



Mark Gordon
Governor

Wyoming Public Safety Communications Commission

5300 Bishop Boulevard, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3340
Mark Harshman, Chairman | Telephone: 307-777-4015



Darin J. Westby, P.E.
Director

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

The Public Safety Communications Commission (PSCC) met in the I-80 Room of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Training Building on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. Chairman Mark Harshman presided, calling the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Mark Harshman, Chairman	Karl Germain, Commissioner
Monte McClain, Vice Chairman	Phillip Franklin, Commissioner
Dwane Pacheco, Secretary	Cindi Shank, Commissioner
Paul Bertoglio, Commissioner	Matt Waldock, Commissioner
Matt Carr, Commissioner	John Wetzel, Commissioner
Mike Choma, Commissioner	Darin Westby, Ex Officio

Commissioner Owen St. Clair was absent.

III. Introductions

The following attendees participated in the meeting:

Nathan Smolinski, Chief Technology Officer	Tracey Murdock, Senior Public Safety Advisor, FirstNet Authority
Mark Kelly, Emergency Communications Manager	Lesia Dickson, Area Director, FirstNet Authority
Neil Gardiner, WyoLink Support Manager	Garett Doyle, Regional Manager, AT&FirstNet
Aimee Binning, 911 Planning Coordinator	Kimberly Chapman, Commission Secretary
Tim Kunkleman, Regional Director, Lumen	

Susan Elliott assisted with virtual meeting management.

IV. Agenda Adjustments

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

V. Action Items

1. Draft Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Commissioner Franklin, and unanimously carried to approve the August 9, 2023, business meeting minutes.

2. WyoLink Application

It was recommended by Mr. Gardiner, moved by Vice Chairman McClain, seconded by Commissioner Carr, and unanimously carried to approve the applications from Wind River Transit Authority, Pennington County, South Dakota, and Sheridan Area Search and Rescue.

Following a discussion on an application presented at the meeting by Classic Air Medical, the commission delayed consideration of the application until the February 7, 2024, business meeting. Commissioner Choma preferred that the WyoLink office staff review the application before the commission took action on it. Mr. Gardiner reminded the commission that typically private entities are sponsored by counties to access WyoLink talkgroups.

VI. Updates/Discussions

1. Director's Update

Mr. Smolinski presented a brief update from the director.

Recruitment and Retention

Mr. Smolinski reported that the director is working with Wyoming Administration and Information and the Human Resources Division to create hiring incentives to attract quality candidates and fill vacancies. These incentives are intended to be offered for positions agency-wide.

Mr. Smolinski reported that the agency was able to obtain pay increases for dispatchers, which will attract qualified applicants for dispatch vacancies.

Space Efficiency Study

Mr. Smolinski reported that the department has contracted a consultant to complete a space efficiency study. The study will evaluate WYDOT's current use of space in our facilities to determine if new construction or expansions are needed. The consulting firm will conduct a site visit before the end of the year and issue their recommendations in early 2024.

Joint Transportation, Highways, and Military Affairs Committee (JTC) Meeting

WYDOT leadership is preparing for the JTC meeting on November 3, 2023. Mr. Smolinski reported that WYDOT is monitoring several potential bills, including Bill Draft: 24LSO-0085 Light and high profile vehicle closures. The bill proposed increasing fines for violators to \$2,500 and [possible] loss of a driver's license. The department will monitor the progress of all transportation-related bills and update the commission as necessary.

2. Chief Technology Officer's Report

Mr. Smolinski presented his update, with additional information provided by Ms. Binning.

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) Update

Ms. Binning participated in the planning meetings for the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) and reported on the discussion surrounding 9-1-1 and NG9-1-1. The 9-1-1 funding deficit was a major concern, and participants discussed strategies to decrease the \$3.2 million deficit between 9-1-1 fees collected and services provided. One option identified by stakeholders is to expand the 9-1-1 fee category to capture more revenue, but this would require legislative action to accomplish.

