

**MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION**

**July 11, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Place: 6<sup>th</sup> Floor MDOT Conference Room  
401 North West Street  
Jackson, MS

<b>Commission Members Present:</b>	
<b>MS Emergency Management Agency</b>	<b>Chairman Robert Latham</b>
<b>MS Association of Fire Chiefs</b>	<b>Vice Chairman Tom Lariviere</b>
<b>MS Office of Homeland Security</b>	<b>Rusty Barnes</b>
<b>MS Association of Supervisors</b>	<b>Steve Gray</b>
<b>MS Department of Transportation</b>	<b>Willie Huff</b>
<b>MS National Guard</b>	<b>Gary Ladd</b>
<b>MS Department of Public Safety</b>	<b>Ken Magee</b>
<b>MS Department of Corrections</b>	<b>Audrey McAfee</b>
<b>MS Department of Information Technology Services</b>	<b>Craig Orgeron</b>
<b>MS Association of Sheriffs</b>	<b>Steve Rushing</b>
<b>MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks</b>	<b>Curtis Thornhill</b>
<b>MS Department of Environmental Quality</b>	<b>Terri Torrence</b>
<b>Advisory Board Members Present:</b>	
<b>Chairman House Public Utilities Committee</b>	<b>Representative Jim Beckett</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman Senate Energy Committee</b>	<b>Senator Giles Ward</b>

Chairman Latham called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and welcomed everyone. The Chairman asked if there were any changes to the June 13, 2013 minutes which had been emailed to Commission members. There were none and the Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2013 meeting as written. Mr. Steve Rushing made the motion to approve. Mr. Steve Gray seconded the motion and the motion passed with none opposed.

Ms. Helfrich was asked to provide the MSWIN Project update. Ms. Helfrich noted that all construction has been completed. One microwave link in Phase 3 and the final network testing for Phase 1 need to be finalized and that should be wrapped up relatively soon. LMR radio installations still need to be finalized. Motorola has sent out emails to each of the agencies making sure we know which radios your agencies are installing themselves and which radios we need to install. Ms. Helfrich will be sending out a follow-up email because that process needs to be completed.

It was discussed at the last meeting that Ms. Helfrich would be in touch with FirstNet to see where we are on moving forward with LTE. Ms. Helfrich informed the Commission that there was a regional meeting in Memphis, TN two weeks ago and nine people attended on behalf of the State. Some of the attendees were: Mr. Buffington, Ms. Helfrich, Dr. Orgeron, Commissioners Huff and Barnes, Mr. Songy from the Governor's office, and Mr. Bill Brown from MEMA. We discussed with FirstNet, the need for us to come to some type of agreement so that the State of Mississippi could move forward with the LTE Network at no additional cost to the State. A Letter of Intent was requested from FirstNet by the time of today's meeting as to our moving forward and further working through discussions with them. As of this point in time, Ms. Helfrich had not received any type of Letter of Intent from FirstNet.

Chairman Latham noted that he has been receiving numerous calls from local entities that are at a point where they need to make decisions about upgrading their radio systems and asking that the WCC come and talk with them about the capabilities of MSWIN. He also noted that we are seeing a shift in the willingness on the part of many local governments to now accept MSWIN as a viable option for them and understanding that we have the infrastructure in place and coming into the realization that MSWIN is not just a disaster communication network but that the number of users are increasing every day for routine as well as emergency communication.

Mr. Lariviere was recognized to report for the Procurement Review Committee. Mr. Lariviere noted that two (2) matters had been brought before the Committee this month. Neither required Commission approval because they were below the threshold required for Commission approval: The Capitol Police request was for the purchase of 85 Motorola portables which are MSWIN compatible at a cost of \$157,395.35; the Wireless Communication Commission request was initially for the purchase of 132 Tait portable radios but upon further review, it was determined that the Tait portable w/AES encryption was a better fit and so it was decided that the purchase would be for 107 Tait Portable radios w/AES encryption at the same cost of \$197,670. Mr. Lariviere stated that the Procurement Review Committee unanimously approved both requests. Mr. Lariviere also stated that the WCC Cache has EFJohnson, Tait, Realm BK, Motorola and other types of radios for use on MSWIN which further emphasizes that this is not a proprietary system.

The Chairman called for the report of the Governance/Interoperability Committee and Mr. Huff asked that the Revenue Committee be allowed to report before the Governance/Interoperability Committee.

The Chairman agreed and then called for the report of the Revenue Committee. Mr. Gray stated that he had nothing to report but noted that he met with Ms. Helfrich and Mr. Buffington on Wednesday to talk about some possible options with the business plan to meet the 50% requirement.

The Chairman called for the report of the Governance/Interoperability Committee and Mr. Huff stated that the Committee recently met with several members of the Commission in attendance. In this meeting there were three vendor presentations on Radio over Internet Protocol (RoIP) technology. Presenters were from Comsouth, Motorola, and Hurricane Electronics for Harris. This technology allows some vendor manufactured smartphones to be able to extend coverage, range, and availability to people with smartphones and to use those phones as communication devices on the system. This is not designed to replace mission critical devices. Mr. Huff further stated that he feels it is worth spending some more time looking at the technology and seeing how it could be a value added to the WCC that could help us on some small revenue stream. It could be a great tool for administrators or people that travel a lot outside of their areas. There are several vendors and if we were to proceed, an RFP will have to be developed and all vendors have access to it.

