

Public Safety Broadband Network (PSBN) Commission  
Department of Public Safety, Headquarters, Lab Classroom

Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2013

- The meeting was called to order by Chair, Paco Aumand at 1:30 pm with the following present: Al Barber, UFCA; Joe Flynn, DPS; Seth Lasker, Burlington FD; Ken Morton, Williston FD; Steven Locke, Hartford; Michael Richards, VSFA; Bill Laferriere, BGS; Roger Marcoux, LCSD; Sara Small, DPS; Robert White, VTrans; Jim Porter, Public Service; Frank Costantino, DII; Keith Clark, WCSD (participated via phone); Chris Campbell, VTA. Joe Flynn was called out of the meeting shortly after it began.
- **Update:** Paco started the meeting by explaining that at the last PSBN meeting it was decided that the Commission needed to identify the needs for all of Vermont's Firefighters, Public Safety and EMS in regards to Broadband Network/Long Term Evolution (LTE). The best approach was to start by inviting several guests to this meeting today to help determine how to begin the process. Paco gave a brief overview of the Governor's order to create this Commission and explained the grant funding that has been awarded to DPS for this project. The award name is: State and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) grant and it is strictly for the use of planning, development of a Broadband Network. The funds will be used to identify the needs for Fire, Public Safety and EMS officials. Paco also commented on the fact that if Vermont doesn't participate, it is feared that rural communities won't get serviced and Vermont would not get the full benefits of a Broadband Network.
  - **SLIGP Grant Award:** Sara provided the group with the JFO process and overall status of the SLIGP grant. The grant was recently sent to the JFO and Human Resources for their approval. A grant adjustment was recently submitted to National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requesting some of the funding to be moved from the contractual category to the personal services category. The Commission had determined at a prior PSBN meeting that hiring a full time project manager would better serve the needs of Vermont rather than hiring some out of state Project Management Firm. The grant adjustment has been approved by NTIA and once the JFO and Human Resources give their approval on this award we will then move forward with the hiring process. Paco elaborated on the why the Commission decided to move into this direction "contractor versus employee" and he also mentioned how difficult it is to get positions approved at the state level, even "limited" positions which is what we are seeking for this grant.

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- **FirstNet, what is going on at the National level:** Paco noted that there is a new member of the Commission – Barry Bonaface. FirstNet has identified the opening of 2 new National Offices, one in Northern Virginia and the other in Boulder, Colorado. FirstNet is also planning on developing regional offices like FEMA.
- **Other Broadband Initiatives:** Chris gave an overview of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). Keith mentioned that the National Sheriff's Association has issues with FirstNet in regards to how they have relayed information. It was noted that resolutions can be found on the FirstNet webpage. Paco talked about the national issues in regards to any network that is built for Public Safety must be hardened sufficient, reliable, secure and available all of the time. All focusing on data exchange first and foremost.
- **Getting Organized:** Paco stated his hope for today's meeting would be to get a dialog going. The following is what was discussed and by who:
  - Roger:** LE has coverage issues, enhance current capabilities -radio, cell and two way as they are problematic in some areas.
  - Paco:** Two way at best has 85% coverage
  - Ken:** This needs to be affordable, fiscally responsible and who is going to pay for all of this?
  - Paco:** We don't know who is going to pay, maybe FirstNet-maybe subscriber use?
  - Mike Manning:** Verizon, AT&T – sustainability (there will have to be a user fee). Piggy back off from Verizon, AT&T etc. as this grows and continues to offer capabilities to all Public Safety communities.
  - Chris:** Revenues will flow into this mixture Public Safety and Commercial. The question is how to marry up the revenues?
  - Ken:** Asked; excluding the tower how much does 4G cost? Answer: \$50k per site.

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**Roger:** Asked; is legislature looking for a statewide solution? Answer: Paco says not he doesn't think so. COP/FF/EMS has the capabilities of receiving data from dispatch. How this will be used, as it was not designed for commercial use only Public Safety providers.

**Jim:** Several of the carriers are interested in talking to the Commission. Paco mentioned that he has been contacted by Alcutel/Lucent and RCC Communication.

**Mike Richards:** Towns want cell service, some operate on UHF and VHF. They want hardened, some want latest and greatest technology and some don't trust the government.

**Paco:** The building of the network needs to be Public Safety hardened, Statewide and affordable. Statewide isn't really realistic. Definitely need to make network available to the most rural - major corridors and thoroughfares. Cannot get every square inch of the state. Intents of FirstNet-needs to be Nationwide and they are staying focused on the commitment.

**Chris:** he stated that he is optimistic, maybe we can send the message...one or the other. #1. Much separation from Commercial or #2. Utilize-more emphasis on additional coverage.

**Seth:** Affordably and isolation is key

**Paco:** Asks Keith if he has anything to offer. Keith says that we should be using Irene as an example. Data needs to be real-time. Dash cam video would be a tremendous benefit. Secure connections with hospitals is another benefit.

**Roger:** We need some basic level for all of Vermont. Can we enhance or just fix our current problem? Bigger issue is radio.

**Mike Manning:** What do we want? Companies already reaching out to see what is needed. Verizon has the rural areas coverage for the most part. Keep in mind that we are 2 to 3 years away from the construction of voice being just an app on a broadband network. Someone mentioned the Aline Interference issue between Canada, State and FCC. This is unique to VT. Interoperable with Canada ie: border. It was also mentioned that the Border States have problems. Specifically NY as 9 VT departments are dispatched out of NY and the communications are bad. Interoperability – once one moves do they go silent to the rest? The needs: gateways, being able to communicate and the sharing of frequencies.

**Roger:** Asks, do we need to answer now?

**Paco:** The outcome of this meeting is two-fold. We wanted to pick your brains about specifics, help us validate our views of what is needed and let everyone know where we are at.

- **Where do we go from here?** Paco stated that today's message is pretty clear. Development is one thing, voice communication is a big concern and this needs to be affordable. Need two more new members-Roger and Keith were chosen. They will let Paco know if they are able to join.

- **Other Business**

- Next meeting – December 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm
- Invite a Development Public/Private Partnership Consultant from Texas to talk about planning, education and outreach. What opportunities are available for 2014? Paco also mentioned that DPS is required to provide quarterly programmatic reports to NTIA (we have committed ourselves to contacting a specific number of FF/PS and EMS in regards to outreach and education).
- Other broadband initiatives: Chris is attending a meeting on December 4, 2013 at U&H in Durham NH. There will be representatives from other states, Connect ME and State Public Utilities. Mike Richards, Kirsten and Paco will also attend.

- **Meeting adjourned:** At 3:10 pm.