



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
FIRST RESPONDER NETWORK AUTHORITY
**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 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, November 17, 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.

INTRODUCTION

In his opening statement, Board Chair Stephen Benjamin welcomed all who virtually joined the FirstNet Authority Combined Board and Committees meeting. He introduced himself as the new Chair of the FirstNet Authority Board and shared with the audience his experience as the mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, and his excitement to continue to build upon the success of FirstNet by serving the nation's first responders. In addition, he acknowledged the appointment of six new Board members to the FirstNet Authority and each member's assignment to his or her respective Board Committees. New board members were asked to introduce themselves.

The main focus areas of the meeting were the 2022 Board meetings schedule; presentation of the annual Chief Harlin R. McEwen Public Safety Broadband Communications Award; approval of the August 18, 2021 Combined Board and Committees meeting minutes; updates from the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) from new PSAC Chair Christopher Lombard; updates from the Advocacy, Network and Technology, and Finance Committees; a Governance and Personnel Committee vote, a Finance Committee vote, a Network and Technology Committee vote, and a Board vote; and 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 Patterson.¹ A quorum was present for the Board and Combined Committees meeting.

¹ Tia Patterson attended this meeting virtually.

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 this meeting, therefore indicating no conflicts of interest, and the meeting proceeded.

Introduction of New FirstNet Authority Board members and committee memberships

- Stephen Benjamin – Board Chair; Governance and Personnel
- Sylvia Moir – Governance and Personnel Chair; Advocacy
- Jocelyn Moore – Network and Technology Chair; Finance
- Kristin Graziano – Advocacy
- Peter Koutoujian – Advocacy
- Alexandra Fernandez Navarro – Network and Technology
- Warren Mickens – Network and Technology

2022 Board meetings schedule

- Wednesday, February 9, 2022 – Albuquerque, New Mexico / Virtual
- Wednesday, May 4, 2022 – New Hampshire / Virtual
- Wednesday, August 17, 2022 – TBD / Virtual
- Wednesday, November 16, 2022 – Washington D.C. / Virtual

Chief Harlin R. McEwen Public Safety Broadband Communications Award

The Chief Harlin R. McEwen Public Safety Broadband Communications award was established in 2017 in honor of Chief Harlin R. McEwen for his extraordinary expertise, experience, and leadership as the founding PSAC Chair. Vice Chair Carrizzo introduced retired Chief Michael Duyck as the 2021 awardee. Starting in 1995, Chief Duyck served with the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue in Tigard, Oregon, and filled all ranks of emergency services as well as fleet services, human resources, logistics, emergency management, and government affairs. In addition, he was elected as President of the Western Fire Chiefs Association in August 2014. Chief Duyck accepted the award and took a few moments to speak on his continued support of FirstNet with the PSAC.

Votes Taken

Prior to proceeding with the business of the day, Chair Benjamin requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2021, Combined Board and Committees Meeting. Rich Carrizzo made the motion. Billy Hewes seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the August 18, 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 committee resolution(s):

- Paul Patrick motioned to approve Network and Technology Committee Resolution 12 - Committee name change to *Programs and Future Planning Committee*. Alexandra

Fernandez Navarro seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

- Karima Holmes motioned to approve Governance and Personnel Committee Resolution 12 – Committee name change to *Governance and Risk Committee*. Richard Carrizzo seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.
- Billy Hewes motioned to approve Finance Committee Resolution 29 – Committee name change to *Finance and Investment Committee*. Jocelyn Moore seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

The Board also voted to approve Resolution 111 – Bylaw Amendments

- Billy Bob Brown, Jr. motioned to approve Board Resolution 111, Bylaw Amendments. Warren Mickens seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

PSAC Update

New PSAC Chair Christopher Lombard provided updates from the bi-monthly webinar; mission and procedures; PSAC membership; Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) Strike team; the Telehealth Strike team; the Tribal Working Group (TWG); and 2022 plans for PSAC.

On October 26, 2021, the PSAC hosted its bi-monthly webinar where members of the PSAC received an overview of quality-of-service, priority and preemption, and the evolution of cellular communications. A live demonstration on how the prioritization and preemption on the network is tested during a public safety scenario was showcased by the FirstNet Authority lab in Boulder, Colorado. PSAC members were also updated on procedures to comply with the Don't Break Up the T-Band Act of 2020, which states that any state or taxing jurisdiction identified by the Federal Communications Commission as engaging in diversion of 911 fees and charges is ineligible to participate on or send representatives to serve as a member of the PSAC. This administrative update is critical to remain compliant with federal rules but does not negatively impact current PSAC members. Chair Lombard went on to introduce new members selected to serve on the PSAC Executive Committee including himself, Chief Brian Schaeffer representing the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, and Shawn Talmadge representing the National Governors Association. In addition, he introduced new PSAC members Jeff Cohen representing the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International and Brad Stoddard representing the National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators.

