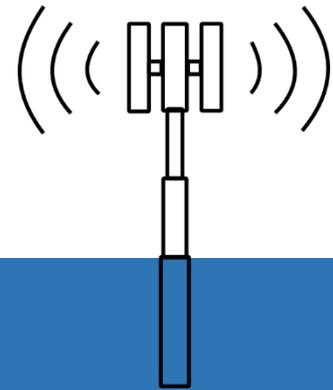


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Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission

# 2017 Annual Report

The purpose of the Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission is to ensure the building, deployment and operation of a statewide interoperable public safety broadband network that meets the interoperability goals and specifications of the FirstNet network, pursuant to Title VI of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. The commission shall advise the Governor on issues related to the public safety broadband network and shall report to the Governor annually.

*This report is submitted to the Governor in keeping with the requirements of Executive Order #05-13.*

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## Executive Summary

In 2012, Congress passed legislation creating FirstNet. The law charged FirstNet with the duty to build, operate and maintain the first high-speed nationwide wireless network dedicated to public safety entities. FirstNet is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The creation of FirstNet and its mission was encompassed in the final recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. That tragedy demonstrated the need for first responders to have a dedicated, reliable network for advanced data communications nationwide. During emergencies, public safety personnel need priority access and preemption, which are not available on commercial networks.

The Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission (PSBC) was established by Executive Order in 2013 to guide and prepare for FirstNet in this state. The PSBC is charged with advising the Governor on issues related to the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). In 2017, the PSBC fulfilled a defining task of the commission to prepare a recommendation for Governor Phil Scott to either opt-in or opt-out of the federal FirstNet plan for Vermont. The PSBC recommended that Vermont opt-in to the federal plan. The opt-in recommendation was supported by several independent reviews.

In preparing to make a recommendation, the PSBC:

1. Critically reviewed the draft and final proposals submitted by FirstNet/AT&T to the State of Vermont for a statewide Radio Access Network (RAN);
2. Worked with FirstNet/AT&T to improve the solution recommended for Vermont by FirstNet/AT&T – specifically improvements in coverage and deployable technology;
3. Secured the services of an independent consultant (Televate) to conduct a technical review of the FirstNet/AT&T RAN offer and reviewed their findings and opt-in recommendation;
4. Conducted outreach with Vermont's practitioner community to share information and request feedback on the commission's activities;
5. Issued an RFP for optional RAN proposals and evaluated the responses for suitability;
6. Worked with the State Treasurer's Office to obtain an opinion on financial risks to Vermont on the various approaches—the State Treasurer recommended an opt-in decision; and
7. Considered the findings of the Independent Review (IR) conducted by Couer Business Group on behalf of the Agency of Digital Services that also recommended Vermont opt-in.

On November 29, 2017 Governor Scott announced his decision to accept the FirstNet plan to deliver a wireless broadband network to the state's public safety community. On December 28, 2017 the governors in all 50 states, two U.S. territories and Washington D.C. opted-in to the federal FirstNet system.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act was signed into law on February 22, 2012. The law created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). The law gives FirstNet the mission to build, operate and maintain the first high-speed, nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. FirstNet will provide a single interoperable platform for emergency and daily public safety communications. The FirstNet organization is the first of its kind. Never before has Congress established an independent government authority with a mandate to provide specialized communication services for public safety.

FirstNet has 20 megahertz of nationwide spectrum with which to deploy the FirstNet network. The network was made possible by public safety's successful fight for D-Block 700 MHz spectrum, also known as Band Class 14. Congress not only allocated valuable spectrum, but also authorized up to \$7 billion in funding for the construction of the FirstNet network. To create a nationwide network, all 56 U.S. states and territories must have a Radio Access Network (RAN) that is connected to the FirstNet core network. To contain costs, FirstNet is tasked with leveraging existing telecommunications infrastructure and assets. In 2016, FirstNet released a Request for Proposals to select a private partner to build-out and manage the network. In March, 2017, FirstNet announced that AT&T was the winning bidder.

