

Department of Public Safety
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December 21, 2018

Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission

2018 Annual Report



The Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission (PSBC) was established by Executive Order in 2013 to guide and prepare for FirstNet in this state. The PSBC is charged with advising the Governor on issues related to the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network. In 2017, the PSBC fulfilled a defining task of the commission to prepare a recommendation for Governor Phil Scott to either opt-in or opt-out of the federal FirstNet plan for Vermont. The PSBC recommended that Vermont opt-in to the federal plan and on November 29, 2017 the Governor announced his decision to accept the FirstNet plan. During 2018, the PSBC continued work to monitor developments in the network buildout and keep first responders informed about the progress in Vermont.

This report is submitted to the Governor in keeping with the requirements of Executive Order #05-13.

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FirstNet Developments in Vermont

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act was signed into law on February 22, 2012. The law created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). The law gives FirstNet the mission to build, operate and maintain the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. FirstNet will provide a single interoperable platform for emergency and daily public safety communications. The FirstNet organization is the first of its kind. Never before has Congress established an independent government authority with a mandate to provide specialized communication services for public safety.

FirstNet has 20 megahertz of nationwide spectrum with which to deploy the FirstNet network. The network was made possible by public safety's successful fight for D-Block 700 MHz spectrum, also known as Band Class 14. Congress not only allocated valuable spectrum, but also authorized up to \$7 billion in funding for the construction of the FirstNet network. To create a nationwide network, all 56 U.S. states and territories must have a Radio Access Network (RAN) that is connected to the FirstNet core network. To contain costs, FirstNet is tasked with leveraging existing telecommunications infrastructure and assets. In 2016, FirstNet released a Request for Proposals to select a private partner to buildout and manage the network. In March, 2017, FirstNet announced that AT&T was the winning bidder.

With a contract awarded, FirstNet and AT&T began immediate work on coverage plans for each state. The plans outlined how they would build the RAN in each state and territory in the U.S. On June 19, 2017, draft state plans were transmitted to each state. In Vermont, the Public Safety Broadband Network Commission reviewed a draft and final plan and gave feedback to FirstNet. Governor Phil Scott received notice of the final FirstNet plan delivery on September 29, 2017. Upon receiving this notice, Vermont--and all of the states--were given 90 days to review their unique state plan and decide whether to opt-in or opt-out of the network. The deadline for governors to inform FirstNet of their decision was December 28, 2017.

At their November 20 meeting, the commission voted to recommend to Governor Phil Scott that he should opt-in to the FirstNet plan for Vermont. Governor Scott announced on November 29 that Vermont would accept the federal buildout plan for FirstNet. For states that choose to opt-in, the responsibility and costs to fully build and manage the network rests on FirstNet and AT&T. States that choose to opt-out assumed the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the network for up to 25 years in their state. Opt-out states were required to meet stringent standards to ensure the nationwide system remains interoperable, reliable and sustainable. Opt-out states were also required to receive approval from the Federal Communications Commission, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and FirstNet before work could begin on the RAN in that opt-out state. At the close of the state decision deadline, all 50 states, two U.S. territories, and Washington D.C. opted-in to the federal FirstNet system.

2018 Developments

This past year has been a buildout year for the federal network. The federal contract with AT&T requires that the company have a nationwide network substantially in place by the close of 2022. This buildout includes new and improved coverage for under-served or unserved areas nationwide—particularly, rural areas. In Vermont, AT&T has committed to have in place more than 35 new towers. FirstNet/AT&T has contacted landowners for all of the new tower sites and are now in the engineering and permitting

stage. More than half of the new tower sites are being built at locations where there is currently no cell tower.

In 2018, Vermont was the first state in New England to receive one of the new SatCOLTs built by AT&T under the FirstNet contract. The SatCOLT (Satellite Cell Site on Light Truck) was on display at the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference in September. The SatCOLT is owned and operated for public safety by AT&T and is housed at the company's facility in South Burlington. The SatCOLT can provide FirstNet coverage in an area up to 1.5 miles and support approximately 300 concurrent users. The unit primarily broadcasts a signal over Band Class 14 and can be equipped to broadcast over the existing AT&T commercial spectrum. For FirstNet participating organizations there is no charge for this service, however, first responder devices must operate on the Band Class 14 channel. We anticipate that these deployables will be used during extended emergency responses or preplanned public safety events. The SatCOLT can also be used to augment normal cell tower capacity.

