



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
**MINUTES OF THE MAY 4, 2022, COMBINED BOARD AND COMMITTEES
MEETING IN PERSON AND 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 on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, via WebEx and in person at 11:00 AM EST in Durham, New Hampshire. An audio recording and transcript of the meeting, as well as the archived presentation, are available on the FirstNet Authority website: www.FirstNet.gov.

INTRODUCTION

In his opening statement, Board Chair Stephen Benjamin welcomed all who joined the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting in-person and virtually at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, campus. He thanked the university and the State of New Hampshire, especially John Stevens, the New Hampshire Single Point of Contact for the FirstNet Authority, and the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator. The Board and FirstNet Authority leadership participated in a public safety technology expo and had many opportunities to engage with first responders from across New Hampshire and the Northeast about their experiences with FirstNet. New Hampshire Governor Sununu, several agencies from the State of New Hampshire, and the FirstNet Authority Board and staff participated in a public safety roundtable to learn about how the public safety community is using FirstNet, how their operations have evolved using the solution, and challenges they faced with adopting and integrating FirstNet.

During the meeting, the Board approved the February 9, 2022, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes, heard updates from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Chair Christopher Lombard and the Advocacy, Programs and Future Planning, and Finance and Investment Committees, took a Finance and Investment Committee Resolution vote and a Board Resolution vote, and heard closing remarks from FirstNet Authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Edward Parkinson.

Roll Call

Stephen Benjamin (“Chair”), Richard Carrizzo (“Vice Chair”), Billy Bob Brown Jr., Brian Crawford, Alexandra Fernandez Navarro, Kristin Graziano, Billy Hewes, Karima Holmes, Darrin Jones, Peter Koutoujian, Warren Mickens, Sylvia Moir, Jocelyn Moore, Paul Patrick, and Tia Boatman Patterson. A quorum was present for the Board and Combined Committees meeting.¹

¹ Richard Carrizzo, Peter Koutoujian, and Tia Boatman Patterson participated virtually. Tia Boatman Patterson joined the meeting after roll call was taken.

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 Office of General Counsel that applies to all Board members. All Board members responded prior to the meeting that they did not need to recuse themselves from participation in any portion of the meeting, therefore indicating no conflicts of interest, and the meeting proceeded.

Votes Taken

Prior to proceeding with the business of the day, Chair Benjamin requested a motion to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2022, Combined Board and Committees Meeting. Paul Patrick made the motion. Sylvia Moir seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the February 9, 2022, Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes to be available to the public at the end of the meeting.

The Finance and Investment Committee voted to approve Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 31 – Recommendation on Network Investments:

- Billy Hewes motioned to approve Finance and Investment Committee Resolution 31 – Recommendation on Network Investments. Karima Holmes seconded, and the Finance and Investment Committee unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

The Board also voted to approve Resolution 113 – Network Investments:

- Paul Patrick motioned to approve Board Resolution 113, Network Investments. Kristin Graziano. seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

PSAC Update

PSAC Chair Christopher Lombard provided updates regarding the March Webinar, PSAC membership, and the Tribal Working Group (TWG).

The PSAC members participated in a webinar in March where the FirstNet Authority provided an investment overview and a coverage opportunities update. During the webinar, PSAC members were asked to provide their opinions on the highest and lowest priority of focus for the next five years. Based on the 16 PSAC responses, public safety focus received the most votes, followed by outdoor coverage and resiliency. For lowest priority, in-building coverage received the most votes, given the FirstNet Authority's recent focus in in-building coverage. This kind of targeted input from the PSAC will be helpful to the FirstNet Authority team as they work towards the 2022 priority areas and further develop investment opportunities. A handful of PSAC members participated in the information exchange focus group, where they provided their input and perspective on the need to exchange information among mobile applications and the challenges associated with doing so. The FirstNet Authority team is also looking to discuss the FirstNet Central ecosystem with the PSAC Users Working Group.

PSAC Chair Lombard went on to introduce a *new PSAC member*, Joe Brooks. Joe represents the At-Large Fire Non-Management First Line Responder, connected to the International Association of Fire Fighters. He is a radio supervisor for Boston Fire.

The PSAC TWG has met every month so far in 2022. The May teleconference this week focused on planning for the in-person TWG meeting next month at the FirstNet Lab in Boulder, with the goal of continuing work on the 2022 Tribal Strategy with the FirstNet Authority team.

