



Mark Gordon
Governor

Wyoming Public Safety Communications Commission

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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, May 8, 2024. Vice Chairman Monte McClain presided, calling the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Monte McClain, Vice Chairman	Karl Germain, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Paul Bertoglio, Commissioner	Rick Kaysen, Commissioner
Matt Carr, Commissioner	Cindi Shank, Commissioner
Mike Choma, Commissioner	Owen St. Clair, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Phillip Franklin, Commissioner	Matt Waldock, Commissioner

Commissioners Mark Harshman, Dwane Pacheco, and John Wetzel were absent.

III. Introductions

The following attendees participated in the meeting:

Nathan Smolinski, Chief Technology Officer, WYDOT; Mark Kelly, Emergency Communications Manager, WYDOT; Neil Gardiner, WyoLink Support Manager, WYDOT; Aimee Binning, 911 Planning Coordinator, WYDOT; Jeff Winkleman, Wyoming Account Director, Lumen; Tim Kunkleman, Regional Director, Lumen; Ashley Paulsrud, Grants and Finance Section Chief, Wyoming Office of Homeland Security (WOHS); Keith Tupper, Emergency Communications Project Development, WYDOT; Jeremy Johnson, Emergency Communication Coordinator, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA); Mike Kahler, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming Attorney General; MacKenzie Sewell, Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming Attorney General; and Kimberly Chapman, Commission Secretary, WYDOT.

Susan Elliott assisted with virtual meeting management.

IV. Agenda Adjustments

There were no changes or adjustments to the agenda.

V. Action Items

1. Draft Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Commissioner Carr, and unanimously carried to approve the February 7, 2024, business meeting minutes.

2. WyoLink Application

It was recommended by Mr. Gardiner, moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Commissioner Waldock, and unanimously carried to approve the application from the Region 1 Healthcare Coalition.

Classic Air Medical's application was tabled at the October 25, 2023, business meeting and resubmitted for consideration. The Carbon County Sheriff's Office is sponsoring Classic Air's application, and under a county membership agreement, Carbon County will allocate a talkgroup for dispatch.

It was recommended by Mr. Gardiner, moved by Commissioner Kaysen, seconded by Commissioner Franklin, and unanimously carried to approve the application from Classic Air Medical.

3. Consideration of WyoLink Talkgroups

Statewide Ground to Air Talkgroups

Mr. Gardiner reported that following discussions of Classic Air Medical's application in 2023, staff recognized the necessity of addressing the issue of ground to air communications. They proposed creating a dedicated multi-agency talkgroup (MAT)—MATOC—to allow aircraft to communicate and coordinate with ground operations.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Mr. Gardiner verified that a single talkgroup would be sufficient since there are currently few aircraft utilizing it. The talkgroup may be expanded if the radio communication increases significantly. Individual counties will dispatch and provide talkgroups to resources that are under a county membership.

Mr. Smolinski stated that most calls would originate locally and use local talkgroups. The MATOC channel will be employed when an incident or event grows in scale, extent, or gravity.

Mr. Smolinski informed Commissioner Choma that upon approval of the talkgroup, the WyoLink office will notify the air support systems and relevant ground support agencies to program the channel into their radios. The agencies will also receive brief training from the staff on how to use the channel. The MATOC talkgroup will be reserved for emergency use.

In response to questions from Commissioners Carr and Choma, Mr. Smolinski shared that the talkgroup will be made available to federal agencies on a case-by-case basis. Federal agencies must seek approval from the PSCC to access WyoLink talkgroups.

It was recommended by Mr. Gardiner, moved by Commissioner Shank, seconded by Commissioner Choma, and unanimously carried to approve the creation of a statewide ground to air talkgroup.

Secure MAT Talkgroup

Mr. Smolinski stated that, in response to requests from the Wyoming Highway Patrol (WHP), the WyoLink Office is interested in establishing encrypted channels to ensure secure communication in emergency situations. Although advantageous for the WHP, it poses a difficulty for interoperable communication. In the event that an agency opts to transition to encrypted channels, other responding agencies would be unable to listen in unless identical encryption is installed in their radios.

The majority of agencies and counties employ their own encryption systems, making it a challenge to guarantee secure, interoperable communication amongst agencies. Mr. Smolinski shared that the WyoLink Office has established a common, statewide encryption key that would allow multiple agencies to utilize the same key and maintain interoperability during incidents and emergencies. The staff suggests creating MAT-S, a secure multi-agency talkgroup, which will be built and managed by the WyoLink Office, and offered to various agencies throughout the state. Agencies may request access to the talkgroup and to have it programmed into their radios.