As part of the state's opt-in agreement with FirstNet, Vermont will receive two additional deployable units that will be installed on Department of Public Safety vehicles. The State will own those SatCOLTs and they can be deployed as needed.

In 2018, the PSBC will continue in its role of monitoring the development of the NPSBN in Vermont. With the successful issuance of an RFP for FirstNet planning services, the commission anticipates taking steps in 2019 to identify and document on-going coverage needs/gaps within the state and prepare policies and procedures to help facilitate the development and use of the network.

Governance

The Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission (PSBC) was established by Executive Order in 2013 to guide and prepare for FirstNet in this state. The PSBC is charged with advising the Governor on issues related to the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). The commission must consist of at least 11 voting representatives appointed by the Governor. Representatives include first responder professionals from local police, fire, and Emergency Medical Services; the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board; and State agency representatives from the Department of Public Safety, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Digital Services, Department of Public Service, Department of Buildings and General Services, and the Agency of Transportation. Administrative support for the commission is provided by the Department of Public Safety, Radio Technology Services, under the direction of the Single Officer. The Single Officer is the individual designated by a state as the person responsible for working with FirstNet in their state or territory. This role is tied to the State and Local Implementation Grant (SLIGP) program which requires such a designation as part of the federal grant process. There is more information on the grant in the SLIGP portion of this report.

Below is the list of current commission members and their affiliation. The terms for all commission members expire on July 15, 2019.

- Terry LaValley, Single Officer, PSBC Chair, Department of Public Safety
- Chris Herrick, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
- Steven Locke, Career Fire Service, Chief, Burlington Fire Department
- Al Barber, Vermont Fire Chiefs Association, Chief, Hinesburg Fire Department
- Ron Kumetz, Vermont State Firefighters Association, Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department
- Dan Manz, Vermont Ambulance Association, Vice President
- Douglas Johnston, Chief, Springfield Police Department
- Thomas Hango, Captain, Vermont State Police, Emergency Communications Commander
- James Porter, Department of Public Service, Director, Public Advocacy
- Barbara Neal, E 9-1-1 Board, Executive Director
- Robert T. White, Agency of Transportation, Senior Manager
- Frank Costantino, Agency of Digital Services, ERP Tech Services Director
- Ken Jones, Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Economic Research Analyst

GOVERNANCE MEETINGS

The Public Safety Broadband Network Commission met twice in 2018. The commission convened on April 11 and October 17. The PSBC meets on an as-needed basis. At the April meeting, commission members received an update from FirstNet and AT&T representatives on network developments in Vermont since the state officially opted-in to the federal plan on November 29, 2017. At the October meeting, PSBC members considered and approved the selection of a contractor to assist with FirstNet planning services as part of the SLIGP 2.0 grant.

OUTREACH

The focus of the PSBC outreach effort is on reaching the public safety community for which the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network is being built. These efforts concentrate on law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services personnel. In 2018, project personnel facilitated 14 presentations reaching 431 people. Of particular note was a series of seven regional information meetings on FirstNet, organized by the Department of Public Safety. In all, more than 100 people attended the meetings, representing 103 different departments. A common request from first responders was for improved coverage in Vermont and affordable prices.

There were three newsletters produced in both a printed and e-version. Each edition was distributed to approximately 700 public safety agencies and individuals. Newsletters were published in January, May and October.

The PSBC web site was promoted throughout the year. At the site (www.PSBC.Vermont.gov) people can learn more about the project and how Vermont first responders would benefit from a broadband network. In 2018, there were 1,528 users of the site and 5,445 page views.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

At the April 11, 2018 commission meeting, members approved the release of an RFP to seek proposals for FirstNet planning services. The RFP was released on August 2, 2018 and closed on August 31, 2018. The intent of the PSBC was to secure a firm that could provide highly specialized consulting and technical services to aid in FirstNet planning. The evaluation team selected a winning bidder from the four bids received and presented their recommendation to the entire PSBC at the October 17 meeting. The PSBC unanimously approved the selection of Televate—the company recommended by the evaluation team. All work is funded through the SLIGP 2.0 grant. The contract has a not to exceed amount of \$108,000. Allowable deliverables are:

- Data collection in specific areas identified to be helpful as requested by FirstNet;
- Development of policies and agreements to increase data sharing between public safety systems using the NPSBN;
- Planning activities to prepare for emergency communications technology transitions; and
- Identifying and documenting on-going coverage needs/gaps within the state.