Advocacy Committee Update

Committee Chairman Carrizzo recognized International Firefighter Day and noted recent and upcoming National Public Safety Telecommunicators 9-1-1 Operators Week, Police Week, and National EMS week activities meant to honor public safety officials. He also provided an overview of outreach activities conducted over the past quarter:

International Wireless Communication Expo (IWCE) - Chairman Carrizzo and CEO Parkinson were joined by a panel of past members of the FirstNet Authority and Board to present on, “America’s Public Safety Network, Its Ten-Year Mark.” Discussion focused on the importance of the FirstNet Authority and the FirstNet solution, and the continued importance of the solution and continued collaboration for success with public safety and AT&T. FirstNet Authority personnel who attended met many stakeholders and learned a lot from the sessions.

Congressional Armed Services Institute, National Advisory Council – Chairman Carrizzo and FirstNet Authority staff provided a presentation on the status of the FirstNet solution and where it’s heading, and they also scheduled some future meetings with the Council.

Boston Marathon – FirstNet Authority and AT&T provided support to stakeholders again this year, including the Boston Fire Department, Brookline Fire and Police Departments, and City of Cambridge, who provided their perspective of FirstNet and how FirstNet performed in the Boston metro area.

National Hurricane Conference (Orlando, Florida) – FirstNet Authority staff led a session, “Harnessing the Power of FirstNet for Disaster Planning, Response, and Recovery.” The presentation included content on FirstNet and how it benefits Emergency Management. The team shared details on the tools available in FirstNet Central. These include Advanced Network Status Updates, Uplift, and how to request a deployable. The team also promoted FirstNet Authority’s Network Experience and Engagement Program. This includes pre-planning and incident planning engagements, the exercise catalog, and how we implement Post Incident and Event Reviews for further engagements. The team also met with North Carolina stakeholders and representatives from the Department of Defense.

The Stakeholder Collaboration team, in support and conjunction with the Roadmap Development Division team, conducted focus groups with PSAC members and public safety stakeholders on information exchange. These focus groups provided invaluable, important feedback and perspective to our teams, including how some of these public safety agencies are tackling

challenges with information sharing themselves to ensure data silos do not impact public safety operations. As always, this input is key to guiding and shaping future efforts.

Programs and Future Planning Committee Update

Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore noted that February 22, 2022, marked ten years since the passage of legislation that established the FirstNet Authority. The FirstNet Authority has met tremendous milestones over the past decade. Just last month, the Public Safety Broadband Network LTE-related core services, or Task Order 3, one of the original task orders awarded to AT&T, was completed.

FirstNet's dedicated deployable assets are fully integrated into the fleet and continue to help meet public safety's increasing demands at no cost to subscribing agencies. Since the start of fiscal year 2022, 325 plus solutions have been deployed, providing needed coverage during various events, such as the Western wildfires, hurricane response, and planned event operations. As a result, some FirstNet Authority employees had the honor of being selected for the 2021 Chief Acquisition Officer's Award for Excellence in Acquisition by the Department of Commerce, Acting Senior Procurement Executive and Director of the Office of Acquisition Management. Committee Chair Moore then asked FirstNet Authority Chief Network and Technology Officer Jeff Bratcher to provide an in-depth report on recent progress and additional milestones.

Mr. Bratcher spoke on the recent AT&T announcement that the FirstNet solution has added 50 additional dedicated deployables to the deployables fleet, increased the number of public safety device connections by 300,000, and added 1,000 new public safety agencies across the nation and the territories that have joined and are now using FirstNet in their day-to-day operations. To highlight the tremendous amount of agency growth over the past four years, Mr. Bratcher shared data from the end of the first quarter of 2018, which showed approximately 42,000 connections and 630 agencies subscribed to FirstNet. This compares to the 3.3 million connections and 20,500 agencies using FirstNet to date, as well as the ability of any individual subscriber (*e.g.*, volunteer firefighter) to walk into an AT&T store and subscribe to FirstNet.