With a contract awarded, FirstNet and AT&T began immediate work on coverage plans for each state. The plans outlined how they would build the RAN in each state and territory in the U.S. Draft state plans were transmitted to states on June 19, 2017. In Vermont, the Public Safety Broadband Network Commission reviewed a draft and final plan and gave feedback to FirstNet. Governor Phil Scott received notice of the final FirstNet plan delivery on September 29, 2017. Upon receiving this notice, Vermont--and all of the states--were given 90 days to review their unique state plan and decide whether to opt-in or opt-out of the network. The deadline for governors to inform FirstNet of their decision was December 28, 2017.

At their November 20 meeting, the commission voted to recommend to Governor Phil Scott that he should opt-in to the FirstNet plan for Vermont. Governor Scott announced on November 29 that Vermont would accept the federal build-out plan for FirstNet. For states that choose to opt-in, the responsibility and costs to fully build and manage the network will rest on FirstNet and AT&T. States that choose to opt-out must take on the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the network for up to 25 years. Opting-out states must meet stringent requirements to ensure the nationwide system remains interoperable, reliable and sustainable. Opt-out states will have to receive approval from the Federal Communications Commission, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and FirstNet before work may begin on the RAN in an opt-out state.

At the close of the state decision deadline, all 50 states, two U.S. territories and Washington D.C. opted-in to the federal FirstNet system.