Mr. Huff noted that in the last meeting there was considerable discussion about LTE/Broadband and the effort to talk with FirstNet and get some direction from them as to where they are wanting to go and how the State would be involved. Since then WCC Staff and Attorney Mark Garriga have drafted a resolution. Copies of the resolution were passed to all Commission members present. Mr. Huff then read the resolution after which he made a motion to accept the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Lariviere and additional discussion ensued. Mr. Huff indicated that while this resolution is meant to send the message as to where the WCC stands, it in no way is meant to keep us from making an agreement with FirstNet based on what the State requires. Dr. Orgeron asked if the loop has been closed on the formal request for a Letter of Intent (LOI) or if FirstNet is just late getting it to us. Mr. Songy from the Governor's office stated that he expects that we will receive a letter but that it will not have an agreement in it as he does not expect that they will be agreeable with what we have proposed. There was no further discussion and the Chairman called for a vote. The motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Latham recognized Senator Ward who apologized to the Chairman and the Commission because he had to leave the meeting. He stated that he has the budget proposal and pointed out that Randy Sanders who is the Staff Analyst for the Senate Appropriations Committee is present in the meeting today and will be in attendance for the entire meeting to hear the related budget information.

Dr. Orgeron provided the Report of Monthly Expenditures. Dr. Orgeron stated that the final \$2M dollars of deficit funding has been received which brings the total in the 3603 Fund to \$6.5M dollars. The remaining FY13 balance is \$972 thousand dollars which we have encumbrances on and continues to be drawn down. We have through August to pay June obligations and most of that will be spent. The total expenses for the month of June was \$10.2M dollars; nearly \$2.6M dollars in contractual obligations with the bulk of the expense for Milestone payments of \$7.6M dollars. Mr. Huff made a motion to approve monthly expenditures. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Gray and passed with none opposed.

Ms. Helfrich was recognized to discuss the FY15 Budget Request for which she had provided a handout to all Commission members present. The total request was for \$12.6M dollars. Ms. Helfrich stated that some changes have occurred – maintenance and operations went up about \$550 thousand dollars because warranties on phases in MSWIN have expired and the cost has to be picked up and that tower leases have increased because of the 10% renewals on some of the leases and some increases due to microwave backhaul upgrades which is about \$2M dollars. But she noted that with the contract that was signed with Motorola last month there was a savings of \$630 thousand dollars and that the FY15 Budget did not include LTE costs other than the expenses that we had to incur for tower lease increases due to LTE Equipment and increased microwave backhaul. Chairman Latham asked if we know what amount we may potentially be able to recover if we are able to work out things with FirstNet. Ms. Helfrich and Mr. Buffington stated that they have discussed that with FirstNet and have those figures and will be able to provide that information for the next meeting. Mr. Buffington also stated that potentially a \$4.2M dollars savings annually could occur at completion of the project but that today as things are it could potentially be approximately a \$2M dollar annual savings. Chairman Latham noted that this could potentially reduce future maintenance and operations costs if the issues with FirstNet are worked out.

Mr. Tom Lariviere noted that in a presentation made to the WCC in 2008, it was estimated that when we were up and running our operation costs would be \$11M dollars and so we were pretty much on target with our original estimate. Dr. Orgeron stated that this was good to know and be repeated because a lot of the concern about the budget is rooted in where the numbers are coming from.

Chairman Latham thanked Mr. Sanders for being present because he felt that it was important for him to hear these discussions and see that we are truly making an honest effort to cut costs as much as possible. The Chairman again stated that while the fees are still on the table, he feels that those fees would be a detriment to the overall success of the system.

Chairman Latham called for a motion to approve Ms. Helfrich to move forward with the submission of the budget as presented. Dr. Orgeron made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gray and the motion passed with none opposed.

Ms. Helfrich then addressed the emergency purchase of the SOW. Ms. Helfrich had stated in last month's meeting that there was an accident transporting one of the SOWs from Cleveland, MS to Jackson on May 16, 2013. Ms. Helfrich explained that SOW is an acronym for Site on Wheels which is one of MSWINs deployable assets. One of our Legislative requirements is to ensure rapid restoration of emergency communication service during an event of any disruption. Our SOW is damaged and now that we are in Hurricane Season, we need all of our deployable assets ready to go in case of an event and that is why we moved forward with the emergency request. Mr. Huff made a motion to ratify the emergency purchase of the SOW. The motion was seconded by Mr. Magee and the motion passed with none opposed.

Ms. Helfrich then updated the Commission on the WCC Business Plan to make sure everyone is in agreement before it is further defined and finalized. It is due August 31, 2013. She stated that the WCC is working with Pete Walley, Director of Economic Development Planning Bureau at the University Research Center who is helping develop the WCC Business Plan. Ms. Helfrich laid out some six (6) ideas that they are currently looking at and would like to further develop. She did state that they have not included user fees because of the strong opposition to them at this time but will add them if it is the will of the Commission. Chairman Latham called for discussion and there was none. The Chairman did restate his opinion that user fees are an option but not a good option.

There was no other business for discussion. The next meeting will be held on August 1, 2013 at 1:30 PM in the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor MDOT Conference Room. Dr. Orgeron made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gray and passed with none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:47 PM.