Task Order 3 was completed in March of this year, covering building the core and network services that are being taken advantage of today by public safety. That was the linchpin of getting the solution up and operational with our dedicated service. We had a couple of industry firsts with this: the introduction of 3GPP standardized mission-critical push-to-talk, mission-critical data and video features, FirstNet Rapid Response for voice capability, a Z-axis or vertical axis capability for first responders, and an industry-first cell tower to the core encryption of the user plane data. Providing additional security for the solution, as well as application programming interfaces and our developer portal, are geared towards getting first responders the capabilities they need to communicate.

Mr. Bratcher then highlighted the FirstNet Authority's partnership with the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Public Safety Communications Research Program on a customized facility equipped with a high-speed optical tracking system to support research in first responder user experience, indoor localization, situational awareness, and other areas that align directly to the FirstNet Authority Roadmap domains, market engagement efforts, and feedback from public safety in the field. This space is directly adjacent to the Boulder Lab and will offer future

opportunities for research, development, education, and training with public safety, academia, and industry.

Finance and Investment Committee Update

Committee Chairman Brian Crawford spoke on the proposed investment that seeks to improve and advance FirstNet by supporting a valuable in-building coverage capability that will provide public safety better access to the tools and features of the solution.

Vice Chair Carrizzo then spoke about the extensive surveys the FirstNet Authority conducted with members of the public safety community, PSAC members, and additional stakeholders. Most survey respondents, 92%, reported that they spend over half of their time indoors. It's critical that connectivity is available not just in the outdoors, but indoors, where responders spend much of their time. While indoors, 76% of survey respondents reported they depend on unlicensed Wi-Fi for their mission-critical operations. Additional research showed that 80% of mobile sessions are initiated indoors, making high-quality indoor coverage a real necessity for every first responder. This investment will provide Band 14 in-building coverage extension to primary public safety agencies deployed at their discretion, when and where they need them.

Chief Sylvia Moir added that many of the mission-critical functions for law enforcement, including prisoner processing, patrol operations, jail lockups, in-house training, and building security require very strong indoor coverage. Public safety relies on Wi-Fi in buildings because it's really the best or sometimes the only option available absent a reliable FirstNet connection. This investment to provide a small cell product that operates on our Band 14 spectrum will improve the FirstNet experience for public safety, provide reliable connectivity, and bring mission-critical services indoors, such as Push-To-Talk and video. It will enable more reliable handoff to and from the macro network as a law enforcement employee or operator moves from our station to vehicles. This investment will also improve the efficiency and ensure access to mission-critical functions when and where first responders need them to do their jobs to safeguard the members in their community.

Sheriff Peter Koutoujian agreed that sheriffs' offices are heavily reliant on indoor coverage not only in the community settings, but to perform critical functions like administering the county jail. These environments can quickly become dangerous, even in the best run correctional facilities. Our research and engagement with public safety found that while larger agencies often have access to complex in-building solutions, thousands of small to midsize agencies, which by the way, replace most of our sheriffs' offices across the country, typically do not have the same level of information technology support, and have expressed a strong interest in a FirstNet-supported option. A lack of in-building coverage, in all types of buildings, presents an issue for law enforcement and will increasingly become a barrier to FirstNet adoption as the use of mobile applications for public safety operations grows. This investment should help public safety and provide greater equity as well between all the sheriffs' offices and law enforcement agencies across this country, no matter their size, by providing a cost-effective solution for access to the FirstNet Network where and when they need it.

Closing Remarks

Chair Benjamin thanked CEO Parkinson for his leadership and service to the FirstNet Authority and to first responders over the past 10 years and shared that the Board has made it a top priority to fill the CEO position that Parkinson will vacate for an executive position in the private sector. Deputy CEO Lisa Casias will serve as Acting CEO as the search for a new CEO begins. The announcement for a new CEO will be on USA Jobs and shared via the FirstNet channel. Deputy CEO Casias and Chief Network and Technology Officer Jeff Bratcher expressed their thanks to CEO Parkinson for his service.

CEO Parkinson provided his closing remarks, reflecting on his time with the FirstNet Authority and the accomplishments of the agency and the FirstNet solution. He proceeded to thank the Board and individual staff members. Board members Patrick, Hewes, Crawford, and Moir also shared remarks and thanked CEO Parkinson for his service to the organization and reflected on the accomplishments of the agency and the network.

Board Adjourned

Chair Benjamin requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alexandra Fernandez Navarro made the motion, Billy Bob Brown Jr. seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.