bylaws and the PSAC Charter.

Periodically, the FirstNet Authority reviews the Bylaws that govern the operation of the Authority and the Board and makes proposals to the Board for updates to align changes with changing operations, as well as the law. Over the last several years, the Board has voted on several resolutions adopting small scale revisions to the Bylaws when required. This year,

however, the Authority took a deeper dive into the document and has recommended administrative as well as substantive changes to the Bylaws. For example, several sections clarified the role of the Board to better reflect the functions currently performed, as well as the role of the Executive Director with respect to the Board. Other sections are being updated to streamline administrative processes. For example, removing references to faxing and mailing documents in order to carry out Board member functions and responsibilities. The Authority also took this opportunity to update the FirstNet Authority logo on each Board Committee Charter. This is the first major revision of the Bylaws since the Authority was created in 2012, and all changes to the document will be provided as an attachment to the resolution that the Board will vote on today.

The Board also has before it revisions to the PSAC Charter. I'd like to take a minute to run through the PSAC Charter updates for which we also have a Board Resolution today. The first update to the charter is administrative and reflects the FirstNet Authority realignment in 2021, which in essence created a new Marketing Engagement Team, and we had to update a significant amount of the verbiage in the charter in order to properly reflect that. Next, the Marketing Engagement and Operations Teams worked with our Legal Team to add language to the PSAC Charter that reflects the recently enacted statutory provision, prohibiting representatives of states and jurisdictions that are diverting 911 fees from participating in the PSAC. Lastly, unless there is further discussion on the topic, as Board Chair, I will be the signatory of the updated PSAC Charter.

The Board is now prepared to move to a vote on Resolution 109, Bylaws and Public Safety Advisory Committee Charter Revisions. Before we vote, do any Board members have any questions or comments about the proposed resolution?

Hearing none, we are prepared to vote on Board Resolution 109. Madame Secretary, would you please read the operative language?

Janell Smith:
Sure. Now, therefore, be it resolved that the FirstNet Authority Board hereby amends the Bylaws of the FirstNet Authority, a copy of which is attached to the resolution as Exhibit A, and be it also resolved that the FirstNet Authority Board hereby amends the PSAC Charter, a copy of which is attached to the resolution as Exhibit B.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you. May I have a motion to approve Board Resolution 109?

David Zolet:
Mr. Chairman, this is David Zolet, Board Member. I make a motion to approve this resolution.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you, Mr. Zolet. Is there a second?

Billy Hewes:
Mr. Chairman, this is Board Member Hewes. I second the motion.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you, Mr. Hewes. All in favor, say "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:
Aye.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Any opposed, say "Nay."

Are there any abstentions?

Resolution is carried. Madame Secretary, will you please make the resolution available to the public following this meeting?

We will now move to an update from the Chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee, Todd Early. Mr. Early?

Todd Early:
Mr. Chair, Board members, good morning. Todd Early, PSAC Chair. As always, it's an honor and a privilege to be able to be here and provide you an update on the great work that the PSAC is doing. So, thank you very much for that opportunity. It's been a busy start to the year for the PSAC. We've completed the 2021 through 2023 PSAC membership appointment and renewal process and have reappointed six members of the Executive Committee.

Since the last Board meeting, we had great attendance at the March bi-monthly PSAC webinar, during which members received a briefing from Texas Department of Public Safety, Jared VandenHeuvel on recent experience with HPUE testing. In addition, the FirstNet Authority Team also provided an overview on the FirstNet's push-to-talk mutual aid framework. At this time, I would like to take a moment to welcome our new PSAC members. As I mentioned, the PSAC completed the PSAC membership appointment and renewal process for the 2021-2023 term. Many members were reappointed for another term, and we also welcomed ten new members to the team. We really look forward to working with these new members and the guidance and expertise that they will provide the PSAC. It's extremely important in the expertise that they bring, and at our next business meeting we will be able to spend some time and get to know these new members. There is a list of these new members up on the screen for everybody to take a look at and see, and again, we appreciate their time and look forward to working with each and every one of them.

