

**Keynote Address of Chief Jeff Johnson, Chief (Ret.)  
Board Member, FirstNet**

at the

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**As Prepared for Delivery**

Thank you. I want to recognize a couple people that made some substantial contributions to us being here today—Jimmy Gianato and Chief Charles Werner — two people who contributed mightily to this workshop today. Both sit on the Public Safety Advisory Committee. I also want to acknowledge Ken Boley. Ken is not a guy that seeks the limelight. The fact is when we were on Capitol Hill, Ken gave us excellent strategic advice at important times. And his background in terms of contributing to build out in the D.C. area, his experience, and even sometimes his lawyer skills are very, well, helpful.

I did want to say, also, that you may see our messages and what we say evolving over time. And I think the best way I can explain that is *we've never built a nationwide public safety network*. And if any of you have in here, stand up and tell me what's going to happen, because I want to know. The reality is we haven't, and we're learning. And I think we're going to learn together. That's why we're here together.

I wanted to thank you for being here, and for volunteering. The reality is that all of you one way or another have stepped up and volunteered to track this, to accept this, to be involved in this historic event. And volunteering is something I'm very familiar with. In Delaware volunteer firefighters are known as the third political party. You can't hear a presentation by the Vice President of the United States, who is from Delaware, without even mentioning the volunteer firefighters in Delaware. And 75 percent of firefighters in the United States are volunteer firefighters. So this is an industry where volunteerism is critical to our success and, frankly, to our delivery model.

And it is that volunteer mindset that I think is important for all of us to have as we work toward this goal. And what is the goal? The goal is really this simple. It's to design, build and operate FirstNet, a nationwide network dedicated to first responders. That's who it's for. We can't build it without all of you. We couldn't do it without you on the Hill when we passed the law. And we can't build this out without you. And that's going to mean we need frank talk. We need to hear from you, you need to be candid. And our obligation to you is to be candid right back. It's going to take directness for us to see your issues, for us to see unique qualities that exist in your world and for us to try to put that into context in terms of building out a nationwide network. It's got to happen. There's no reason for us to be cranky. We have so much to be grateful for. Public Safety three years ago could not have imagined a day when Congress would give us 20 megahertz of spectrum and \$7 billion. They gave us a governance

model, they gave us spectrum, they gave us money, and they gave us everything we need to get this done.

The tools are there by themselves at this point in time in history. I was thinking that the capabilities of commercial wireless technology are advancing at breakneck speed. Most of us are replacing our devices every couple years just to keep up. The evolution of the wireless technology on the commercial side has been staggering. As Sam Ginn our chairman is fond of saying, few of us would ever have predicted when we had a flip phone, the capabilities that would come with a smartphone only a few short years ago. Few would have predicted our personal reliance on our smartphones. I don't know about you, but it's an integral part of my life. I check for two things before I leave the house, my wallet and my phone. The rest is bonus.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, FirstNet today is not intended to replace land mobile radio. Will it eventually? Let's watch what technology does as FirstNet evolves. But today, we're building a nationwide, high-speed data network dedicated to public safety; data first, mission-critical voice later. There's no utility in trying to anticipate when that date is. Inevitably you'll get it wrong. I think we all understand the migration of technology, we all understand the importance of land mobile radio as public safety first responders. I think we have begun to see the importance of data. And really that's what we're talking about. High-speed LTE, commercially proven, big pipes, driving innovation and public safety, creating a gravitas that will cause the industry to migrate to public safety with applications and innovations that just like with the flip phone – we can't imagine from where we stand today.

Our challenge really is how do we build a nationwide network to meet your local needs but have nationwide architecture and a nationwide approach? How will we bring these things to market in a mission-critical fashion and enable local management of a network, which has got to happen right? When we are done, this network has to be managed at a local level by you; not a national level – local. So why are we here? Well we're here because public safety fought and won spectrum, won the money, and won the grants. We showed Congress the national vision. This is the last remaining recommendation to the 9/11 commission. So alright, now let's get this thing built.

But I do have to say — it isn't perfect. The bill that actually passed was not “the bill” that public safety circulated on the Hill for four or five years. In actuality, this law is the byproduct of what came out of the committee that was working on the Middle Class Tax Relief Act. And I've got say, all due respect to everybody who contributed to it, it is awesome, but it is not perfect. It is not perfectly aligned with the State and Local Implementation (SLIGP) Grant Program. The SLIGP timelines and expectations and FirstNet's timelines and expectations are not precisely aligned. We're going have to do the best we can with that. It's not precisely and profoundly clean in how it relates to the public safety Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). And we're going have to do the best we can with that.