PERSONNEL

No personnel were hired in 2018.

SLIGP: Grant Summary

FirstNet planning efforts are largely funded in Vermont through a federal grant received by the Department of Public Safety titled the State Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP). SLIGP is designed to provide resources to assist states and territories as they plan for the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) overseen by FirstNet. The federal grant program is administered within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Funding allocations per state are determined by the NTIA using a formula that considers both population and land mass. Most grant recipients, including Vermont, are required to provide matching funds (cash or in-kind) in the amount of 20 percent of the award. States receive access to the federal share only as it expends the money and solicits for reimbursement from NTIA.

Since 2013, the NTIA has awarded Vermont two SLIGP grants. Through the SLIGP 1.0 grant program, Vermont was awarded \$888,676. Of that, the federally authorized share was \$710,941 and the state authorized share was \$177,735. Vermont's SLIGP 1.0 grant expired on February 28, 2018. In a second round of funding, the SLIGP 2.0 program provides funds for planning and policy work associated with the implementation of the NPSBN. Funds for SLIGP 2.0 were gleaned from unspent SLIGP 1.0 awards. At the close of SLIGP 1.0, Vermont deobligated \$281,884 of its federal award. In total from all states, the NTIA had \$41.8 million to redistribute to states for SLIGP 2.0. The SLIGP 2.0 program is active from March 1, 2018 through February 29, 2020. Vermont was informed in March, 2018, that the Department of Public Safety was awarded \$541,235. Of that, the federally authorized share is \$432,988 and the state authorized share is \$108,247. The following is the budget breakdown and the expenditures made to-date for SLIGP 1.0 and SLIGP 2.0.

SLIGP 1.0

Budget Category	* Amount	**Expended to 2/28/18	***Expended in 2018
A. Personnel	344,290	256,294	18,657
B. Fringe Benefits	94,795	102,044	9,639
C. Travel	34,506	28,465	
D. Equipment	-	-	-
E. Supplies	12,000	5,020	2,193
F. Construction	-	-	-
G. Consultants/Contracts	267,398	82,155	14,520
H. Other	6,431	6,003	-
Total Direct Costs	759,420	479,981	45,009
I. Indirect Costs	129,256	57,446	-
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	888,676	537,427	45,009
Federal Share	710,941	429,056	33,966
Non-Federal Share	177,735	108,371	11,043