In response to a question from Commissioner Choma, Mr. Smolinski reported that the majority of state agencies possess equipment capable of secure communication, though local agencies and organizations may not. Most state law enforcement agencies and several local agencies followed the WHP in upgrading their radios and equipment. Many local agencies have used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to upgrade their equipment from single key to multi-key encryption. Mr. Smolinski assured commissioners that the department is gradually upgrading WHP equipment to guarantee that local agencies can maintain interoperable communication with the WHP.

Commissioner Waldock shared an anecdote highlighting the need for secure communications. During a recent SWAT operation, Campbell County lacked the ability for secure communication. Citizens were able to access a mobile app that enabled them to monitor law enforcement conversations, causing complications during the operation.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Mr. Smolinski stated that the MAT-S talkgroup could be regionalized in the future if radio traffic became too heavy. The WyoLink office is willing to continue discussion on this matter.

Commissioner Choma recommended that staff draft a memo, on behalf of the commission, to inform all WyoLink users on the creation of the new talkgroup and instructions on its usage. Commissioner Waldock suggested that the memo be sent to the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP) to be disseminated to the membership.

It was recommended by Mr. Gardiner, moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Commissioner Waldock, and unanimously carried to approve the creation of a secure MAT talkgroup.

VI. Updates/Discussions

1. Director's Update

Mr. Smolinski presented a brief update from the director.

Interim Legislative Topics

Mr. Smolinski reported that the department is monitoring the progress of several topics and issues that could potentially become legislation. He highlighted a few of the topics that are pertinent to the PSCC.

The Joint Transportation, Highways, and Military Affairs Committee (JTC) has requested that the director and other members of the WYDOT executive team present information on the agency's state funding. WYDOT primarily relies on funding from federal agencies and taxes, supplemented by a smaller but still significant contribution from state funds. The Joint Corporations, Elections, and Political Subdivisions Committee is reviewing the 911 system.

The Select Committee on Blockchain, Financial Technology and Digital Innovation Technology will address topics such as data ownership, personal privacy, government data usage, and technology that can assist the government in safeguarding and managing data. The department always monitors the activities of the Joint Appropriations Committee, but Mr. Smolinski is particularly interested in their review of the Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) agency due to its close connection with WyoLink and other communication systems across the state.

WYDOT Town Halls

The director recently participated in a series of town hall meetings with WYDOT employees statewide. The town hall meetings provide the director with the opportunity to share departmental and legislative updates, as well as to respond to any inquiries or issues brought up by employees in the five WYDOT districts. The director covered a range of subjects in his presentation, including his leadership philosophy, WYDOT's upcoming round of strategic planning, and engagement with the legislature. A video recording of one of the town hall meetings is available to commissioners.

2. Chief Technology Officer's Report

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

PSCC Officer Term Limits

Mr. Smolinski recommended that the commission consider establishing policies that set officer term limits. The Wyoming State Statutes stipulate that the PSCC must elect a chair, vice chair, and secretary, with no specific limitations on the length of their terms in office. Mr. Smolinski and Chairman Harshman agreed that the discussion is necessary, timely, and appropriate.

The Wyoming Aeronautics Commission policy guidelines—which were presented as a model for the PSCC to follow—set a two-year term limit for officers and a schedule for elections. Mr. Smolinski sought feedback on the length of officer terms and proposed staggering terms to ensure greater continuity and stability.

Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Chapman will develop draft policies for review and approval by the commission at the August meeting. Commissioner Shank recommended three-

year terms for officers and Vice Chairman McClain proposed that the commission (re-)elect one officer each year in order to stagger the terms.

Next Generation 911 (NG911) Update

Ms. Binning provided an update on NG911 activities. She began by directing the commissioners' attention to Tab 5 of the Commission Packet, which contained a letter to Congress from former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairs urging for increased funding for America's 911 system. The former chairs proposed two different strategies to increase funding: either through the sale of transmission rights on designated spectrum bands or by tapping into excess funds from ARPA or the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The department will monitor the ongoing funding discussion and will be prepared to apply for any grant initiatives that may arise from the discussions.

Recently, Ms. Binning visited public safety answering points (PSAPs) across the state. She commended site administrators and managers on their dedication and effort in ensuring public safety. Ms. Binning reported that currently 25 PSAPs are ready for the transition. PSAPs must meet five categories to transition to NG911: computer aided dispatch, radios, recorders, GIS information and tracking, and site trunking. Ms. Binning noted that she should have the report on 911 fees and NG911 progress in Wyoming ready for the August meeting.