Also, we added Deputy Chief Chris Lombard from the Seattle Fire Department to the Executive Committee last month, and we appreciate Chris's willingness to serve and look forward to working with him. As you know, Chris is a longstanding member of the PSAC and very active and provides very valuable feedback in the many times is deployed on USAR deployments during disasters and is able to take that knowledge and experience and, being a user himself, provide that valuable feedback. So, Chris is a great addition to the Executive Committee and really appreciate his willingness to provide his assistance.

I'd like to take a moment to provide a quick update on the Strike Teams. Our ICAM Strike Team met twice in 2021 to identify and discuss public safety applications that could potentially benefit from the FirstNet ICAM solution. These inputs and group expertise offered insights into important application and database solutions for public safety, potential challenges, and other considerations for broad ICAM adoption. The results from these discussions will be applicable to the ICAM rollout strategy, which will likely be released in the coming months.

The Telehealth Strike Team, in 2019 developed an introductory product that provided a mid-level view of telehealth and its ability to be used effectively in public safety. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services selected several healthcare agencies nationwide to pilot the ET3 model, which was delayed due to COVID-19 to January of 2021. The Telehealth Strike Team has developed a project statement and will be convening a larger group of participants via survey and working to highlight success stories and lessons learned from using the technology at both ends of the telehealth process. I greatly appreciate all the work that's going into these two Strike Teams and the leadership from those as well. It's very valuable input and something that we're going to be able to utilize and to improve the use of the network and the technology.

Quick update on the Tribal Working Group. There's been significant progress with the Tribal Working Group as well. The National Congress of American Indians (NCIAI), reappointed Theron Rutyna as the new PSAC member, which also makes him the new Tribal Working Group Chair. Theron is the IT Director for the Red Cliff Tribe and has been on the Tribal Working Group representing the Great Lakes Intertribal Council for over three years now. Theron has participated in a number of FirstNet Authority work in the past and was very involved in the building of the FirstNet site on the Red Cliff land. The Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition accepted an invitation to join the Tribal Working Group, and they nominated Jeff Thrasher, who works in the Choctaw Nation Office of Emergency Management.

The Tribal Working Group revised and approved the outreach of the Tribal Governments Guidance and Tribes and FirstNet FAQ documents. They are found on the Firstnet.gov website, and additional priorities for this year include creating a tribal SME database for data capture focusing on primary agencies first and recording public safety podcast episodes and developing blogs highlighting the different Tribal Working Group member associations and topics of interest from Indian Country. Mr. Chairman that includes all of my update. Looking forward to the great work of the PSAC in 2021 and subject to any questions that you or the members may have. Thank you.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you, Todd. Before we move on, I'd just like to thank you for your continuing dedicated leadership of the PSAC, but also like to thank the members. One of the first challenges, I think, for an agency like the First Responder Network Authority to deal with in a program such as this, is to have a deep, but also a continuing and evolving understanding of the needs of public safety. The PSAC is our key connection to the public safety community, and, under your leadership, they are driving the direction of this program; they are providing the necessary feedback, and I just want you and they to understand how much we appreciate that. Because without it, we would be sort of fumbling around in the dark in many cases, but with you out there continuously

feeding us information, I think we're going to have the confidence that we are following the lead of public safety as we were intended to do. Thanks, Todd.

Todd Early:
Mr. Chairman, thank you for that. We're blessed with a great group of members, and I'll be sure and pass that along. Thank you, sir.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you. Let's move now to the Advocacy Committee update, and we'll hand it over to Chief Carrizzo, Vice Board Chair, but also the Chairman of the Committee. Chief?

Richard Carrizzo:
Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and good morning, Board members. Before I get into the Advocacy, I just want to thank Dave Buchanan who's going to talk a little bit more about what's going on with the Advocacy Team at the FirstNet Authority. But, want to welcome everybody and say thank you and appreciate all Dave's work this past quarter, as always. The team has continued to provide virtual engagements throughout many of our stakeholders throughout the U.S. over this last quarter, and like I said, they've been getting into some of the numbers that we've seen, and it's just been a wonderful time with our stakeholders, and we're really fortunate to continue to provide these virtually.

Although last month, we had the wonderful fortune of getting into the New England region and seeing many of the stakeholders in-person. At that time, we were able to show them the new Compact Rapid Deployable. This is a deployable that goes on an SUV in the back and can be lifted by one person into a hitch, and then deployed wherever. They're great for wildland fires, hurricanes, rough terrain - I was fortunate to see one in operation and actually helped set it up back in the fall of last year during a wildland fire. This is going to be a great asset to, not only the Authority, but these are devices purchased by users, our stakeholders, and can just continue to provide and grow our broadband network.