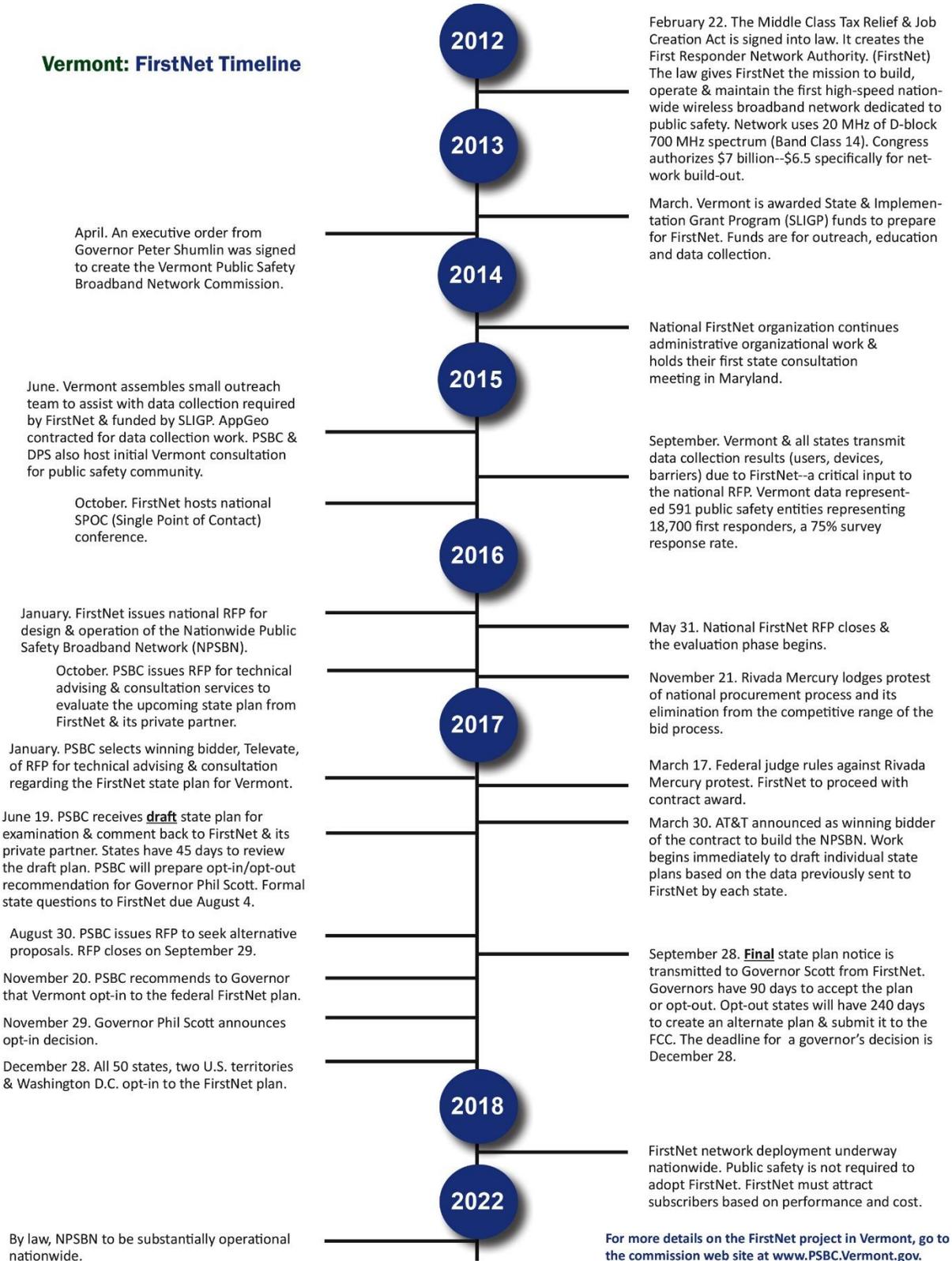
## Governance

The Vermont Public Safety Broadband Network Commission (PSBC) was established by Executive Order in 2013 to guide and prepare for FirstNet in this state. The PSBC is charged with advising the Governor on issues related to the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). The commission must consist of at least 11 voting representatives appointed by the Governor. Representatives include first responder professionals from local police, fire, and Emergency Medical Services; the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board; and State agency representatives from the Department of Public Safety, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Digital Services, Department of Public Service, Department of Buildings and General Services, and the Agency of Transportation. Administrative support for the commission is provided by the Department of Public Safety, Radio Technology Services, under the direction of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC). A SPOC is the individual designated by a state as the person responsible for working with FirstNet in their state or territory.

Below is the list of current commission members and their affiliation. The terms for all commission members expire on July 15, 2019.

- Terry LaValley, Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Chair, Department of Public Safety
- Chris Herrick, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Safety
- Steven Locke, Career Fire Service, Chief, Burlington Fire Department
- Al Barber, Vermont Fire Chiefs Association, Chief, Hinesburg Fire Department
- Ron Kumetz, Vermont State Firefighters Association, Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department
- Dan Manz, Vermont Ambulance Association, Vice President
- Douglas Johnston, Chief, Springfield Police Department
- Thomas Hango, Captain, Vermont State Police, Emergency Communications Commander
- James Porter, Department of Public Service, Director, Public Advocacy
- Barbara Neal, E 9-1-1 Board, Executive Director
- Robert T. White, Agency of Transportation, Senior Manager
- Frank Costantino, Agency of Digital Services, ERP Tech Services Director
- Ken Jones, Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Economic Research Analyst

## Vermont: FirstNet Timeline



### PLAN EVALUATION

The primary focus of the PSBC in 2017 was to evaluate build-out plans for Vermont of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN). Following an RFP process in late 2016, the PSBC had a technical consultant in place by March 1, 2017 to assist in evaluating the federal FirstNet plan for Vermont. Funding for the technical consulting was provided through the SLIGP 1.0 grant, which limited such a review solely to a FirstNet proposed plan. Televate is a public safety communications technology consulting firm based in Virginia. Televate's expertise is in interoperable voice and data communications and information technology for public safety and homeland security organizations, state and local government agencies, and public authorities.

