

FirstNet board member Dowd cites support in seeking reappointment

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson

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[FirstNet](#) board member Charles Dowd, who recently retired from the New York Police Department (NYPD), said he wants to be reappointed to the FirstNet board and is receiving support from at least four organizations as the time nears for appointments to be announced.

“I would love to be reappointed, and I’m hopeful that I will be,” Dowd said during an interview with [IWCE](#)’s *Urgent Communications*.

During his time with the NYPD, Dowd was one of the earliest and most-outspoken public-safety proponents of broadband connectivity for first responders, and he was a key player in the public-safety lobbying effort that ultimately led to Congress passing legislation that established FirstNet in February 2012.

Dowd was one of the initial FirstNet board members appointed in August 2012. Now that he is retired from the NYPD, Dowd has indicated that he has more time to dedicate to FirstNet’s effort to deploy a sustainable public-safety broadband network nationwide.

“I’m getting a lot of support,” Dowd said. “Major Cities Chiefs is strongly supporting me; they’ve sent a letter to the Secretary of Commerce supporting my reappointment. FOP [the National Fraternal Order of Police] is strongly supporting me; they’ve sent a letter. The Republican Governors Association and Democratic Governors Association both have sent letters supporting my reappointment.

“I’m very flattered that they’ve stepped up and endorsed me so strongly.”

Also expressing support for Dowd’s reappointment is Richard Mirgon, a former president of the [Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials](#) (APCO) and another key player in the public-safety lobbying effort on Capitol Hill that led to the

FirstNet legislation.

“Chuck [Dowd] knows this,” Mirgon said during an interview with *IWCE’s Urgent Communications*. “Chuck is an honest, good guy, and he’s doing the right thing, and I really believe he needs to be reappointed. Chuck always has been the right guy, and not only because of his expertise, professional skill set and ethics. He has proven over the last few years that he does an excellent job of representing public safety and continues to get support from public safety.

“One of the things that Chuck has done that we haven’t done in a long time is engage public-safety unions. People have seen them as controversial, but Chuck has worked to make sure that they are part of the conversation to ensure that everybody—from the bottom of the totem pole to the top—is involved in the conversation. I think that’s critical, and Chuck’s helped get us there.”

Jim Pasco, executive director for the National Fraternal Order of Police—the largest police organization in the country, with more than 335,000 members—echoed this sentiment.

“One of our big apprehensions, going back to the beginning [of [FirstNet](#)], was that we would not get the kind of law-enforcement support on the board that we view as necessary to keep the for-profit companies from hijacking this thing,” Pasco said during an interview with *IWCE’s Urgent Communications*. “We have come to rely on Chuck—and a couple of others on the board—to ably represent the positions of law enforcement, and he has done so.

“He has the requisite expertise, experience and the ability to articulate our positions better than anybody else on the board.”

FirstNet board members are appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. There is no scheduled timetable for the appointments to be announced, but past FirstNet appointments have been made in August, so most industry sources believe an announcement will be made this week or next.

In addition to Dowd, other FirstNet board members with expiring terms are former FirstNet Chairman Sam Ginn, Paul Fitzgerald and Ed Reynolds, according to the FirstNet website.

“I’ve let them know I want to be reappointed,” Fitzgerald said during an interview with *IWCE’s Urgent Communications*

Ginn has announced that he will not seek reappointment, so the FirstNet board will have at least one new member when appointments are announced.

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