Another concern identified by the stakeholders was cybersecurity. There are two major cybersecurity risks to 9-1-1 service: denials of service and swatting calls. A denial of service happens when multiple 9-1-1 calls are placed simultaneously and disrupt a telecommunicator's ability to answer legitimate calls. This is typically caused by robocalls to public safety answering points (PSAPs) using the 9-1-1 circuit and it can delay the response of emergency services to real emergency incidents.

Swatting calls are essentially prank calls to PSAPs requesting assistance with fake events that require the response of multiple agencies and entities. This limits the resources that will be available in a community for real emergency incidents. Ms. Binning reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has a database of active swatting incidents in the U.S. that is accessible to PSAPs and telecommunicators. She will share more information on this database at the Wyoming Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and National Emergency Number Association (NENA) meeting in November.

Cybersecurity Grants

Ms. Binning announced that cybersecurity grants are available through the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security, which is facilitating the grants for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She encouraged all stakeholders to work with their local emergency management coordinators to ensure the community has a cybersecurity plan. The funding may then be used to help the community develop a strong resistance to the cybersecurity threat.

Wyoming NG9-1-1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Data Model Letter

Ms. Binning reported that a letter was sent to stakeholders on October 3, 2023, on behalf of the PSCC, to introduce the NG9-1-1 GIS Data Model. The letter encouraged stakeholders to begin gathering and compiling GIS data. Ms. Binning shared that some stakeholders have already expressed their willingness to implement the new standards.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Ms. Binning said that no concerns about the model have been shared with her or the working group that developed the model.

9-1-1 Outages

Mr. Kunkleman, with Lumen, reported on recent 9-1-1 outages in Wyoming. A 10.5-hour outage event occurred on September 19, 2023, beginning in the early morning hours and lasting until early afternoon. The outage was caused by a maintenance malfunction at a third-party fiber facility—Lumen leases fiber facilities from two third-party vendors. During routine maintenance, the vendor's network was accidentally interconnected with Lumen's network and this caused many unusual system anomalies. Alarms misidentified the problem as a fiber cut, but the network was still operating to a degree that would not be possible in the event of a true fiber cut. The vendor did not notify Lumen of the issue's true cause until noon.

The Casper to Gillette fiber route, which is the only fiber route in that area, was impacted by the outage. Four PSAPs in Gillette, Campbell County, Crook County, and Newcastle were isolated from the system. While rerouting calls, Lumen experienced issues with PSAPs that serve as backups for each other but were simultaneously afflicted by the outage. The calls were ultimately rerouted to a wireless number because some wireless devices were still working.

Mr. Kunkleman reported that Lumen is unsure how many calls were unanswered or unsuccessfully rerouted. The company is able to provide a number of customers potentially affected by the outage.

Commissioner Shank shared information on outages and service disruptions in Lincoln County, and she encouraged Mr. Kunkleman to reach out to Lincoln County Emergency Management or the dispatch supervisor to investigate these incidents.

Vice Chairman McClain informed Mr. Kunkleman that many Wyoming PSAPs are not receiving the proper, federally mandated notifications of outages from Lumen. Ms. Binning shared that state 9-1-1 coordinators from several states were affected by the outage and received no notification or communication from Lumen. She reminded the commission that the Federal Communications Commission requires immediate notification of primary and secondary outages. Mr. Kunkleman stated that he would visit with Lumen's network operations center to investigate why PSAPs and state offices are not receiving outage notifications.

In response to a question from Chairman Harshman, Mr. Kunkleman shared that Lumen has initiated new protocols and procedures to improve communication between the company and third-party vendors following the September 19 outage.

WyoLink Funding/American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Mr. Smolinski updated the commission on the most recent expenditures of ARPA funds allocated to WYDOT for WyoLink. Of the total \$35 million award, \$4.5 million was used to purchase equipment for local entities and the equipment is beginning to be delivered.

Mr. Smolinski reported that an estimated \$13 million of the total award has been spent to date. The funds must be expended by the end of 2026.