Ms. Binning reported that a cybersecurity attack on a county in Oregon—that completely stopped operations for county agencies for six weeks and continued to impact operations for an additional six months—highlighted the need for greater cyber resiliency and preparedness. Following this event, CISA began hosting Cyber Resilient 911 (CR 911) Symposiums nationwide. Ms. Binning, Vice Chairman McClain, and Destry Dearden, IT/GIS Director for Lincoln County, recently attended one of the symposiums.

One of Ms. Binning's biggest takeaways from the symposium was that local and county agencies must improve communicate regarding these issues. She proposed that local communities organize a cybersecurity roundtable meeting, hosted by the local Emergency Management office, to address cybersecurity threats and strategize on county or city response plans. Vice Chairman McClain said that the CR 911 event underscored the importance of redundancy and backups for critical systems.

Types of 911 Outages

Ms. Binning discussed the types of outages that affect access to 911. She stated that when an outage occurs, information is not carried to a designated location through the proper lines or the selective router. [The selective router provides the number and the location of the caller to the telecommunicator.] Ms. Binning directed the commissioners to the document located in Tab 5 of the Commission Packet, which outlines the various types and root causes for outages.

Local outages occur when a service provider cannot connect a caller with the PSAP. A caller may still place a call, but the call will not reach the PSAP. A point-to-point outage occurs when one point cannot connect to another—usually due to cut lines or failed end equipment. These types of outages are usually limited to a specific area.

An automatic location identification and automatic number identification (ALI-ANI) outage occurs when the Intrado Network is down or the selective router is non-functional. Intrado helps obtain and transmit the ALI and ANI information. During this outage, calls are still able to reach the PSAP; however, the absence of ALI and ANI data may cause a delay in emergency assistance.

Trunking issues result in intermittent service interruption of the call to the PSAP. The main concern is that the caller may not be aware of these issues, which could prevent crucial information from reaching the PSAP and delay the dispatch of resources.

Ms. Binning discussed a potential solution to outage issues that were discussed in the FCC's presentation at the May meeting. Wyoming may consider enacting legislation with more stringent regulations that reduce the impact of outages and service disruptions on its residents. Ms. Binning has gathered 911 legislation from other states that Wyoming could modify and use.

Ms. Binning is a member of a national group of 911 coordinators who are discussing solutions to 911 outage issues. One idea is to modify to the FCC's reporting thresholds, although the FCC would be the one to implement any changes. Providers are required to report any outage that lasts 30 minutes and affects 900,000 user minutes, but it could take hours to reach those thresholds in Wyoming. Another idea is to create a nationwide dashboard of incidents and outages that states, and possibly PSAPs, could access to obtain information on the cause of any outage and projected restoration timelines.

Work with the Public Safety Commission (PSC)

Mr. Smolinski discussed interim legislative topics, focusing on the Joint Corporations Committee's examination of the Telecommunications Act, which is set to expire in 2025. The Telecommunications Act grants the PSC the authority to mandate PSAPs to submit reports on 911 funding.

Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Binning are collaborating with the PSC on an interim topic regarding 911 funding and outage notification requirements. He emphasized that reporting and notification are separate concepts: reporting requirements pertain to the PSAPs, while outage notification requirements apply to telecommunication providers.

Mr. Smolinski reminded the commission that counties currently have the authority to collect up to \$0.75 per line for 911 fees, a rate that has remained unchanged since 1988. While all counties are collecting these fees, they are collectively experiencing a deficit of approximately one-third of their annual budget.

During conversations with the PSC, Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Binning discussed increasing the cap on 911 fees. While there was no consensus on what the actual total should be, it was unanimously acknowledged that raising the fees is necessary and was included in the proposed interim topic.

The other item that was discussed with the PSC was outage reporting requirements. As the PSC learned during the FCC's presentation in May, the number of people impacted by an outage determines the national reporting standards and our low population size makes this criterion irrelevant to Wyoming. In future discussions with

the PSC, Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Binning plan to address the establishment of notification criteria for Wyoming. The state could adopt the model used in California, where notification criteria are determined based on the percentage of individuals impacted by an outage in a specific zip code. WYDOT and the PSC will discuss whether this is a viable option for Wyoming.