You know, we're in this room today because FirstNet desires to listen. We desire to listen to you and what your needs are and what needs to happen in your area. I think there are just a handful of questions to worry about. The first one is what is possible? I told you we'll do plain talk, here's the plain talk. You hear so much about a 400-page document. What's in that 400-page document? Is that a plan?

Well it's not. It's a document that looks at what alternatives are there. And really, in my view, it says what is possible.

How do you really start to even get to a point where we can talk to you, unless we're talking to people like device manufacturers and saying, "If we brought you an order for two million devices, how long would it take you to put it in a pipe and get devices to come out?" We've got to know that. We've got to know that kind of detail on so many fronts before we can engage you in meaningful dialogue about what your needs are and how we're going to build this. If "what is possible" is step one, then "listening" is step two. This is the first day of our formal listening tour of six regional meetings followed by 56 individual visits with states, territories and commonwealths. And that's where we're going to have a very personal dialogue with you. After that is done, we're going to select network alternatives, when you select a network alternative after you listen, that's going to yield a price and that's going to yield a picture of what the service looks like. And that'll show up to you as a proposal. And then the law contemplates that some of you may not want to belong to FirstNet. There's an opt-out provision for those of you that find FirstNet's offering to build the RAN not to your liking and you'd like to do something different. There's a path articulated in the law for you to do that. .

Here's what we're listening for: in this listening phase, we're listening for coverage needs; we're interested in capacity, in hardening, reliability and security. We're interested in those little unique qualities that we can't see from our vantage point. I was talking with attendees from West Virginia. We're often talking about coverage and how much of the nation we're going to cover. The fact is we want to cover as much of America as we possibly can. But I had no idea until this morning that there's a 100- by 110-square mile area in West Virginia that's a radio free zone. They have diesels and Studebakers because electronic ignition isn't allowed in there. I didn't know that. The reality is that Alaska and Florida have very little in common in geography. From a geographic perspective, Guam and Saipan have very little in common with Oregon or Manhattan. We have to understand your unique qualities so that we can pour that into the network. So when we make choices about this network we make sure to fill your unique needs. You can vent to us. Insights, partnerships, infrastructure — nobody knows your system better than you do.

This is a new dawn for public safety. A network with the kind of capabilities that we're contemplating is truly a force multiplier. The kind of scale that we will bring to the device market is likely to dramatically lower the cost of devices. Now we'll probably end up replacing those more often than they have done historically, but it should dramatically put downward pressure on the price. A single nationwide network is going to enable operability nationwide. I think in my 32 years of axes, hoses and shocking people we've always talked about interoperability. But the reality is none of us step off the airplane in a new city and glance at our phone and say, "Oh, check that out — my phone is interoperable." It's not interoperable when it's the single nationwide network. It's operable. And the challenge is to bring that single national approach — that vision for single nationwide architecture — to public safety; to bring mass to the single slice of spectrum to a single technology. We believe that's going to bring innovation. We're getting glimpses of it today. We're getting glimpses of what high-speed data networks do to help the police in New York City. We're getting glimpses in my Oregon region of what high-speed data networks do for fire and rescue services, use of the Pulse Point application and what it can do for saving

lives in critical moments. We're getting glimpses of what it means, operationally, to provide real-time videos from cameras. Let's look at the impact it had in Boston and the ability to solve that horrendous crime. Take a look at what technology is doing to how we do our jobs and I think we're only getting glimpses. The most important part of that discussion — of what could be and what is — is a two-way conversation. Our goal is to be open and candid. Our goal is to be conversational and more importantly to be all ears.

Let's start this part of that straight talk discussion with some of the things that I think might be on your mind. If any of you get any digital publications or print media, I'm sure you've heard about the Fitzgerald Resolution. I've known Paul for many years. Paul is a good man and he is a dedicated public servant. Paul felt strongly about the issue he put forth in that resolution. I didn't agree with him; the other board members didn't agree with him. But nonetheless, he put it on the table. The other day we held a special Board meeting to form a special review committee chaired by Wellington Webb, former Mayor of Denver, and there's a committee to help deal with it. The findings from the review will be shared with the public. Message sent, message received and action taken.