The feedback that we've been receiving on these have just been incredible. This use, the mobility, and own and the operations, the quickness of setting them up and taking them down and moving them to where they need to be. It's just been overwhelming. I'd like to turn it over to you if you could explain a little bit more about some of our accomplishments in the engagement area.

David "Dave" Buchanan:
Sure thing, Chief. Thanks for the time today and happy to update the Board on how we have been engaging public safety in this last quarter, and I want to highlight a couple things which we spend time on each meeting. One is to chat about and give you an update on what we've accomplished from an output perspective, what we've accomplished from an outcome perspective. So, our outputs you see here on the left-hand side of the screen. During the quarter ending on March 31st, our team was successful in delivering 449 public safety engagements, 76 at the national level, the remainder at state and local tribal level. More than 7,000 public safety stakeholders reached those meetings, and this is consistent with the level we've been able to deliver over the last four or five quarters in terms of the number of engagements and the number

of people. So, the team has continued to do a really good job of building relationships and connecting with public safety.

The takeaway from me though, Chief, is what are we accomplishing from those engagements. In the 601 feedback items you see that we've been able to capture, document, and share over this last quarter, I think are the most important aspects of this work. This feedback, as you're well aware comes in at least three forms. We get positive feedback, affirmations from public safety about what's working for them with respect to FirstNet, how they're using it, what applications, network services, and coverage areas are most beneficial to public safety operations. We get feedback about public safety operations and use of FirstNet, use cases, and best practices, and other information about the operational use of feedback helps us understand better how and where and when public safety is using the network attributes during times of emergency, during everyday use, and during really everything from the exigent to the routine on how they're using FirstNet and what we can learn about their use of it that helps us better understand it.

And it also comes in the form of issues. Issues that come up that need our attention or need the attention of AT&T, with respect to areas that need attention, that need remedy, or that need to be addressed, whether there are issues like what we heard and saw coming out of Nashville or other areas. Being able to capture and understand and really be able to share in a deep understanding, what we need to do to enhance or invest or improve in the network so that the network is even more valuable, more beneficial. We think that's a really important part of the value these engagements and these discussions bring, is that rich understanding of the positive and negative in the everyday use and the exigent use of the network.

This information we're able to share internally, as you know, we do a report for the Leadership Team, for our Network Management Team, for our Roadmap Team, for our Investment Team, shared internally and externally to AT&T about these findings. This helps share not just our impressions of the pulse of public safety and their use of the network, but specific concrete examples, data points that help us better understand the network, the use of the network, and what market segments are using the network, and how those market segments are consuming the attributes of the network.

So that continues to be a big part of what we're attempting to accomplish as we go and have these hundreds of engagements. That feedback we get back, that information that helps us understand everyday use, and understand in discrete and distinct ways really critical information that helps us at our job at the First Responder Network Authority of how to improve, enhance, and invest in the network going forward.

In the middle column, I'll mention to you, as you reference, Chief, we continue to use virtual meetings as a way to take advantage of the opportunities we have through use of online collaboration tools. We used 17 national webinars in this last quarter and were able to deliver on the 12 weeks of that quarter. The very popular one around z-axis, where we partnered with a fire services organization, more than 400 fire services professionals able to join us to have a two-way dialogue about z-axis, situation awareness tools, and understanding how to operationalize those situation awareness opportunities that exist inside of FirstNet and get feedback about its use inside of that community. It's just an example of the kind of dialogue we're able to leverage by

using virtual meetings. Yet, as you've heard me say before, virtual meetings will never replace the benefit of in-person, but it does take advantage of the technology and allows us to connect with people that otherwise maybe can't get away to join us in-person or are deskbound for whatever reason. Those folks are now able to engage us through these meetings.