Mr. Smolinski, Ms. Binning, and Vice Chairman McClain provided testimony to the Joint Corporations Committee at their meeting on April 22. The topics of discussion included the challenges that PSAPs are currently encountering and the necessary adjustments to strengthen the 911 system. One of the suggestions put forward was to secure additional funding for the migration to NG911. Mr. Smolinski stated that the committee expressed a strong interest in outage notification requirements, the methods used to notify PSAPs and citizens of outages, and the appropriate actions to take in the event of an outage.

Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Binning will meet with the PSC on May 13 to discuss next steps on securing funding for NG911. The Joint Corporations Committee has tasked the group with drafting language for potential outage notification requirements. The group intends to explore concepts from other states, identify the most effective strategies applicable in Wyoming, and present their ideas to the telecommunications providers.

Following a question from Commissioner Bertoglio, Mr. Smolinski stated that the first priority is to increase the 911 fees in order to ensure that PSAPs are not operating on a deficit. After achieving this goal, the subsequent priority would be to obtain funding to build the NG911 system. Once these two goals have been achieved, the fees can be reassessed to determine if they are sufficient to maintain the system. Preliminary discussions propose capping the fee at five dollars and allowing each county to set their own rate within that range.

In response to a question from Commissioner Choma, Vice Chairman McClain explained that the \$0.75 surcharge falls short in funding 911 services in multiple Wyoming counties due to their limited population size, which hinders the generation of adequate revenue. There are significant expenses to maintain and operate 911: site trunking, software, hardware, salaries and benefits for telecommunicators, and others. These expenses—especially the purchase of new equipment—can cause even the most populous counties to operate with a deficit.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bertoglio, Vice Chairman McClain explained that the \$0.75 surcharge is determined by state statute and would require updating before counties could raise the 911 fee rates. Mr. Smolinski added that a revised Telecommunications Act could grant the PSC more authority over 911 reporting and notification requirements. When an outage occurs in Wyoming, the PSAP reports it to WOHS, which in turn reports the outage to the PSC. The PSC then contacts the provider, however, they lack the authority to compel the provider to resolve the outage promptly or to enforce penalties if the provider does not comply.

Vice Chairman McClain clarified that 911 fees are determined according to the mailing address of the cell phone owner, in response to a query from Commissioner Carr. Mr. Smolinski suggested that some of our partners—WASCOP, the Fire Chief's

Association, et cetera—be included in the discussion in the future as they have a vested interest in the 911 system.

Lumen Updates

Mr. Kunkleman shared a list of all the notifications that were recently sent to Wyoming PSAPs following incidents and outages. He sends a similar list to Mr. Smolinski and Ms. Binning monthly. If there are any questions about a particular event, Mr. Kunkleman can provide additional details—the time and duration of the event, the number of notifications, the times each notification was sent, and the notification method used.

Any item marked with a circle and red line on the list indicates that it was an event that did not impact 911 services. Mr. Kunkleman said that Lumen contacted the PSAP in those instances, but a final notification was not sent. He explained that the list only includes incidents that resulted in notifications to the PSAPs, but did not qualify as reportable outages to the FCC or the PSC. Mr. Kunkleman heard, but was unable to verify, that the PSC has a separate reporting standard of an outage affecting 1,500 user minutes. He believes that this approach is logical considering the relatively small population in Wyoming, which rarely exceeds the FCC's 900,000 user minute threshold.

Mr. Kunkleman explained that Lumen sends an initial outage notification between 30 and 60 minutes after detecting an outage. Lumen aims to update the PSAP within 2 hours and send additional updates as often as possible. If the event affected 911, then a final notification will be sent once it has been completely resolved.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Mr. Kunkleman shared that Lumen does not always share restoration timelines with the PSAP. Lumen is attempting to improve the notifications to have greater utility to the PSAPs. Vice Chairman McClain requested that follow up notifications to the PSAPs include the cause of the outage and estimated timelines for service restoration.

Following a question from Commissioner Shank, Mr. Kunkleman stated that while the list does not detail the reasons for the outages, Lumen does possess comprehensive information about the outage events. He will provide more detail in future monthly reports, per Mr. Smolinski's request. Mr. Smolinski will begin sharing Lumen's monthly outage reports with the PSCC and any requests for additional information may be directed to Mr. Kunkleman. Mr. Smolinski can offer to share the reports with the PSC when he meets them on Monday. Mr. Kunkleman proposed that the PSC or PSCC could be included as an additional recipient for all notifications forwarded to the PSAPs.

