

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

IN RE:

APPLICATION OF NEW CINGULAR WIRELESS PCS,
LLC (AT&T) FOR A CERTIFICATE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC
NEED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE,
AND OPERATION OF A WIRELESS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT 499 MILE
LANE, CITY OF MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

DOCKET NO. 506

December 13, 2021

TESTIMONY OF DIRECTOR WAYNE BARTOLOTTA

1. Mr. Bartolotta, please summarize your background and your current position with the City of Middletown.

Director of City's Central Communications Center. The Center is the public safety answering point for all 911 calls and handles dispatching of all Police, Fire, and EMS units in the City of Middletown and the Town of Portland. I have been Director of the City's Central Communications Center for 16 years. Prior to that, I served the City of Middletown as a member of the Fire Department for 26 years, retiring as Fire Chief.

2. When did the City acquire the land at 499 Mile Lane from the U.S. military and for what municipal purposes was it acquired?

In October 2012, the City acquired 499 Mile Lane from the United States of America, acting by and through the Secretary of the Army. The property was conveyed to the City for use of the property as an emergency management response facility. Since its acquisition, the City of Middletown has used property as a public safety and emergency management response facility.

3. When did the City build the existing public safety tower at 499 Mile Lane?

The existing public safety tower was constructed in February 2018.

4. Please describe the public safety communications project, municipal objectives and other criteria that went into building the existing tower site at 499 Mile Lane?

In 2015, after continued issues with poor coverage for police and fire communications, the City of Middletown began to evaluate solutions to achieve a 95% in-building coverage for Middletown and Portland Police, Fire, Emergency Management, Public Works, and local government. That year, the City of Middletown solicited requests for proposals for a complete overhaul of the City's entire public safety communications system. In November 2016, the taxpayers of the City of Middletown authorized a bond

to fund the project. After the bond was approved, Motorola Solutions was selected for the project, and the new emergency management communications system went on-line in November 2019.

5. Please describe the City's interest in continuity of service for first responders from the existing public safety tower at 499 Mile Lane and its concerns with any risks to disruption of services?

The Mile Lane site serves as the Master Site of the City of Middletown's entire public safety communications system. It is the central point for all radio traffic, all processing and radio system management, and controllers on site maintains communications between all other sites in the system. In other words, the Mile Lane location is the computing backbone for the City's entire emergency communications system. Additionally, the Mile Lane site also links the system to statewide assets in Rocky Hill, allowing vital statewide coverage for first responders.

While limited backup systems exist if a loss the Mile Lane site occurred, the limitations would be significant for the timely dispatch of police and fire units in Middletown and Portland. During any interruption, no state assets would be available to assist or mitigate coverage since the link to statewide assets would be lost.

Lastly, and equally important, is the fact that not only is Mile Lane the master site for the operation of the City's emergency dispatch system, it is also a RF (Radio) site for use for emergency responders. The area served by the Mile Lane facility covers a significant portion of the City of Middletown. Should this site go down, or experience an interruption, a sizable RF coverage outage would occur. Unlike with the dispatch system, there are no backup systems for radio coverage, and none of the equipment would be operational for standalone use.

6. Is that why, when AT&T proposed sharing the site in some way, you explored various options with the company and ultimately the City consented to a second tower proposal next to the existing one?

Yes. In 2017, AT&T expressed interest in the Mile Lane facility for its First Net program and set up its first engineering visit in late 2018. In the initial discussions between the City and AT&T, the City inquired whether AT&T could use the City's current public safety tower on the property. In 2019, AT&T had an engineering report performed that concluded that the City's public safety tower would not be able to support the weight of AT&T's equipment. The City then had discussions with AT&T regarding whether it would be feasible to reinforce the City's public safety tower. Unfortunately, AT&T concluded that option would not be feasible. As a result, the City then explored two alternative options with AT&T:

1. AT&T would build a new tower in the location where the City's current tower exists. AT&T would remove the current tower, move all equipment to a temporary tower,

erect the new tower, and then move all equipment back from the temporary tower to the new tower; and

2. AT&T would erect a monopole adjacent to the current tower for their equipment, and for the equipment of other cellular carriers.

The City decided to move forward with option 2, because that would not require the City's equipment at the Mile Lane facility to go offline as part of a relocation onto a new tower. Given the substantial coverage outages that would occur in the City's emergency communications system in the event the equipment at the Mile Lane facility went offline, the City of Middletown did not want to risk any interruption of emergency services to the residents of the City of Middletown or the Town of Portland.