This quarter we were also able to use focus groups. You heard me describe this two Board meetings ago, that we were going to be emphasizing the use of focus groups. Focus groups would have targeted market segments to be convened around specific technologies or network issues. In this case, we had 14 focus groups, stakeholders from 25 states around mobile applications in the FirstNet app catalog. Again, that very targeted group of people around a very specific topic allows us to get rich feedback in those categories you heard me describe earlier. But, again, helps us make sure that as we look at how to advance, invest, and improve the network, public safety's voice is the first thing we're looking at and is the really important ingredient to help us find yet the best way to make those improvements.
Last thing I'll close you with is just again, follow up on the Nashville meetings, that you and I and Tip were able to participate in, and our field team from Tennessee, Ehrin Ehlert and Gerald Risner had a series of meetings in-person with the Nashville team to conduct follow-up from the incident that occurred there on Christmas day. I would describe those as a positive engagement, really getting at exactly what I've been talking about here. Being able to make a -- have a relationship with those stakeholders that are impacted, being able to listen to what they're issues were, be able to bring them information about the network, and be able to continue to work with them and drive forward with them, as this issue is reconciled. Your example and your opening comment about the CRD exhibits are other examples of the kind of engagements we're able to do. Benefit of being able to collaborate with AT&T and collaborate with states in order to have these in-depth conversations around the network and solution opportunities. Again, become important ways for us to get that operational feedback, understand how public safety is using the network and use that feedback to drive our work going forward. So, with that, Chief Carrizzo, I'll turn it back to you and thanks for the opportunity today.

Richard Carrizzo:
Thanks, Dave and again, thank you, your team, the entire Advocacy Committee. We've always talked about how this network is for first responders, and it's continued to be built by first responders, and it's done that way through the engagements, and this is just one piece that is so important to the bigger picture of the Authority. So, I just want to thank you and the entire Advocacy Committee and your team. So, thank you. Tip, back to you.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thanks, Chief and thank you, Dave. As I said in response to the PSAC presentation from Todd Early, it will be hard to overstate the degree to which we depend on this continuous public safety engagement and sort of understand what the evolving needs of the community are so that we can be responsive to them. These trips to Nashville, which Dave participated in, Chief Carrizzo and I, were very much sort of orchestrated by our public safety professionals out in the field, and I came to understand and appreciate, I think, the fact that we don't have to sit here in the Washington area and figure out what public safety wants because we have our marketing engagement people actually out in the states, and in the communities. Not only are they there, but in the case of the two individuals that Dave mentioned, they are public safety professionals in

their own rights. So, they came out of the public safety communities within the areas where they currently serve, and it will be hard, again, to overstate how valuable that kind of insight is. So, please pass our appreciation along to them, Dave, and thank you for the great work that you and your team are doing.

We'll now get an update from the Network and Technology Committee, and I'll hand it over to Neil Cox, the Chair of the Committee. Neil, over to you.

Neil Cox:
Thank you, Chairman. It's a pleasure to talk to you today. The Network and Technology Committee has had two meetings since our last readout in February, and we've got a lot of progress in major systems results to report. Back in March, the committee was briefed on newly released product offerings and some service offerings on the FirstNet Network. Two items of particular interest were a MegaRange, which provides a high-powered user equipment that's exclusively available on Band 14 and unique to our network, and some of the tests have been really phenomenal based on terrain and foliage. In some cases, we've been able to extend the range of the network 20 to 30 miles. This is phenomenal to have this high-powered equipment.

And another item we talked about was a new service, which was a network -- FirstNet messaging, which provides a highly secure unified messaging service. Then, just a few weeks ago, we had another meeting in April, where we really had a detailed briefing on the location-based services, including existing and planned feature releases on the new z-axis for the FirstNet vertical location capability; an exciting, new potential for new technologies that are on the horizon that this technology can use.

Now, this has been a problem with all wireless. We've always had the x-y since we started using GPS and wireless. Now, FirstNet is the first to deploy the z-axis, which is vertical and we're getting results that are within three meters of where a person is located, which will have a tremendous amount of new technologies and services that we'll develop around this. So, there will be a lot more to come on that.

So, in this committee update, it's going to be my pleasure to introduce Jeff Bratcher, who is the Chief Network and Technology Officer for FirstNet, and he will provide a readout focused in the following themes: ongoing momentum in the network deployment; he'll also talk about recent progress in global standards; differentiated devices available for our public safety users that are just for our network and for public safety users; innovative applications and solutions to operational issues faced by first responders and how the network is addressing them; and progress in advancing public safety technologies to the collaboration with peers across the Department Of Commerce. So, now with this, I'll turn it over to Jeff. Jeff?

