

**MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION**  
**August 29, 2013 Meeting Minutes – Special Called Meeting**  
 Place: 6<sup>th</sup> Floor MDOT Conference Room  
 401 North West Street  
 Jackson, MS

<b>Commission Members Present:</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 Environmental Quality</b>	<b>Richard Harrell</b>
<b>MS Department of Transportation</b>	<b>Willie Huff</b>
<b>MS National Guard</b>	<b>Gary Ladd</b>
<b>MS Department of Health</b>	<b>Mike Lucius</b>
<b>MS Department of Public Safety</b>	<b>Ken Magee &amp; Timothy Smith</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 Association of Police Chiefs</b>	<b>Perry Waggener</b>
<b>Also in Attendance:</b>	
<b>LBO/Senate</b>	<b>Drew Maddox</b>
<b>Office of the Governor</b>	<b>Joey Songy</b>
<b>Advisory Board Members Present:</b>	

Vice Chairman Lariviere called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and welcomed everyone. The Vice Chairman then recognized Ms. Vicki Helfrich to discuss the MSWIN Revenue Generation Plan.

Ms. Helfrich prefaced her presentation with comments on the WCC and who we are. She stated that the Wireless Commission was created in 2005 to ensure that all first responders in the State had the ability to interoperate had the ability to speak across agencies in order for the State's first responders to do their jobs. About two months after the Commission was formed, Hurricane Katrina hit. Today is the 8<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Katrina and those that were out there responding had the opportunity to see first-hand what not having interoperable communications, not being able to talk to one another, and not having a public safety grade communication system means. What the Commission chose to do after Katrina was to provide a solution - MSWIN.

The RFP for MSWIN was issued in 2006; the contract was executed in June of 2007; and MSWIN was operational state-wide in March of 2013. In less than six (6) years we built out a Public Safety communication grade system state-wide from scratch. That sounds like a long time but when you're talking about State and Federal procedures, procurement, grant guidelines, and environmental assessments, that is no time at all and the system was built out ahead of schedule and under budget which is quite an accomplishment. We have provided the solution for first responders; we've done what we were asked to do by the Legislature. We have gone beyond that and work monthly with locals and other entities to try to provide solutions; to help them find ways to buy the radios that they need to get on MSWIN – we all have the same goal. The Commission is comprised of the users on the system. You use it every day and you understand why it matters and why it is important. Today we are faced with how we move forward and we have been asked by the Legislature to find a funding solution. We believe the government is responsible for providing the safety of its citizens and we do not believe that the purpose of public safety is to generate revenue. When we looked at what our options are, 'subscriber fees' is one of the first things that everyone talks about. Any time we've looked at subscriber fees for our first responders we find that not only does it not bring in the amount of money needed to keep

the system going but it becomes an impediment and a barrier to allowing first responders to all use the same system and that's not what we are here to do. We are here to provide solutions so we did not add subscriber fees in the plan. We focused on alternate solutions – leveraging the biggest asset we have. MSWIN is one of the State's largest assets. This is a state-wide telecommunications backbone network; 144 towers; point-to-point microwave backhaul which can provide an incredible opportunity to provide services to the rural and underserved areas of our state. What we chose to put in the plan is what we can implement now – existing opportunities to move forward. We focused on four areas. Those areas are the MSWIN Backhaul, MSWIN Towers, MSWIN Value Added Services (which are services over and beyond the radio service that we provide to first responders), and MSWIN Third Party Subscription Fees.

A handout was provided to each Commission member present and Ms. Helfrich went on to discuss each of the four groups independent of each other. Bound copies of the Revenue Generation Plan were also provided. Ms. Helfrich noted that actual contacts have been made in all instances and it was found that the suggested services are needed and serve as opportunities for generating revenue for MSWIN. In all instances, we can provide these services without compromising or jeopardizing the integrity of our system for our first responders. Ms. Helfrich noted that the WCC Staff worked with Pete Walley at Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and he helped pull the numbers together for the different scenarios. We think that the numbers we have looked at in our start-up year (after we get the services implemented), can generate up to \$4M dollars. We feel that is a conservative but realistic estimate. We focused on the underserved areas of the State and estimated a 20 to 25% take rate in the first year. Ms. Helfrich further stated that in order to achieve these goals, we will need additional staff and/or enter into public/private partnerships and that she thinks public/private partnerships will be key in making this successful quickly.

Ms. Helfrich ended her presentation by stating that a lot of people helped pull this information together. Pete Walley put the numbers together for us and put the plan together for us. There were others in the background talking to banks and other entities and working on possible resolutions for us so that we could get a plan in place to help us generate revenue to keep our system going.

Ms. Helfrich asked for any questions. Mr. Gray asked how the potential unit numbers were gathered. Ms. Helfrich noted that, as an example, Pete Walley was able to pull the number of school buses in every county. Mr. Buffington stated that we looked at the real numbers as potential and looked at the first year as market penetration – around 20-25%. This was true in all four categories. Dr. Orgeron noted that there is a \$5.6M dollar start-up cost; it appears to be applicable for any service that is offered. He asked what that is. Ms. Helfrich stated that it is a one-time cost which is applicable only to MSWIN backhaul opportunities and is not necessarily an expense the WCC would take on. The cost is an estimate for last mile equipment to get from our backbone to whatever entity we are serving. That cost can come from Federal funds, existing Federal funding streams, and grants or in some instances some entities are willing to pay for that last mile. Mr. Buffington stated that this is for equipment to get to the entity from our nearest site to their nearest location.

Several other comments, questions and suggestions followed and Mr. Huff noted a concern that these scenarios that are being discussed in the Revenue Generation Plan will not go into effect on October 1 of this year or July 1 of next year and that the Legislature needs to be aware of that and that this should be clearly documented when we are asking for appropriations next year. Mr. Huff also asked how data transfer is normally charged on for backhaul. Dr. Orgeron fielded that question.

There were no additional comments or questions and the Vice Chairman called for a motion for the Commission to direct the WCC Executive Officer to present this plan (as directed in Statute SB 2899 from the 2013 Legislative Session) to Legislative Budget Office (LBO) and the Governor's Office. Mr. Huff made the motion; Mr. Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed with none opposed. Vice Chairman Lariviere called for other business. There was none.

The next meeting will be held on September 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM in 6<sup>th</sup> Floor MDOT Conference Room. Mr. Huff made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gray and passed with none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:22 PM.