* Budget was updated through Grant Adjustment Notification on 10/14/15

** Expenditures reflect total spending from grant start date of 8/1/13 through close of SLIGP 1.0 grant on 2/28/18

*** SLIGP 1.0 grants closed nationwide on 2/28/18, only two months of expenditures

SLIGP 2.0

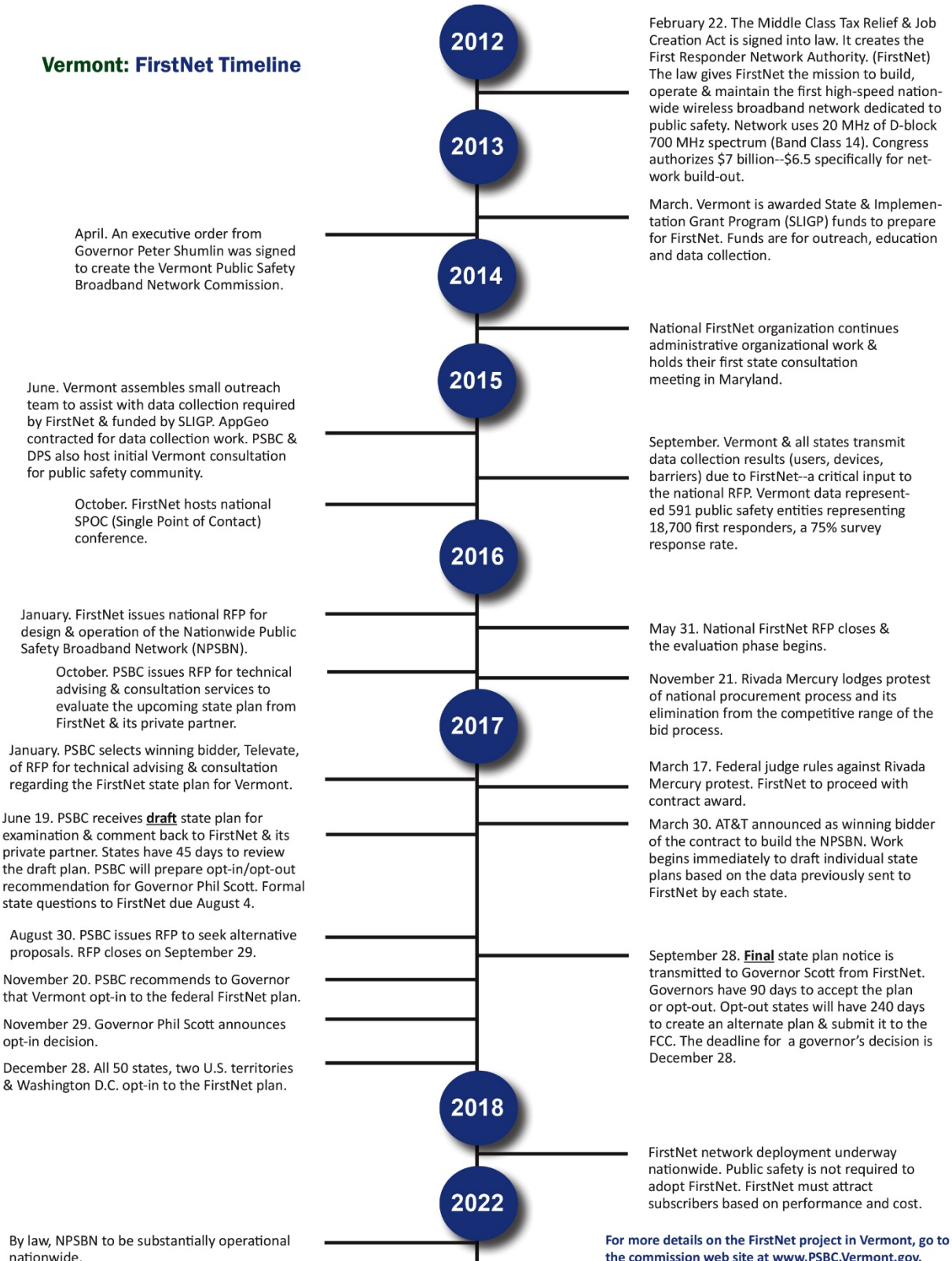
Budget Category	* Amount	**Expended 3/1/18 to 11/30/18
A. Personnel	244,674	74,551
B. Fringe Benefits	81,022	37,162
C. Travel	12,792	-
D. Equipment	-	-
E. Supplies	5,100	-
F. Construction	-	-
G. Consultants/Contracts	108,000	-
H. Other	8,500	-
Total Direct Costs	460,088	111,713
I. Indirect Costs	81,147	5,431
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	541,235	117,144
Federal Share	432,988	68,378
Non-Federal Share	108,247	48,766

* Total budget for SLIGP 2.0

** SLIGP 2.0 grant started 3/1/18

Timeline

Vermont: FirstNet Timeline



Contact Information

Each state has a designated FirstNet Single Officer. In Vermont, that person is Terry LaValley, the Director of Radio Technology Services for the Department of Public Safety. He also serves as the Chair of the PSBC. Administrative support for the commission is provided by the Department of Public Safety, Radio Technology Services, under the direction of the Single Officer.

Terry LaValley
FirstNet Single Officer, Director of Radio Technology Services, PSBC Chair
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Administrative support for the PSBC is provided by the Program Lead. This position plans and implements activities related to the FirstNet project in Vermont and reports to the Single Officer.

Lisa Helme
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Website for the commission: www.PSBC.Vermont.gov