Jeffery "Jeff" Bratcher:
Thank you, Chairman Cox. Can you hear me okay?

Neil Cox:
Yes.

Jeff Bratcher:

So, good morning, everyone. Good afternoon, wherever you may be. The FirstNet Authority is pleased to see the adoption of the FirstNet Network and its differentiated services for public safety continue to grow at a tremendous pace. The FirstNet Network continues to evolve with features that public safety responders have told us that they need in their mission critical communications. We are seeing more and more public safety agencies subscribing to the FirstNet Network, that again, they themselves lobbied Congress for back in 2010 and 2011, which ultimately led to the creation of the FirstNet Authority in 2012 to build this network on their behalf. Just a little less than two weeks ago, AT&T announced on April 22nd that the FirstNet Network now serves more than 2.2 million public safety user connections across more than 16,000 public safety agencies across the 56 states and territories.

A couple of recent agencies that have chosen to move to FirstNet services include the Los Angeles Police Department, which is the third largest municipal police department in the United States, and the city of Cambridge, which is a part of the greater Boston metropolitan area. AT&T's deployment of Band 14, which is the low-band spectrum that is licensed nationwide to the FirstNet Authority from the FCC, continues to proceed at an aggressive pace across both urban and rural geographies. This deployment remains ahead of the contractual deployment dates outlined in our 25-year contract with AT&T.

I will note that our FirstNet Authority Program Management Team are working now to validate the connection and coverage numbers you see here, via the official contract deliverables that we receive from AT&T on an ongoing basis. The challenges faced by public safety in 2020 were supported by over 750 asset deployments for both planned and emergency events. To meet this continued demand, the FirstNet Authority is investing in expanding the size and diversity of the existing fleet of the 72 dedicated deployable network assets, the three Flying Cell-On-Wings or COWs and the purpose-built Aerostat. We anticipate the additional resources that we invested in beginning last year becoming available within the next quarter as we head into the hurricane and fire seasons.

AT&T also recently announced the availability of innovative Compact Rapid Deployables or CRDs, where public safety agencies themselves can now purchase their own dedicated FirstNet deployable that is very easy to operate, turn on, and get coverage where they need it, when they need it. These agency-owned Cell On Wheels can be deployed by a single person within a matter of minutes, providing the public safety users on FirstNet another unique coverage solution that allows them again to take the network with them.

I'd like to move to the next slide and talk about some technology updates as well. As the network and user base expands on FirstNet, the Authority staff is working tirelessly to ensure innovation is a component in the new public safety communications technologies and solutions. Directions within global standards, as you see listed here, devices, applications, and some collaborations with some our other federal partners. Touching on the standards aspect, the Third Generation Partnership Project, which is the primary global open standards body for wireless networks, continues to operate and migrated to virtual meetings via the pandemic, as opposed to their historically face-to-face meetings. The FirstNet Authority Standards Team has maintained its aggressive submission of contributions to the working groups within 3GPP to again, drive

those mission critical public safety broadband requirements into these global standards.

In February, we shared that Release 17 work is in full swing and that completion date is currently targeted for March of 2022. There have been several key wins for public safety in Release 17, including enhancements to the mission critical services suite, again, migrating those to 5G, some of the push-to-talk enhancements, location accuracy, as well as some new radio Vehicle-to-Everything, and LTE-to-LMR interworking functionalities. Other important public safety capabilities continue to progress such as mission critical services over 5G technology and the non-terrestrial network support, integrating low Earth orbit satellite systems as part of the network infrastructure in the standards bodies.

The ATIS, which is the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions, and the Telecommunication Industry Association, short name ATIS TIA, are key standards setting organizations here in North America, and the team is working primarily to define within these bodies the joint land mobile radio to LTE interworking, which will link the LMR networks to the public safety broadband network, FirstNet. They recently voted to publish the interworking function addenda, which will support this LMR-to-LTE interworking, and we see this as a significant milestone resulting from FirstNet's leadership and persistence to drive this interface into the North American standards suite.