FirstNet informed the states that draft state plans would be available solely through a State Plan Portal (SPP). Access to the SPP would be limited only to those who agreed to FirstNet terms of use, that required strict confidentiality. Many states objected to the strict confidentiality provisions. On June 19, 2017, the PSBC was notified that the draft plan for Vermont was viewable through the SPP. Vermont negotiated with FirstNet over the terms of use to enable an addendum that would accommodate release of some information, following a formal application of Vermont's Public Records Act. On July 6, 2017 PSBC members and others listed as authorized users, could access the state plan for Vermont. This federally protected portal enabled those on the state's authorized users list to review hundreds of pages of documents that detailed proposed coverage for Vermont, network architecture of the national system, and the products and services that would be available to first responders. The PSBC began its evaluation process.

A timeline of the PSBC evaluation process is on the next page.

## PSBC Evaluation Timeline

June 19, 2017	FirstNet notifies states that SPP is now open
July 6, 2017	PSBC members & authorized users may access SPP
July 17-18, 2017	PSBC evaluation working groups meet. Working groups evaluate the SPP based on technical specifications, financial & products offerings, and operational aspects.
July 18, 2017	PSBC governance meeting
July 19, 2017	Vermont submits 51 questions to FirstNet on the state plan
July 20, 2017	Working groups meet with FirstNet/AT&T representatives to discuss Vermont's draft plan
July 27, 2017	PSBC governance meeting – preliminary report received from Teleate on Vermont's draft plan
August 4, 2017	National FirstNet deadline for states to submit questions. The PSBC submits formal questions and concerns, referencing July 19, 2017 submission.
August 22, 2017	PSBC governance meeting – approval given to release RFP for an alternative RAN build-out plan in Vermont
August 30, 2017	RFP is released for bids
September 25, 2017	PSBC governance meeting—RFP evaluation process determined
September 29, 2017	RFP closed—three responses, only one qualified bid
October 9, 2017	Executive summary from qualified bid transmitted to PSBC
October 13, 2017	PSBC members participate in FirstNet hearing before the House Committee on Energy & Technology
October 23 & 26, 2017	Four PSBC working groups meet to evaluate the bid. Working groups evaluate over-arching requirements, business, technical, and financial aspects.
October 30, 2017	PSBC governance meeting—final recommendation report from Teleate & RFP evaluations discussed
November 20, 2017	PSBC governance meeting—members vote to recommend Vermont opt-in to the federal FirstNet plan
November 22, 2017	PSBC Recommendation Report transmitted to Governor
November 29, 2017	PSBC Chair participates in FirstNet hearing before the House Committee on Energy & Technology
November 29, 2017	Governor Phil Scott announces that Vermont will opt-in to the federal FirstNet plan
December 28, 2017	All 50 states, two U.S. territories and Washington D.C. opt-in to the FirstNet plan

## **GOVERNANCE MEETINGS**

The Public Safety Broadband Network Commission met ten times in 2017.

Vermont sent a contingent of five people, three who were commission members, to a national SPOC (Single Point of Contact) state team meeting in Dallas, Texas June 7-8. States could bring up to five members to the meeting to be briefed on the pending release by FirstNet of draft state plans. Attending for Vermont were Terry LaValley, SPOC and PSBC Chair; Jim Porter, Department of Public Service and commission member; Robert White, Agency of Transportation and commission member; John Quinn, Agency of Digital Services Secretary; and Lisa Helme, FirstNet outreach manager for the Department of Public Safety.

## **OUTREACH**

The focus of the PSBC outreach effort is on reaching the public safety community for which the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network is being built. These efforts concentrate on law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services personnel. In 2017, project personnel gave 18 presentations reaching 612 individuals. For example, on September 15, 2017, PSBC members gave a presentation on FirstNet in Vermont at the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference.

Both a printed and e-version of a project newsletter were written and distributed to approximately 700 first responder and public safety related agencies. Newsletters were published in January and June.