Mr. Winkleman updated the commission on his conversations with Lumen's network operations center (NOC) in Minneapolis. He shared the concerns gathered from Wyoming and other states with the NOC, especially the long wait times that some PSAPs are experiencing. Management at the NOC shared that there was a 50 percent increase in staffing to assist with the high call volume, but the training period will take one to two years for the new hires. Mr. Winkleman advised that if a PSAP reaches out to the NOC and encounters unsatisfactory customer service, the PSAP should request assistance from a more experienced technician.

WyoLink Funding/American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Mr. Smolinski updated the commission on the expenditure of the ARPA funds, which must be encumbered by December 31, 2024, and expended by December 31, 2026. The funds were designated for vital initiatives, including two new WyoLink tower sites and the modernization of the microwave network. A new WyoLink tower will be located in northern Sheridan County, while the other will be situated close to Encampment. Access to the Sheridan County site is seasonally limited as it is located within the Kerns Wildlife Management Area. Construction crews will begin work as soon as the site opens in mid-May. The program is currently in the process of finalizing site agreements and coordinating the installation of power to the site.

The Encampment site will be a collocate on a Union Wireless tower. Mr. Smolinski and Mr. Kelly will meet with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) later in May to discuss the construction of the shelter and a retaining wall. The agreement has been signed and submitted, and a final inspection will occur before construction commences. Mr. Smolinski hopes that both sites will be operational by the end of summer or early fall.

Mr. Smolinski reported that the microwave upgrade project is in progress and expected to take additional time due to the large number of sites included in the upgrade. A structural analysis will be conducted at existing sites to assess the tower's capacity to support the new equipment before work can proceed.

Subscriber Unit Contract

WYDOT's current purchase agreement for subscriber units—mobile and portable radios—is set to expire in June. The Emergency Communications Program is working with Procurement on a new request for proposals (RFP). The RFP will invite multiple vendors to submit price quotes for a range of equipment. Mr. Smolinski is optimistic that the new contract will provide improved pricing for all subscribers—state agencies and local entities. The RFP should be issued by June or July.

Following a question from Commissioner Kaysen, Mr. Smolinski expects the contract to be awarded in August or September. Staffing vacancies in the Wyoming Attorney General's (AG) Office have caused delays in the process; however, he is optimistic that there will be no further delays.

Local Contracts

In 2023, the legislature approved a biennial allocation of \$8.6 million—from General Funds—to WYDOT for the operation and maintenance of the WyoLink system. The program, with assistance from the Wyoming AG's Office, reviewed the county-owned tower sites that utilize WyoLink. Several counties—Natrona, Converse, Laramie, and Teton—built their own towers, as well as Casper and Gillette. Additionally, the local entities are responsible for maintaining the towers, typically through contracts with Motorola.

WYDOT is proposing to merge all local contracts into the statewide contract to take advantage of economies of scale and guarantee all WyoLink users continued access to the towers. Initial estimates suggest that incorporating the county contracts will result in an additional \$300,000 annual expenditure. Mr. Smolinski reported that relationships with the counties and towns could be strengthened if WYDOT assumed

the responsibility for the maintenance of county-owned towers. Motorola would continue to provide maintenance for the towers, while the counties and towns retained ownership.

Mr. Smolinski hopes to have the contract finalized before the end of WYDOT's fiscal year in September. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) specifies that in the event of the legislature revoking the allocation, the towns and counties will resume responsibility for the maintenance and operation of their towers.

State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) Grants

Ms. Paulsrud provided an update on the SHSP grant program that WOHS administers on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The SHSP grants have historically provided significant funding for interoperable communications to state, county, municipal, and tribal local governments. In 2024, the grant funding was cut by 10 percent—taking the total available funds from \$4.8 million to \$4.3 million. Local agencies and governments must receive 80 percent of the grant funds, while the remaining 20 percent is allocated to state programs and projects.

Despite the decrease in funding levels, DHS has maintained its funding priorities, which include: election security, cybersecurity, information sharing, combating domestic violence/extremism, and community preparedness and resilience. Ms. Paulsrud stated that WOHS will carefully consider projects that fall outside of the national funding priorities to determine what the department is able to support.

The SHSP grant program is highly competitive, with WOHS usually receiving funding requests ranging from \$9 million to \$13 million. Ms. Paulsrud wanted to inform the PSCC about the reduction in grant funding, so that commissioners could share this information with their respective organizations and communities.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Ms. Paulsrud shared that the information [and intelligence] sharing priority area relates to situational awareness, public alerting and warning, and emergency management applications such as Web Emergency Operations Center.

