

(Draft Minutes waiting approval)
MINUTES OF THE
GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE
Thursday, September 11, 2014 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 210 Senate Building

Members Present:

Rep. Brad L. Dee, Cochair
Sen. Ralph Okerlund
Rep. Douglas V. Sagers
Chief Chris Burbank
Chief Michael H. Jensen
Chief Terry Keefe
Chief Mike Mathieu
Mr. Doug Chandler on behalf of Ken Peterson
Mr. Steven H. Proctor
Ms. Tina Scarlet
Captain Alan Workman
Lt. Sheriff Brent Atkinson on behalf of James Winder

Members Absent:

Sen. Wayne A. Harper, Cochair
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley
Sherriff David Edmunds
Chief Mike Navarre
Mr. Jerry Pope

Staff Present:

Mr. Joseph T. Wade, Policy Analyst
Ms. Victoria Ashby, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Tim Barber, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Welcome and Task Force Business

Chair Dee called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

MOTION: Chief Jensen moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)

Mr. Proctor briefed the task force on the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). Created in 2012 by Congress, FirstNet is an independent authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration that provides emergency responders a high-speed, broadband network dedicated to public safety, nationwide.

The task force questioned Mr. Proctor regarding the possibility of Utah being a possible state for beta testing for the network. Mr. Proctor responded that he is aware of some preliminary testing going on in a number of other states but Utah is not among them. Mr. Proctor also responded to questions from the task force regarding lifespan of a new network, any related business plans for implementation, and public resources needed to complete this new network. Mr. Proctor emphasized that FirstNet is in the early developmental stages and any changes associated with it are far off.

3. Public Safety Radio System Funding Sources in Other States

Mr. Proctor reviewed a number of public safety radio systems across several states and how they are funded. Many states face similar challenges, either building a network from the ground up or upgrading a new network that is worn out with very little federal funding. Mr. Proctor stated that the approach to solving these challenges will need to take place with cooperation, given the lack of clear policy solution in any state that solves every problem.

4. 911 Fees in Other States Compared with Utah's Fees

Ms. Scarlet presented "911 Fees in Other States Compared with Utah's." Ms. Scarlet categorized each state based on whether local fees are imposed only, state fees are imposed only or some hybrid system.

Ms. Scarlet responded to questions from the task force regarding what portion of fees go toward dispatch training and the challenges of staffing smaller, rural dispatch centers, compensation and human resource classification of dispatchers. Ms. Scarlet stated that staffing is a consistent challenge across the board in dispatch centers and compensation is a factor in that challenge.

5. Update on Fiscal Impact of HB 155, 2014 General Session

Brian Wikle, Analyst, and Angela Oh, Analyst, Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst presented "HB155 Status of Transfers to UCA" which outlined the fiscal impact of 2014 General Session H.B. 155, "Utah Communication Agency Network and Utah 911 Committee Amendments" during its first year.

6. Potential Funding Sources

Chair Dee led the task force in a discussion of different possible proposals for a funding source for the UCA 800 mHZ upgrade. The task force discussed a potential new fee within communications, a statewide tax increase, and radio fees. Chair Dee indicated he will have task force staff forward multiple ideas to the task force for them to consider.

Mr. Chandler expressed that he would like to see a funding mechanism similar to the one in H.B. 155.

7. Other items/adjourn

MOTION: Chief Jensen moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote passed unanimously. Chief Burbank and Sen. Okerlund were absent for the vote.

Chair Dee adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m.