Another issue is the 400-page document. Let me assure you of one thing. There is no business plan. There is research into alternatives, and taking a look at what choices are out there, what possibilities exist. But there is no plan. There is no plan until the board listens to you first. Then we look at network alternatives, then we look at the research we've done. They apply that and make some choices. Only then, when the Board says this is where we're going, with a strategy and structure, only then do you have a plan. You know we're cranking out a lot of work. From my perspective, I would have liked to have done a better job communicating outwardly. But it's a learning thing. I can't possibly impress upon you the difficulty of starting up a brand-new, independent entity to build out a nationwide network; the difficulty around creating relationships, the processes and getting people in place to talk, listen and have events like this. I really think we are starting to get better, but it's those things you struggle with early on.

Another thing we hear frequently is how much will it cost? We don't know. We won't know until we make a network choice. We won't know until we hear from you and understand what infrastructure, what assets you can bring to the table as well as other potential partners. This is as close as I can get — you had better find the price attractive enough to buy or we failed! Fair? There is no requirement in the law that says you must buy FirstNet services, none. The only way FirstNet pays its bills and sustains a nationwide architecture is if you choose to buy it. That means we have to drive a bargain at a price point and a value point where you find it worth it. That's the real challenge. Right?

Another question we get — what's next? This implies there is this serial process to what we're doing. Really it's more of a concurrent process rather than serial process. I realize in government much work is done in a serial process. But here, we can't get it done with serial development. We have to do things concurrently and we're open to sharing our thinking on that with you.

Those are some of the big questions. We have time set aside for you to ask questions. We will do our best to answer. So I hope by our next regional meeting, next week, I don't have 4 questions I've heard, I have a lot more.

You know, President John F. Kennedy said, "This country was conquered by those who move forward." That's where we're at. We're here to move forward. There's not a person in this room who isn't in their own way a proven leader. And we've all been places organizationally where we're taking bold and brave steps down paths and in directions where others may not completely agree. They may have interests not aligned with you. They may have a personal philosophy that doesn't align with yours. But your goal and your responsibility is to move forward. FirstNet is charged with one primary responsibility: We have to build a nationwide network. We must build a nationwide network. That is our job. We are the only people in the room with that one responsibility.

We will not be as efficient as we should or could be, without you. We want to listen to you. We want to see what's unique about your state. We want to see what partnerships and infrastructure you can bring to the table. We want to see who is going to be early to this game and who is going to embrace the FirstNet vision early. We're going to do it better if we listen to you.

I understand, of all people, having had responsibility for building out Oregon's statewide radio network. I spent 10 years doing that. I understand you are here and have a fiduciary responsibility to those who sent you to this meeting, and we have a fiduciary responsibility to build a nationwide network, and those two things are not always going to align and that's okay. I just want you to hear it from us straight out. We want to work with you. We want to figure out how to make our worlds align. We will be stronger and will do a better job if we do make them aligned.

Our goal is to have millions of public safety users leveraging the power of the network every day at the street level. I could wax for hours about the opportunities that exist for police officers, firefighters and EMTs at the street level about the aspirational component of how we can make their lives better. How we can make them more effective and efficient. But I want to make sure we do at least one thing today. Let's keep it real and stay grounded. This is a huge lift. This is a lift that I don't think any of us, no matter how much I try to imagine, no matter how complicated and difficult this will be, I have a feeling that in two years I'm going to look back and say I had no idea. It is going to be phenomenal and it's going to be challenging. But we are here in the spirit of partnership. And we're motivated to get this right ladies and gentlemen.

None of us in public safety when we were on the Hill thought this would be easy. We did not believe that the legislative lift would be easy. And all of us instinctively knew, if we got the legislation through, the implementation would be even more challenging. So here we are. We are at implementation and it is every bit as challenging as we thought it might be. You and I share one thing—we both want to get this right. We want to get these tools in the hands of our cops, firefighters and EMTs on the street. We want to give this network to public safety for all the right reasons.

Because we know, if we do this right, we will save lives and we will do our jobs more efficiently than ever. There are already nations from around the world that are looking to see what we're doing and

how we're doing it. This era is upon us. Today is time for all of us in this room to look forward. To take a look at what your unique needs are and try to apply them. Our challenge is to try to build out our nationwide network.

We're here to listen. We're here with our hand out. We're here with our ears open to make sure we understand you. And I want to wrap this up by saying we are eager and looking forward to individual visits at your state level and beginning a conversation with you - in detail - about what you have, what you need and what you need from FirstNet.

With that I want to thank you for coming here this morning.

Thank you.