

Poth indicates that FirstNet will have final say whether to execute contractor award

Urgent Communications By Donny Jackson

June 30, 2016

An evaluation team is in the process of selecting the best proposal to build the much-anticipated nationwide public-safety broadband network, but [FirstNet](#) ultimately will decide whether to execute a contract with the selected offeror team, FirstNet CEO Mike Poth said during today's open board meeting.

Under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)—the rules that FirstNet has opted to use in this procurement—details regarding the bidding cannot be disclosed by the government, including who is on the team evaluating the proposals and selecting the best bid. Theoretically, the contracting officer could select a bidder other than the one chosen by the evaluation team, [but that “rarely, if ever” happens](#), according to a Beltway source familiar with the process.

Poth indicated that FirstNet officials still hope to make the contract award by Nov. 1, but only under the correct conditions.

“Lots of things could go right; lot of things can get twisted; but we'll never allow it to go wrong, though—we're not going to stop,” Poth told the board during the open meeting, which was [web cast](#). “We're now targeting the November award, but we will not award in November, if it is not in the best interest of public safety, in the best interest of our partners and in the best interest of FirstNet and the government.

“Although we think ... we have a good, clean line of sight to be able to do that [make an award], we are not just going to rush to judgment. Capitalizing on the strength of the board—with your backgrounds and your expertise—is going to give me even more confidence that we will be able to get to where we need to be.”

Indeed, multiple sources said that FirstNet has the legal option not to exercise a contract with the offeror team emerging from the evaluation process, although one of the sources noted that

FirstNet could expose itself to some unwanted political repercussions if declined to contract with a potential partner in such a high-profile procurement.

Offeror teams had to submit their FirstNet proposals by May 31 to be considered for public-safety broadband contract. Although the government has not identified any of the bidding teams, [Rivada Mercury](#) and [pdvWireless](#) have announced that they are leading offeror teams pursuing the unprecedented 25-year public-safety broadband deal.

[Link to Article](#)

[Link to Urgent Communications News Articles](#)