Touching on devices quickly, public safety stressed to us time and again that access to innovative wireless broadband devices was critical to the success of the FirstNet Network. We continue to deliver on this by developing and growing a global device ecosystem to help public safety with their life-saving missions. We have now over 300 devices in the FirstNet Ecosystem and over 75 percent of those support the nationwide licensed Band 14 spectrum. This is a gain of almost 50 devices since the last quarter in briefing, and all new over 50 entrants support the FirstNet Authority Band 14 spectrum. Driving growth in this are new smartphones, tablets, rugged handhelds, laptops, and a growing wave of public safety-relevant Internet of Things based devices.

And as you mentioned earlier Chairman Cox, the recently announced MegaRange, High-Power User Equipment, again, which is a vehicular based modem and router which supports up to a 1.25 watt transmit power, again, a unique aspect of the Band 14 spectrum that's exclusively licensed to the FirstNet Authority and deployed on the FirstNet Network. We're ensuring first responders have access to the latest Commercial Off-the-Shelf technology via the FirstNet Network. We're also enabling them to take advantage of cost savings and maximize the value of every public safety dollar. The device ecosystem also contains numerous ruggedized devices to support those environments that are required by public safety users in different situations.

Touching briefly on the lower left with applications, the feedback we continue to receive from public safety, they want a robust ecosystem of new applications and solutions to address their operational needs. We now have 167 applications and solutions in the FirstNet Application Catalog. Enhancing situational awareness has been a key element within the FirstNet Roadmap and the need to locate and share personnel location was emphasized throughout our engagements. Also, as you mentioned Chairman Cox, the recently launched z-axis capability for FirstNet via the Intrepid for FirstNet application in both the Google and Apple stores is enabling

this groundbreaking technology that public safety has been a long proponent of. This offers the vertical location mapping capabilities and a new indoor spatial awareness that was not available using traditional GPS-based methods previously.

Other innovative additions to the application catalog include apps that support first responder health and wellness, shared communications, and the locations of nearby Automated External Defibrillators or AEDs. Last but not least, Chairman Cox, I'd like to touch on some of the collaborations, and we continue to focus on innovation with these collaborators that benefit public safety. Our collaboration with the Public Safety Communications Research group within NIST continues through our support of new initiatives, as well as ongoing research. As you mention, they were able to provide an example of their recently launched pulse accelerator, and again, that's for working together in a collaborative program where participants will engage directly with specialists from business, technology, and public safety to develop plans for commercialization of their solutions. We currently have 12 participants in this first tranche or cohort in the program.

The R2 Network is a public innovation network, backed by a $1,000,000 federal grant put forth by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Economic Development Administration, NIST PSCR, and the FirstNet Authority. This network of entrepreneurs, developers, investors, public safety users, and thought leaders has launched with ambitious plans throughout 2021. An early indicator of this traction that they're receiving, public safety agencies in 35 states have signed up for this. These are just two examples of the type of innovation that can be brought to first responders through collaborative research and development programs, which again are informed by the unique skills and perspectives of the FirstNet Authority based upon our consultation and direct engagement with public safety across the country.

I'd also like to wrap up by giving a plug for the upcoming NIST PSCR annual conference. This will be held again this summer virtually, June 21st through 24th. This has long been a key yearly event. I'm glad to see they're continuing to hold this virtually due to the pandemic and our fingers are crossed that it returns to an in-person event in summer 2022. So, with that, I'd like to turn this over back to you, Chairman Osterthaler.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thanks very much Jeff, and thanks to you and your team for all the great work you do, and we ask a lot of you, and we don't give you a lot of time to do it. We ask you questions to which no one really has good answers and you guys continue to deliver. Thank you very much for that. Let's move now to the Finance Committee, and I'll turn the floor over to Brian Crawford, Committee Chair.

Brian Crawford:
Thank you, Tip. The Finance Committee met recently and reviewed the FirstNet Authority's current fiscal year financial performance, which is within expected norms. We also received very good news regarding the outcome of the fiscal financial audit of our Fiscal Year 2020 financial statements, and now I'd like Kim Farington, FirstNet's Chief Financial Officer to provide a brief financial update and report on the audit's findings. Kim?

