



Mark Gordon  
Governor  
K. Luke Reiner  
Director

# Wyoming Department Of Transportation

## PUBLIC SAFETY Communications Commission

### Meeting Minutes



Mark Harshman  
Chairman  
Telephone No.:  
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#### I. Call to Order

The Public Safety Communications Commission (PSCC) met via videoconference on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. Chair Harshman presided, calling the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M.

#### II. Roll Call

The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Mark Harshman, Chairman	Kebin Haller, Commissioner
Paul Bertoglio, Commissioner	Dwane Pacheco, Commissioner
Matt Carr, Commissioner	Luke Reiner, Ex Officio Member
Jonathan Downing, Commissioner	
Doug Frank, Commissioner	
Ron Gatti, Commissioner	

Commissioners Martin Armajo, Mike Choma, and Forrest Williams were absent.

#### III. Introductions

The following attendees participated in the meeting:

Troy Babbitt, Chief Technology Officer	Nathan Smolinski, Emergency Communications Manager
Neil Gardiner, WyoLink Support Manager	Aimee Binning, 911 Planning Coordinator
Kevin Hibbard, Director, State Budget Department	Kimberly Chapman, PSCC Secretary
Ryan Thompson, Assistant Attorney General	Susan Elliott, Director's Executive Assistant
Sandy Scott, Transportation Commission Secretary	

#### IV. Agenda Adjustments

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

#### V. Action Items

##### 1. Draft Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Frank, seconded by Commissioner Downing, and unanimously carried to approve the February 10, 2021, business meeting minutes.

#### VI. Updates/Discussions

##### 1. Director's Update

Director Reiner presented his update.

#### Covid-19

Currently have only one (1) positive case. Administration is actively encouraging employees to get the vaccine. The goal is to have everyone back in the office by July 1, 2021, but employees are still teleworking.

#### Legislature

Director Reiner briefed the commission on the outcome of several WYDOT-related bills from the most recent legislative session.

HB0015, a transportation communication facilities bill, permits revenue from the lease of excess capacity to be directed to the WyoLink Tower Maintenance Account rather than the General Fund. The fiscal estimate was only about \$3,500 per year.

HB0014, a rights-of-way act, provides a mechanism for WYDOT to petition the government for a blanket easement for rights-of-way on public roads on federal lands in Wyoming for broadband infrastructure development. WYDOT continues to support broadband development by working with providers to allow access to the right-of-way.

Revenue bills did not fare as well. The bills on fuel tax, road usage charge, and tolling all failed to pass. The Revenue Information System bill passed. It will raise almost \$1,000,000 a year, through increased driver's license renewal fees, that will be used to replace the system. The safety bills (primary seat belt and backward-facing child safety seats) failed to pass. Bills on automated-enforcement on Teton Pass and moving expenses for WYDOT employees also failed to pass.

Director Reiner asked for the commissioners' support on an initiative by the Wyoming County Commissioners Association (WCCA) to set up a working group to provide a funding source for WyoLink.

#### Budget

WYDOT will start working on its FY22 budget soon. Since most of the revenue bills failed, cuts will have to be considered.

#### *Federal*

The Fix America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is up for renewal this year, and this administration is favorable to its renewal. WYDOT gets about \$280 million a year from the FAST act for our roads.

Congress has reinstated earmarks for both appropriations and reauthorization. WYDOT has been communicating with Representative Cheney's office on the earmarks, and project lists have been submitted.

The American Jobs Plan is the current administration's \$2 trillion infrastructure package. WYDOT is working with the Governor's office to submit projects for this plan, including

the I-80 and I-25 interchange, a re-route of I-80 along the Highway 30 corridor, the I-80 tunnels by Green River, and wildlife crossing projects.

#### Connected Vehicle Project

The commission has previously been briefed on this project, which provides vehicles on I-80 the capability to communicate with each other in order to identify threats and hazards on the roadway. The test was negatively impacted by the loss of 5.9 GHz frequencies, which were taken away by the previous administration and Federal Communications Commission. The current administration has shown a willingness to readdress this issue.

#### COVID 2 Funding

Kevin Hibbard, State Budget Department Director, reported that his office is working with the Department of Homeland Security to recoup about \$70 to \$100 million of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. There are CARES Act monies available for broadband exercises.

He further added his support for the local government initiative to fund WyoLink. Currently, the project is being funded by the Coal Lease Bonus, but there is no expectation to have that funding stream in the future.

## 2. Chief Technology Officer's Report

Troy Babbitt presented his update. The update also included information presented by Ms. Binning on NG911.

Mr. Babbitt recognized and welcomed new commissioner, Teton County Sheriff Matt Carr, and new commission secretary, Kimberly Chapman.

#### Legislature

Mr. Babbitt reminded the commission that HB0015, the WyoLink tower shares bill, is specifically on state-owned, WYDOT-operated towers with excess capacity. ISP's can lease excess room on a tower, if there is space, and not interfere with the current WyoLink network.

Mr. Babbitt reported that as internet service providers install fiber optics on WYDOT right-of-ways (per HB0014), there is a possible benefit to WYDOT of having fiber connectivity to WyoLink towers.

#### Interim Topics

Mr. Babbitt informed the commission that he and Mr. Smolinski will be part of the stakeholder group formed by the WCCA. He continues to build and maintain strong working relationships with county and city officials across the state. Increased cooperation and partnerships could lead to the end-goal of finding a long-term solution for funding for WyoLink infrastructure, maintenance, and end-point radios.