Mr. Smolinski requested approval for a \$500,000 change order to the previously approved \$15 million contract with Motorola to provide updates to the microwave

system. The additional funds will be used to conduct structural analyses on existing tower sites. Part of the analyses will include geological and technical surveys of the tower foundations and surrounding ground. The analyses will provide structural data for an additional 25 sites, which the department presently lacks.

Following a question from the chairman, Mr. Smolinski shared that the contract will fund necessary repairs or mitigations of issues uncovered in the analyses.

Action: It was recommended by Mr. Smolinski, moved by Vice Chairman McClain, seconded by Commissioner Germain, and unanimously carried to approve the \$500,000 change order to conduct structural analyses of WyoLink tower sites.

3. Emergency Communications Program Manager's Report

Mr. Kelly provided an update on the Emergency Communications Program. The update also included information presented by Mr. Gardiner regarding WyoLink operations.

16 Tower Buildout Report

Mr. Smolinski provided additional information on a few of the tower sites included in the report. Fiber will soon be installed at the Lusk site and will complete construction at the site.

Fencing will be erected around the Evanston site to improve security.

Mr. Smolinski reported that the team worked with Motorola to create an accelerated schedule for the optimization of field network equipment. Equipment at the Newcastle and Meadowlark sites will be optimized next week and the Meadowlark tower should subsequently go online. Optimization at Kismet is scheduled for the following week. The site will initially operate on fiber and a microwave link will be added next year.

Mr. Smolinski explained the new icons on the WyoLink Local Towers and Locations Site Map. He highlighted the two new sites in Saratoga and Sheridan, which will be built with ARPA funds. Groundwork has commenced at both sites. Work at the northern Sheridan site will stop soon as it is on a wildlife refuge and motorized vehicle access to the site ends November 1. The team can continue work at the site for an additional one to two weeks with non-motorized access. Motorola has been instructed to complete surveys at the site as quickly as possible to ensure construction commences in May. Work will continue at the Saratoga site, which is a collocate with Union Wireless, until winter weather conditions halt construction.

WyoLink Operational Updates

WyoLink System Reports

Mr. Gardiner shared WyoLink usage data from the third quarter (Q3) of 2023. There was an average of about 2 million push-to-talks (PTT) and 144,424 minutes of airtime for the quarter, which is typical for the time of year. The top 20 talkgroups for Q3 were law enforcement agencies.

The commission agreed with Mr. Smolinski's suggestion to include data comparisons of usage between the same periods in multiple years.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wetzel, Mr. Gardiner shared that system capacity is not currently a concern but the team notes the amount of “busies” at each site. The team analyzes the cause of the “busies” to determine whether usage spikes are incident-driven or if additional channels are necessary.

WyoLink System Upgrades

Mr. Gardiner reported that the GTR fixed station/repeater upgrades are complete. Thirty-five sites have been upgraded since October 2022. Mr. Gardiner thanked Motorola, their subcontractors, and everyone involved for completing the upgrades.

Channels were added at several sites during the GTR upgrade process. The Copper Mountain site, near Shoshone, now has seven channels.

The equipment upgrades will allow the team to upgrade system software to a newer version (2022). The team has begun to process data in preparation for the software upgrade, which is currently scheduled for May 2024.

As a part of the upgrade, new core routers will be added in Casper and Cheyenne. The new routers are necessary for the system to transition to Ethernet from older technologies (T1 and DS3 connections) currently in use.

SAR and MPLS Project

Mr. Gardiner updated the commission on the SAR and MPLS project, also known as the microwave backhaul. Phase I of the project was to replace the service aggregation routers (SAR) in a loop from Cheyenne to Casper. Phase II extended the upgrades into the rest of the state. The last section to be upgraded is in Sheridan County and, weather permitting, should be completed soon. The upgraded technologies allow for more redundancy in the system, which in turn creates a stronger, more robust network.

Mr. Gardiner reported that the department has ordered two NFM-P servers to manage, maintain, and monitor the network and the SARs. The equipment will soon be upgraded with the latest firmware to ensure optimal system operation and facilitate improved system monitoring.