Commissioner Shank expressed her disappointment with the funding reductions, particularly in light of the ongoing conversations about necessary improvements to the 911 system and equipment.

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.

Program Updates

Mr. Kelly reported that the program continues to replace radios in WYDOT vehicles and equipment. Shipments are arriving from purchases made in December 2023. However, the deliveries are arriving incomplete, leading to challenges in distributing equipment to the various districts.

Mr. Kelly and his team are currently identifying tower sites for fiber installation, to potentially serve as alternative network routes. His team is carefully assessing costs and weighing them against the benefits of integrating fiber. Four or five locations have been identified across the state, which could serve as vital junctures for the fiber network.

Mr. Smolinski highlighted the importance of these sites, as they would increase redundancy and resilience of the network. He emphasized that the team is assessing the potential return on investment of fiber installation at various sites. In response to a question from Vice Chairman McClain, Mr. Kelly estimated that half a dozen tower sites currently have fiber.

Mr. Kelly has distributed all the surplus, used radios from the equipment upgrades. Any pending requests will be fulfilled as new equipment is installed. The remaining upgrades will furnish enough surplus 100-watt mobile radios and portable radios to meet all of the requests. He has an excess of 50-watt radios that are available for donation should any requests be made.

4.9 GHz Update

Mr. Tupper discussed the 4.9 GHz band, which the FCC has designated for public safety use. The band is highly sought after, with numerous commercial cellular carriers eager to utilize it.

Mr. Tupper stated that the department relies on this band in situations where the standard 5.8 GHz connection is not available. It is a reliable and cost-effective option for high-speed data transmission. WYDOT has utilized it in the past for network backhaul. The WHP dispatch and the Transportation Management Center have a 4.9 GHz connection to WYDOT headquarters. Mr. Tupper reported that many of the traffic signals across the state are connected via a 4.9 GHz connection.

With the expansion of 5G networks and the increasing utilization of the 5 MHz band, WYDOT is increasingly transferring communications to the 4.9 GHz band. Mr. Tupper found radios that would allow the department to use both the 4.9 GHz and 5.8 GHz connections. The WyoLink system could benefit from using the 4.9 GHz band for its backhaul, which would result in increased redundancy within the system.

WYDOT has utilized the 4.9 GHz band since 2014 and currently holds 75 licenses for the band registered with the FCC. Several Wyoming counties—Sweetwater, Uinta, Hot Springs, Campbell, Johnson, Natrona, and Sheridan—currently use and hold licenses with the FCC for the 4.9 GHz band. Casper, Gillette, Douglas, Cheyenne, Wright, Lander, and Sheridan are also licenses users of the 4.9 GHz band. Despite the under-utilization of the 4.9 GHz band in the United States, Mr. Tupper has confirmed that WYDOT is currently utilizing the band and intends to increase its usage in the future.

In response to questions from Vice Chairman McClain, Mr. Tupper confirmed that a few of the WYDOT webcams use the 4.9 GHz band. Mr. Kelly stated that the connection is determined by the level of congestion, with higher congestion on the 2.4 GHz and 5.8 GHz bands leading to a higher probability of the cameras using the 4.9 GHz band. Mr. Tupper said that if the FCC decides to sell some of the spectrum in the

4.9 GHz band, it would affect WYDOT's communications operations in Casper and Jackson.

WyoLink Operational Updates

WyoLink System Reports

Mr. Gardiner shared WyoLink usage data from the first quarter (Q1) of 2024. There was an average of about 1.7 million push-to-talks (PTT) and 145,341 minutes of airtime for the quarter, which is typical for the time of year. He compared the Q1 2024 totals to the same period in 2023, revealing an increase in PTTs and a decrease of time people spent on the radio, indicating improved efficiency. The top 20 talkgroups for Q1 were law enforcement agencies from nine counties, four municipalities, and three WHP divisions.

WyoLink System Upgrades

Mr. Gardiner reported that over 200 WyoLink talkgroups were patched into Critical Connect, including all of the MATs and the county agency talkgroups (CAT). Nine counties have been integrated into the system via FirstNet. The WyoLink Office is working with Verizon to secure approval for their agreements, enabling the addition of their talkgroups to the system. Once other upgrades are complete, the team will program the system to display identifiers of specific users and/or devices to dispatchers.