Kim Farington:
Thank you, Brian. Good day, everyone. I want to begin by giving you an update on our cumulative operations to date and actually through March 31st. As you can see from this slide, it illustrates our progress through Fiscal Year '21, explaining our operating results through March 31st, which is halfway through the fiscal year. As you can see, we are within the Board approved budget boundaries through our first six months of this fiscal year with cumulative obligations of 36.4 million, and we continue to expect our forecast to be following that same positive trend. On the slide you see now, this presents the great news that Brian referred to. Thanks to the great efforts by Team CFO at the FirstNet Authority, I am pleased to announce that for the eighth consecutive year, the First Responder Network Authority's independent auditors, Harper Rains, Knight, and Company provided an unmodified or clean audit opinion on the FirstNet financial Fiscal Year 2020 financial statements. This is not only impressive, so are the added results to this. Our auditors found no material weaknesses, they found zero significant deficiencies, and they also found no management level findings. So, this is the cleanest bit we could be from a financial standpoint. So, again, thanks to my team for the great job they did, and I will now turn the floor back over to you, Chair Osterthaler.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thanks, Kim. Thanks, Brian. Congratulations on yet another clean audit. I would have dreamt about such an outcome when I was a private sector CEO and never quite got there. So, congratulations, you all must be doing a lot of things right. Before we move to closing remarks with the CEO, I'd just like to say thanks to the First Responder Network Authority Team. It's been kind of a unique year; it's been a challenging year. We've had to learn new ways of working. We've had to deal with the pandemic like everyone else has. We've had to try to figure out how to keep the trains running on time, but also continue to prepare for the future and that's not been an easy thing to do. The Authority exists really only for one reason, and that's to support public safety. As I mentioned earlier, it's not necessarily a simple proposition to figure out what public safety needs from minute to minute, especially if you're in an environment such as the pandemic environment, or the operational environment in which we found ourselves after the Christmas day bombing. But the team has risen to the challenge, and I appreciate that. It's not automatic.

Our community that we serve, for the most part, is not in the Washington, D.C. area. I mean there are agencies here located that of course are important FirstNet participants and customers, but for the most part, public safety is a state and local set of activities. So, I think it's important just to remind everybody that this old gag line, "We're from Washington, we're here to help." When it comes to the FirstNet Responder Network Authority, that's really kind of true because our customers for the most part are not here in Washington, they're out in the communities and so forth, and they only exist and serve those communities. And I think they're doing an awfully good job of doing that. That doesn't happen without solid leadership, starting with Ed Parkinson, but also including the entire Executive Leadership Team and so I just want to pass along the thanks to the Board, but also the thanks to the public safety community for the work that you're doing every day. Sometimes the tasks are a little bit thankless here in the federal environment. They're often challenging, they change from day to day, and I think you all are doing a terrific job of stepping up to the plate and meeting those challenges as they occur. I'd like to pass it over now for closing remarks from Ed Parkinson. Ed?

Edward "Ed" Parkinson:
Thanks Tip, appreciate that and thank you for the comments. I know that the team is watching, and they really do appreciate the role that the Board plays in the entire management team. There's not really much Tip for me to say, you know. When we look at all the accomplishments that we've been able to achieve over the past six or so months and the extremely impressive numbers that we see from the adoption with regards to AT&T, the release of new software and skill sets when you look at the HPUEs and z-axis that Jeff and Neil talked about, the clean audit from Kim and her team, we look at the engagements that we've seen from our public safety market group. It's amazing to see such a dedicated work going into serving public safety. I'd just like to thank the entire team, I'd like to thank public safety, who have put their trust in FirstNet and allowed for the FirstNet Authority to be that voice for public safety. So, it's a privilege to be part of this group and thank you very much for the time today, and hand it back to you, Tip.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you very much, Ed. We're now prepared to adjourn the meeting with thanks as always to Janell, the Board Secretary, for the work she did in pulling this together and for the backup team that enabled us to present this material virtually. With that, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Edward "Ed" Horowitz:
Hi, this is Ed Horowitz, Board Member, and I move to adjourn.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
We have a motion to adjourn. Is there a second?

Paul Patrick:
This is Paul Patrick, Board Member. I second the motion.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Thank you, Paul. All in favor say, "Aye."

Multiple Speakers:
Aye.

Robert "Tip" Osterthaler:
Any opposed indicate by saying, "No."

Are there any abstentions?

Hearing none, thanks to all of you who have participated in the Combined Board and Committees meeting today and to the audience who joined us over WebEx.

The meeting is now adjourned.