Mr. Smolinski shared that the goal of these projects and upgrades is to ensure that the system is reliable and has greater redundancy. The routers will be able to handle a dual-feed of microwave and fibers connections, which ensures a seamless transition between connections in the event of a failure.

Following a question from Chairman Harshman, Mr. Gardiner shared that the upgrades will provide new features to end users. More information on these features will be provided at future meetings.

Statewide Interoperability Coordination (SWIC) Updates

Mr. Smolinski and Mr. Kelly provided the SWIC updates.

Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) Update

Mr. Smolinski provided the commission with the September 2023 draft of the SCIP. The three-year plan was drafted using the input provided by stakeholders at online

meetings and an in-person workshop over the summer, and addresses the needs and priorities of local organizations and governments. The SCIP lays out goals that address land mobile radio (LMR), 9-1-1, broadband, alerts and warnings, cybersecurity, and funding. Each objective under a goal is assigned a specific “owner” to ensure that action is taken and the overall goal is achieved.

The goals outlined in the SCIP could be used to guide the work of the PSCC working groups. Mr. Smolinski suggested that the working groups could develop recommendations and possible actions for each of the objectives assigned to the PSCC, which the commission would approve or adopt.

Mr. Smolinski reviewed SCIP goals and objectives that are assigned to the PSCC [or working groups]. Objectives 1.3, 4.2, 5.7, and 7.1 are good tasks to assign to the working groups. The commission had no concerns with the objectives.

Action: It was recommended by Mr. Smolinski, moved by Commissioner Shank, seconded by Vice Chairman McClain, and unanimously carried to approve the SCIP as presented.

Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) Update

Mr. Kelly reported that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) offers subscribers priority access and processing on landline telephone networks during emergency incidents through the GETS program.

The Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) allow entities to register voice and data circuits that are critical to operations for priority access. The TSP program also gives registered circuits priority for repairs or reinstallation. Mr. Kelly is working with Enterprise Technology Services to register some Wyoming circuits.

The Wireless Priority Service (WPS) is similar to GETS, but subscribers are given priority access on wireless networks.

Program Update

Mr. Kelly reported that new radio and vehicle repeaters are scheduled to be installed in Wyoming Highway Patrol vehicles in WYDOT districts 1, 2, and 4 on December 4-12, 2023. BearCom will handle the installations.

Radio installations for the WYDOT fleet are progressing well: District 1 is 20 percent complete; Districts 2 and 3 are 70 percent complete, but will be 100 percent complete by the end of the month; District 4 is 40 percent complete; and District 5 is about 70 percent complete.

Mr. Kelly reported that the department still plans to donate old radios to local entities. He has received requests from 14 entities and 203 WYDOT radios are available. The total does not include 20 radios that were recently donated to Park County. Mr. Kelly stated that the program will begin fulfilling requests—the bulk of which are for portable radios—in early 2024.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shank, Mr. Kelly reported that the equipment requests have come from various types of local law enforcement, first responder, and emergency services entities around the state.

Critical Connect

Mr. Kelly reported that Montana has accepted the memorandum of understanding and it is under review by the Wyoming Attorney General's office. Once it is signed, the systems for the two states will be connected through Critical Connect. The MOU can be used as a model for adding other neighboring states.

Commercial Emergency Communications Services Update

Mr. Smolinski discussed stakeholder messaging on the Compact Rapid Deployable (CRD) units and Critical Connect. The commission agreed that messaging about each system should come from the PSCC.

FirstNet Progress Update

Mr. Smolinski introduced Tracey Murdock and Garrett Doyle, with AT&T and FirstNet Authority, and invited them to update the commission on the progress of the five-year network buildout in Wyoming.

Ms. Murdock reported that First Responder Network Authority, which is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, was created in 2012 in response to communication failures during the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. FirstNet's purpose is to build, operate, and maintain an interoperable public safety broadband [wireless] network. FirstNet entered into a public-private partnership with AT&T to build out the network.