The Public Safety Broadband Network Commission web site was promoted throughout the year. At the site ([www.PSBC.Vermont.gov](http://www.PSBC.Vermont.gov)) people can learn more about the project and how Vermont first responders would benefit from a broadband network. In 2017, there were 2,705 users to the site and 28,288 page views.

One press release was written and distributed on November 20, 2017 to announce the PSBC decision to recommend to Governor Phil Scott that Vermont opt-in to the federal FirstNet plan.

## **REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS**

At the August 22, 2017 commission meeting, members approved the release of an RFP to seek proposals for the building of an alternative Radio Access Network in Vermont. The RFP was released on August 30, 2017 and closed on September 29, 2017. The intent of the PSBC was to determine whether a qualified partner existed to build, operate and manage a RAN over 25 years at no cost to the State of Vermont. Three responses were received. Two of the responses were deemed non-responsive by BGS Purchasing. Only one response was deemed qualified by BGS. After considering other options for Vermont, the PSBC choose to cancel the RFP and take no action on the solicitation.

## **PERSONNEL**

No personnel were hired in 2017.

## SLIGP: Grant Summary

The Department of Public Safety administrative staff that supports the commission completed and filed a grant application for a State and Local Implementation Grant Program 2.0 award in December, 2017. SLIGP 2.0 is a second round of funding made available to states from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for planning and policy work associated with implementation of the federal FirstNet network. Vermont's SLIGP 1.0 grant expires on February 28, 2018. The SLIGP 2.0 program will be active from March 1, 2018 through February 29, 2020. States will learn of the status of their grant application before the SLIGP 1.0 grant expires.

FirstNet planning efforts are largely funded in Vermont through SLIGP. Funding allocations per state are determined by the NTIA using a formula that considers both population and land mass. Most grant recipients, including Vermont, are required to provide matching funds (cash or in-kind) in the amount of 20 percent of the award. The Vermont Department of Public Safety received a SLIGP 1.0 grant in 2013 of \$888,676. Of that, the federal authorized share is \$710,941 and the state authorized share is \$177,735. The state receives access to the federal share only as it expends the money and solicits for reimbursement from NTIA.

Below is the budget breakdown under the grant program and the expenditures made to-date.

Budget Category	* Amount	** Expended to 12/31/16	Expended to 12/31/17	Balance
A. Personnel	344,290	157,399	74,672	112,219
B. Fringe Benefits	94,795	49,042	40,231	5,522
C. Travel	34,506	19,805	8,660	6,041
D. Equipment	-	-	-	-
E. Supplies	12,000	1,273	990	9,737
F. Construction	-	-	-	-
G. Consultants/Contracts	267,398	25,765	41,870	199,763
H. Other	6,431	5,454	549	428
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>759,420</b>	<b>258,738</b>	<b>166,972</b>	<b>333,710</b>
I. Indirect Costs	129,256	37,925	19,521	71,810
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>	<b>888,676</b>	<b>296,663</b>	<b>186,493</b>	<b>405,520</b>
Federal Share	710,941	199,561	186,267	325,113
Non-Federal Share	177,735	97,102	226	80,407

\* Budget was updated through Grant Adjustment Notification on 10/14/15.

\*\* Expenditures reflect total spending from grant start date of 8/1/13 through 12/31/16.

## Contact Information

Each state has a designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC). In Vermont, that person is Terry LaValley, the Director of Radio Technology Services for the Department of Public Safety. He also serves as the Chair of the PSBC. Administrative support for the commission is provided by the Department of Public Safety, Radio Technology Services, under the direction of the SPOC.

Terry LaValley  
SPOC, Director of Radio Technology Services, PSBC Chair  
Phone: (902) 241-5215  
Email: [Terry.LaValley@vermont.gov](mailto:Terry.LaValley@vermont.gov)

Administrative support for the PSBC is provided by the Outreach Manager. The PSBC functions within DPS Radio Technology Services. The manager also plans and implements activities related to the FirstNet project in Vermont and reports to the SPOC.

Lisa Helme  
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