In 2021, the TWG had a good year collaborating virtually. TWG delegates identified Subject Matter Experts on the FirstNet Authority Roadmap domain technologies that have been incorporated into the database. The purpose of this database is to provide the FirstNet Authority contact information for future focus groups. Delegates reviewed and provided suggested edits to tribal government outreach guidance, Frequently Asked Questions, documentation, and delegates, and FirstNet Authority staff supported the update of the TWG webpage on the FirstNet Authority website.

The PSAC Telehealth Strike team re-examined the widespread adoption of telehealth services and identified emerging telehealth case studies that may save lives, streamline medical services, and ensure quality patient care. This information was collected through a web-based survey that was distributed to EMS providers to gather insight on the current uses of telehealth in the pre-hospital environment. These case studies are highlighted in a recently published blog on FirstNet.gov written by National EMS Management Association PSAC representative and Telehealth Strike team Chairman, John Olsen.

The PSAC ICAM Strike team has completed 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 input and results have been outlined in the PSAC ICAM Strike team Applications Input Report, which was finalized in October 2021. During the COVID-19 response, telehealth services helped patients and medical providers connect in real time in a safe setting.

Looking ahead to 2022, the PSAC has identified areas of focus and priorities. These include leveraging User Working Group membership for future focus groups, and formulating new Strike teams on priority topics. Additionally, the PSAC plans to focus on expanding outreach, partnerships, and conducting engagements with stakeholders.

Advocacy Committee Update

Committee Chairman Carrizzo thanked Board Chair Benjamin for appointing him to continue in his role as the Advocacy Committee Chair, stating the importance of the committee which ensures that public safety's voice is heard throughout the FirstNet Authority organization. In September 2021, Chair Carrizzo traveled with the FirstNet Authority team to Las Vegas, Nevada for the International Wireless Communications Expo and connected in-person with stakeholders across public safety, government, industry, and academia, as well as hearing firsthand from public safety about their recent successful incorporation of FirstNet into incident responses. He attended sessions the FirstNet Authority delivered, including: (1) FirstNet Push-To-Talk and the evolution of mission critical services; (2) current and future communication challenges; (3) a Roadmap for the future of FirstNet; (4) building resilience around disaster response in 2021 and beyond; and (5) FirstNet in action with responding to emergencies and the pandemic. In addition, Chair Carrizzo and CEO Parkinson met with the Presidents of the ten states and Pacific Islands who represent the leadership of the Western Fire Chiefs Association at their Presidents Forum on November 8-9, 2021, in Phoenix, Arizona, where they had many productive conversations and scheduled follow-up meetings. Board member Paul Patrick participated in the EMS World Expo in October 2021 in Atlanta, Georgia. While there, he spoke with stakeholders that stopped by the FirstNet Authority booth. Law enforcement Senior Advisor Harry Markley, from the Market Engagement Office (MEO) team, virtually attended the committee meetings for the International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Conference.

Chair Carrizzo then yielded to Acting Chief Market Engagement Officer Jacque Miller-Waring to provide information on engagement accomplishments.

Ms. Miller-Waring went on to discuss the three main activities to achieve their goals. First, the MEO team focuses on building and enhancing stakeholder relationships at the local, state, territorial, tribal, and federal government levels, as well as with industry and academia. In fiscal year 2021, the MEO team was successful in its continued effort to engage with stakeholders across all 56 states and territories across all disciplines through nearly 1,700 engagements for feedback on the network and ways to advance the FirstNet experience, reaching over 40,000 public safety stakeholders. The MEO team educated audiences and collected over 2,100 feedback items ranging from operational needs, to current uses of the FirstNet technologies, applications, and devices to help improve the network.

Second, the MEO team focuses on sharing the FirstNet Experience. The MEO team promotes “for public safety by public safety” and shares stories of how public safety entities have integrated FirstNet into their operations. The goal is to ensure that stakeholders receive the latest updates, but also hear from their peers what is working most effectively in any given environment. This is done through blogs, podcasts, webinars, and other information that can be accessed through the website. In 2021, the MEO team spent a significant amount of time and effort working with stakeholders on several incidents such as the western wildland fires, Nashville bombing incident, Winter Storm Uri weather event, and Hurricane Ida, which provided the opportunity for the FirstNet Authority to review and analyze the FirstNet’s use, operational gaps experienced by first responders with respect to broadband communications, and solutions to address those needs.

Third, the MEO team focuses on informing FirstNet product and network enhancements based on public safety and other key stakeholder feedback and continues to support the organization's need to collect public safety input across the different Roadmap domains. The detailed feedback and operational needs supported the evolution of priorities to specific opportunities for the FirstNet Authority. The team captured suggestions regarding existing FirstNet products and services including the FirstNet Application Catalog, deployables, network status map within FirstNet Central, Z-Axis capabilities, and Response for FirstNet. This feedback informs the FirstNet Authority’s input to AT&T that will lead to continued product evolution and enhancements. A similar framework is used for building and enhancing key stakeholder relationships, sharing the FirstNet Experience, and informing the FirstNet product and network enhancements.