As discussed at a prior meeting, technicians are installing service aggregation routers (SARs) at the WyoLink sites to enhance the system's resilience and self-healing capabilities. Technicians have also been upgrading the SARs to the latest firmware.

The installation process for the two new NFM-P servers encountered unexpected challenges. The engineer is scheduled to revisit in a few weeks to ensure proper functionality. The NFM-P servers will enable the team to efficiently monitor and manage the network.

Mr. Gardiner reported that the system software upgrades yesterday did not proceed as smoothly as anticipated, but were ultimately successful. Connectivity issues between certain dispatch centers and sites on the unified network were addressed with assistance from Motorola. The system is now running on the 2022 version of the ASTRO 25 software. All of the servers that control the system were replaced at the master sites in Cheyenne and Casper.

Mr. Gardiner shared that the team is doing its best to learn, evaluate, and continuously improve the system through all of the upgrades—GTRs, SARs, and system software.

WyoLink Website & Training

Mr. Smolinski reported that the team is currently updating the website. He hopes the updates will be completed soon and can be presented at the August meeting. Additionally, the team is updating the WyoLink training presentation to incorporate the commission's recommendations and suggested modifications.

Mr. Smolinski recently met with the Wyoming Fire Chiefs' Association to discuss bi-directional amplifiers (BDA), which are devices that extend the coverage of the

WyoLink system into buildings and subterranean structures. The latest fire codes require all buildings to have emergency communication coverage, making BDAs essential for many buildings. Several towns and cities have begun installing BDAs, but not all have provided adequate notification to WYDOT. The issue is that an improperly maintained and operated BDA could bring down a WyoLink site. It is crucial that towns and cities notify the WyoLink office of the installation of a BDA.

Mr. Smolinski provided information to the fire chiefs and fire marshals regarding the new fire codes, the impact of BDAs on the WyoLink system, and the procedures for collaborating with the WyoLink Office to guarantee proper maintenance of the systems. The relationship that is developing with the fire marshals will help WYDOT better handle this issue in the future.

In response to questions from Vice Chairman McClain Commissioner Shank, Mr. Smolinski stated that the new fire codes apply to new and existing structures of 12,000 square feet or larger in size.

Statewide Interoperability Coordination (SWIC) Updates

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

Critical Connect

Mr. Kelly reported that WYDOT is actively engaged in discussions with Montana to integrate the WyoLink system with Montana through Critical Connect. Initial conversations with South Dakota on the same topic have recently taken place. Mr. Kelly proposed that Wyoming could potentially establish a connection with South Dakota before Montana, citing the ease of the connection. The process will be further facilitated by using the existing MOU with Montana as a blueprint for the MOU with South Dakota.

CISA Update

Mr. Johnson presented information to the commission on the Technical Assistance (TA) Program available through the Emergency Communications Division (ECD) of CISA. He also discussed the Emergency Support Function 2 (ESF-2) Training and Exercise held in April.

Mr. Johnson presented some statistics on the current state of the TA program. In fiscal years (FY) 2022 and 2023, there was a 61 percent increase in work orders and there were 320 work orders carried over from FY23. In the first quarter of FY24, there were already 354 open work orders. Mr. Johnson is unable to accommodate any additional TA requests for FY24 due to the lack of capacity to fulfill them.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smolinski have engaged in multiple conversations regarding the provision of technical assistance to Wyoming, especially in light of the halt on new requests. Unfortunately, Wyoming completed its Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) just as the TA request suspension went into effect.

Mr. Johnson stated that CISA's priorities have been altered due to various significant events, such as the 2026 World Cup in Kansas City, the presidential inauguration, interoperability summits, and the Democratic and Republican national conventions. The TA program suffered adverse effects due to stagnant funding from Congress,

rising salaries and benefits, and the introduction of new programs. The backlog of TA requests is still increasing, with open requests from FY22.

CISA has developed short- and long-term plans to execute as many TA requests as possible. The ECD will meet with each Emergency Communications Coordinator (ECC) to review approved TA requests, confirm need with the SWICs, and prioritize delivery over the next 12 to 18 months. Each ECC should execute existing work orders starting with the higher priority work orders. After the existing work orders are executed, the ECCs may accept new, high priority TA requests. Mr. Johnson will know more about CISA's long-term plan for FY25 after the national meeting of interoperability coordinators in June.