In 2017, states were allowed to opt in to FirstNet. A plan to buildout a network in Wyoming was presented to Governor Matthew Mead in June 2017 and the state opted into the system in July 2017. The plan committed to delivering a unique set of capabilities including a dedicated FirstNet core, the FirstNet deployable program, mission critical push-to-talk (PTT), high power user equipment, enhanced location-based services (z-axis), a dedicated 24-hour security operations center, and more.

Ms. Murdock shared that FirstNet relies on feedback and engagement with public safety professionals to build the network with the capabilities and features that local communities need. Mr. Doyle stressed that all participating states, no matter how many subscribers, are given equal opportunity to provide input on the network.

Ms. Murdock shared some of FirstNet's innovative strategies to improve the network. Network features and services are tested and verified at a lab in the FirstNet Technical Headquarters in Boulder, Colorado. Additionally, FirstNet has partnered with the Public Safety Research Center to conduct immersive simulations that provide cost-effective ways to train first responders. FirstNet has also partnered with the Third Generation Partnership Project to develop international standards for mobile telecommunications and public safety communications.

Mr. Doyle reported that over 27,000 public safety agencies and organizations are subscribed nationwide, and approximately 5.3 million devices are using FirstNet for primary communication. FirstNet offers 2.91 million square miles of coverage and ranks as one of the top five cellular providers in the U.S.

Mr. Doyle provided an overview of FirstNet operations in Wyoming. Over 100 Wyoming agencies and 40 communities use FirstNet, and thousands of subscriber units are on the system. Laramie and Natrona counties have the highest concentration of subscribers. Mr. Doyle reported that AT&T FirstNet has exceeded its original commitment to the state on Band 14 coverage. Over 200 tower sites in Wyoming transmit Band 14, which is a segment of the radio spectrum reserved for emergency communications. AT&T has invested \$90 million in the Wyoming network since 2020.

Mr. Doyle reported that public safety continues to drive innovation. AT&T remains committed to improving the mission critical communications and PTT ecosystem. Mr. Doyle shared that AT&T recognizes that LMR interoperability is a crucial component of mission critical communications for users. He reported that advancements in high-powered equipment has helped AT&T expand networks and extend the reach of cellular communications, which is critically important in rural states like Wyoming.

Mr. Doyle reported that AT&T sends part of the user fees back to FirstNet for reinvestment into the network. He stressed the importance of providing feedback to AT&T and FirstNet as local needs and individual agency priorities will guide reinvestments into the network.

Mr. Doyle and Ms. Murdock praised Wyoming for leading innovation in interoperability through efforts to integrate LMR and LTE networks using Critical Connect.

Ms. Dickson reported on the future direction of FirstNet Authority FirstNet is focused on monitoring AT&T's performance to ensure the public-private partnership is successful, and that together, FirstNet and AT&T are fulfilling commitments made to Wyoming and other states. The Authority uses deliverables to assess AT&T's performance and progress against contract objectives.

FirstNet plans to use congressional allocations and user fees from AT&T to expand the deployable fleet, enhance the FirstNet core for 5G network capabilities, and improve in-building coverage and resiliency. Ms. Dickson reported that FirstNet is committed to working with public safety professionals to ensure their needs are considered in decisions on network evolution, service improvements, and coverage enhancements.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Recognition of Outgoing Commissioner

Chairman Harshman recognized former commissioner Jonathan Downing—whose term ended on June 30, 2023—and thanked him for his many years of service to the PSCC.

IX. Announcements

Ms. Chapman introduced Sara DiRienzo, Governor Gordon's policy advisor on transportation, gaming, wildlife, and workforce issues.

Ms. Chapman presented the proposed commission meeting schedule and commissioners provided feedback on meeting dates and locations. Chairman Harshman

requested a third in-person meeting and asked the staff to review the budget to determine if an additional in-person meeting is possible.

X. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Vice Chairman McClain, and unanimously carried to adjourn the October 25, 2023, business meeting at 11:38 a.m.