Network and Technology Committee Update

New Committee Chair Jocelyn Moore provided an update on the progress of the committee since the August 2021 Combined Board and Committees Meeting. A committee briefing was held a few weeks prior where the committee received an overview of the options for migration of the network from 4G to 5G. Strategic guidance was provided to the FirstNet Authority on a range of issues including the coverage feasibility initiative, spectrum opportunities, and emerging technologies. Chairman Moore then yielded to Chief Network and Technology Officer Jeff Bratcher to provide updates on the ongoing momentum and the network deployment; growth and network connections; differentiated devices available for public safety users; innovative applications and solutions to operational issues faced by first responders; and recent experience and deployable coverage solutions that benefit public safety.

Mr. Bratcher spoke on the recent AT&T announcement that the FirstNet network now has more than 2.8 million public safety device connections serving more than 18,500 public safety agencies across all 56 states, territories, and Washington, D.C. AT&T remains ahead of its contractual deployment dates and metrics outlined in the 25-year contract for the Radio Access Network build-out and exceeded 95% of the contractually required Band 14 spectrum coverage. The FirstNet Authority Program Management team is now in the process of validating this milestone with AT&T. The pace in 2021 accelerated with ongoing challenges of the pandemic and an extremely active western wildfire season. The communication needs for these challenges faced by public safety were supported by the deployment of over 650 FirstNet mobile assets and network restorations for both planned and emergency events requested by FirstNet public safety users.

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 over 380 FirstNet devices in the ecosystem, of which over 82% directly support the Band 14 capable (FirstNet Ready®) spectrum – this is a gain of over 114 devices in the past year. FirstNet Ready® means that the device has gone through the device approval program within FirstNet, certification by AT&T, acceptance by the Authority, and it is compatible with the FirstNet dedicated core network. Driving growth in this area are new smartphones, tablets, rugged handhelds and laptops, and a growing wave of public safety-relevant Internet of Things devices. In addition, next generation wireless capabilities (5G) are now part of the latest wave of FirstNet Ready® devices, positioning public safety subscribers to take advantage of the generational shift in wireless capabilities. These devices enable first responders to have access to the latest commercial off-the-shelf technology via FirstNet, and they can take advantage of cost savings and maximize the value of every public safety dollar.

Moving on to the *applications* update, there are over 180 applications and user solutions in the FirstNet Application Catalog. One application in particular provides approved law enforcement officials with access to the state, local, and federal databases, such as the Criminal Justice Information Services and the National Crime Information Center. The application is designed to be intuitive and easy to operate, leverage strong encryption plus two-factor authentication, and meet all Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Justice Information Service security requirements. Law enforcement agencies have real-time access to this data from their mobile devices, which allows them to run warrants and driver license checks right from their Android or iOS devices on FirstNet and get those responses back in seconds on their priority and preemption capable network.

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 the usage 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 over 100 assets. These dedicated deployable assets are now available to public safety FirstNet users in all 50 states, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia.

Finance Committee Update

Committee Chairman Brian Crawford stated the responsibility of the Finance Committee, which is to review and provide guidance on the FirstNet Authority's financial matters and to assure internal controls including independent audit and financial analysis of the FirstNet Authority. Responsibly managing FirstNet Authority finances ensures adequate funds for annual operations and for reinvestments in the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). He then yielded to the FirstNet Authority Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kim Farington.

Kim Farington provided an update on the FirstNet Authority's Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 cumulative operations execution. The FirstNet Authority finished FY2021 on September 30, 2021, with a total cumulative obligation of \$77.6 million. The committee is still working through Fiscal Year-End reconciliations with the anticipation of the confirming balance that will be carried over from the FY2021 budget into FY2022. These funds will be available to support the maintenance, operation, and improvements of the NPSBN that benefits public safety stakeholders. As for the FY2022 budget execution, the fiscal year began on October 1, 2021, with \$12 million of obligations made during the first month of FY2022.

Closing Remarks

CEO Parkinson thanked all new Board members for joining the Board, the FirstNet Authority staff, and previous Board Chairs and members for their dedication to public safety. Going into 2022, he mentioned looking forward to the potential programmatic reauthorization, spectrum re-license at the Federal Communications Commission, as well as continuing the evolution of the technology and network. CEO Parkinson went on to mention a few FY2022 priority items - the contract oversight of AT&T and continued engagement with public safety to advance the network and improve the culture.

Board Adjourned

Chair Benjamin requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alexandra Fernandez Navarro made the motion, Karima Holmes seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.