Following a question from Commissioner Choma, Mr. Johnson shared that the agency is making efforts to complete all ongoing requests before the fiscal year ends. Once the fiscal year ends, all pending requests will be cleared, and TA requests will need to be resubmitted. Mr. Johnson will work with Mr. Smolinski and Mr. Kelly to prioritize new TA requests from the SCIP and submit them in FY25. In response to a question from Commissioner Kaysen, Mr. Johnson said that Wyoming does not have any requests in the backlog due to the timing of the completion of the SCIP.

Mr. Johnson presented information on the ESF-2 Spring Training and Region 10 Earthquake Exercise that took place in Denver on April 24, 2024. The scenario used for the exercise was a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake with an ensuing tsunami along the West Coast of the United States and Canada. CISA's Region 8 office would assist in response efforts in this scenario since most of the local resources would be inoperable. In the year leading up to the training, the planning team offered eight, one-hour webinars to familiarize participants with information that would be pertinent to the exercise.

Participants were divided into five groups and sent to different locations for the duration of the exercise. One group was at a federal facility in downtown Denver, three groups were at FEMA's Regional Response Coordination Center in different rooms, and the final team was at CISA offices. Participants from six states, representatives from the telecommunications industry, and several federal agencies took part in the exercise.

Mr. Johnson shared the presentation slides from the exercise. The slides included maps of the impacted area detailing: critical communications infrastructure; regional resources like hospitals, law enforcement, and shelters; cell tower locations; internet exchange facilities; the impacts to metropolitan and long-haul fiber; land mobile radio transmitters; impacts to PSAPs and the Emergency Alert System; and impacts to the electrical power grid.

The exercise also incorporated tasks that required participants to utilize alternative means of communication such as satellite phones, SAT-COM radios, and high frequency radio networks. Mr. Johnson will share the after-action report from the training with Mr. Smolinski.

Compact Rapid Deployable (CRD) Memo

WYDOT collaborated with WOHS to develop a deployment strategy for the two CRDs. They created a form that communities will use to request the deployment of a CRD in the event of an emergency, incident, or major event within the community. Communities will also be provided with AT&T's CRD pamphlet, in addition to the form.

Mr. Smolinski and Mr. Kelly have prepared a memo that is intended to notify Wyoming stakeholders about the unit's availability and the procedure for requesting it. The commission concluded that the memo should be sent on their behalf.

Action: It was moved by Commissioner Shank, seconded by Commissioner Bertoglio, and unanimously carried to include the PSCC in the verbiage of the memo.

Mr. Smolinski stated that the memo will be placed on PSCC letterhead before being sent to the relevant stakeholders.

Commercial Emergency Communications Services Update

Mr. Smolinski reported that WYDOT continues to work with AT&T FirstNet and Verizon Frontline. However, T-Mobile recently provided the department information on their Wyoming operations, network expansions and coverage, and mission critical communications platform. WYDOT had previously conducted tests on T-Mobile's coverage and data transmission, and the results were unsatisfactory. Following this, T-Mobile requested that the department reevaluate the network using a modem equipped with a 5G module. Throughout the summer, technicians across the state will use the modem and other instrumentation to generate a precise coverage map.

Critical Connect Forms

Mr. Kelly reported that the Critical Connect forms—which WyoLink subscribers must complete to access Critical Connect—will be updated to collect information required by AT&T. Mr. Kelly emphasized that this will streamline the process and reduce paperwork for WyoLink subscribers. The program will send out information to subscribers on where to find the information and how to (re)submit it.

The Verizon agreement is currently under AG review. Subscribing entities must also complete the Verizon agreement, which is quite lengthy. Additionally, the process to share talkgroups through Verizon is slightly more complex than AT&T.

Mr. Kelly reported that he and Mr. Smolinski are working with service providers to add Telecommunication Service Priority (TSP) to WyoLink circuits, which feed both WyoLink sites and PSAPs. The plan is to complete the registration of state circuits before extending it to local entities. Mr. Kelly and his team will be able to guide local entities through the procedure and connect them with the appropriate individuals and resources.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX. Announcements

Ms. Chapman announced that the next meeting will be held via videoconference on August 7, 2024.

Ms. Chapman reminded commissioners that the Wyoming Attorney General's Office is hosting a board training on Friday, May 10, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Cheyenne. A virtual attendance option is available.

Ms. Chapman announced that the November meeting will be held on its originally scheduled date—November 13—but the location has changed. The meeting will be held in Casper in conjunction with the Wyoming Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials conference.

X. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Choma, seconded by Commissioner Carr, and unanimously carried to adjourn the May 8, 2024, business meeting at 12:04 p.m.