CenturyLink/Lumen

Lumen, formerly CenturyLink, has the selective router for 911 services across the state. The department is working with Lumen to understand the design of the lines into the PSAP and what the system could look like in the future, especially using cell phones and high-capacity data.

Next Generation 911 (NG911)

Ms. Binning started her report by recognizing National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. She thanked all of the professionals in Wyoming for their services to the citizens of the state and emergency responders.

The NG911 funding process is in progress through federal legislation in the Lift America Act. Wyoming is preparing for federal grant opportunities to assist in funding NG911 efforts. Working groups are meeting monthly and are focused on five topic areas: governance, outreach and education, strategic planning, GIS, and technology. They are working to identify the current cost of 911 through a survey to emergency communication centers throughout the state. 911 is using legacy equipment and networks within Wyoming that are expensive and do not support the large data that can be sent to dispatch centers with an IP gateway. It is important to identify the cost of 911 service to our local communities.

Ms. Binning has put together a quarterly newsletter to inform stakeholders on the progress made by the workgroups. A copy has been shared with the commission.

A stakeholder's virtual meeting will be held in August, exact date TBD.

Lift America Act

The act is a piece of federal legislation that could provide funds for broadband infrastructure and 911 upgrades. If funds are available through a grant process, Ms. Binning felt that the department is in a good position to apply for funds to assist with the NG911 upgrade plans.

3. Emergency Communications Program Manager's Report

Mr. Smolinski provided his update. The update also included information presented by Mr. Gardiner regarding WyoLink operations.

16 Tower Build-Out Report

Mr. Smolinski reported that progress has been slow during the last couple of months due to weather and Covid cases amongst the main contractor's crew. Buffalo, Orin Junction, Wright, and Jackson have all been made active and are about to be closed out. Final inspections will be conducted soon at Jackson and Greybull, and then those sites will be closed out.

Alcova and Lusk will be online by the end of the week once back-up power has been confirmed for both sites. The site in Alva will be online by early May following installation of fiber optics.

Groundbreaking will happen soon at both Rock Springs sites: Blairtown and 14 Mile Hill. Approval has been granted by the Forest Service on the engineer's plans for the shelter at the Ten Sleep (Meadowlark) site.

The Goshen County site is in the final steps of the right-of-way process. The Newcastle site is still facing hurdles with the local landowner, but WYDOT's Right of Way Program is having in-depth conversations with Union Wireless to evaluate acceptable risks for an agreement.

Conversations are wrapping up on a final agreement with the landowner for the Evanston site. If all goes well, the lease will go active June 1 and construction can begin.

The Northern Big Horn County site is waiting to get final clearance from the Bureau of Land Management, pending further conversation. The location in Bondurant is still snowed-in, so desk work is being completed before surveying and mapping can be completed.

Mr. Smolinski also presented a brief slideshow on the recently completed work at Alcova.

#### Statewide Interoperability Coordination Updates

Mr. Smolinski reported that he has been working with WYDOT Procurement on the Subscriber Unit Request for Proposal (RFP). The opening date is May 11, questions are due May 20, and WYDOT's response is due May 27. The official award date is listed as September 1, but the review panel intends to have the award made much sooner.

He also reported that the department has been working with Homeland Security on a high-frequency communication project. Mobile units with high-frequency radios have been sent out to WYDOT shops and are being tested. Local partners have been invited to participate in the project.

An Incident Communications Center Management course will take place May 3-6 and has over 50 attendees. An auxiliary communications course is planned for Fall 2021.

The WyoLink-PSCC report is due to the Governor's Office by the end of May. Mr. Smolinski will work with Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Gardiner to write the report; a draft will be sent to Chairman Harshman before it is submitted to the governor.

#### FirstNet Updates

Conversations are continuing between WYDOT and AT&T regarding the possibility of connecting WyoLink to the AT&T system. Advantages of the merger include expanded

coverage to more agencies at a lower cost. There is a possibility of bringing in surrounding states for interop communications, so coordination with the vendor is needed to ensure our approach matches neighboring states.

WyoLink Operational Updates

Mr. Gardiner reported that there was a successful test of the Inter Sub-System Interface (ISSI) link to Sublette County earlier this week. Work will continue on the memorandum of understanding to reach agreement on mapping talk groups and training the dispatchers and radio users.

The WyoLink office has been improving and providing new Ethernet connections through the Wyoming Unified Network. There are now connections to Torrington; and connections have been improved to Gillette, Campbell County, Sheridan, and a redundant path to the Teton Pass radio site. There is fiber connectivity to redundant radio sites at Douglas, Yellowstone, and McCullough Park. The office is also involved in a project converting radio site connectivity to Ethernet through the microwave network. As of April 14, the third out of ten sites was completed.

WyoLink technicians have also been applying security patches to servers in Cheyenne and Casper. WyoLink website updates will hopefully be coming soon as content is added. WyoLink staff will update user equipment training once the RFP has been settled on WYDOT and Highway Patrol radios.

**VII. Public Comment/Announcements**

There was no public comment.

Chairman Harshman welcomed Commissioner Matt Carr to the PSCC.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Commissioner Bertoglio, seconded by Commissioner Haller, and unanimously carried to adjourn the April 14, 2021, business meeting at 4:10 p.m.