

# GREATER AUSTIN AREA TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (GAATN) INTERLOCAL AGENCY

## GAATN TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

October 18, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

City of Austin Permitting and Development Center  
6310 Wilhelmina Delco Dr, Rm 1202, Austin, TX 78752

Teams Videoconference link provided 72 hours prior to meeting on homepage of [www.gaatn.org](http://www.gaatn.org)

Remote audio-only option for public access: (512) 831-7858, Access Code: 667 339 442#

## MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order (Including a roll call):

GAATN Technical Subcommittee Chairman Jaime Guerra called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

The following announced as present at the start of the meeting:

Leslye Conoley, on behalf of City of Austin (remote)

Jaime Guerra, on behalf of UT-Austin (on site)

Gary Weseman, on behalf of Austin Community College (remote)

Steve Pyle, on behalf of State of Texas DIR (remote)

Justin Slocum, on behalf of Austin ISD (remote)

Dain Herbat, on behalf of Travis County (remote)

Anthony Breckenridge, on behalf of City of Austin (remote)

Harold Nall, on behalf of UT-Austin (remote)

Paul Hodge, on behalf of Austin ISD (remote)

Frank Ammons, on behalf of GAATN (remote)

Carlos DeMatos, on behalf of GAATN (remote)

Sarah Eichelberger, on behalf of GAATN (remote)

Syd Falk, GAATN attorney (remote)

A quorum was established at roll call.

GAATN Contractors/Members of the public:

Wayne Wedemeyer (remote)

Zeb Broad, on behalf of JC Communications (remote)

Doug Wilson, on behalf of JC Communications (remote)

Chris Gonzales, on behalf of BryComm (remote)

### 2. Citizen Communications: There was no citizen communications.

### 3. Review and approve minutes from the regular Technical Subcommittee meeting of September 20, 2022

Dain Herbat moved to approve the draft minutes as presented; Steve Pyle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### 4. Maintenance Contractor's Report

#### A. Maintenance report

Chris reported that, since the previous meeting, Brycomm completed inspections on B1S and B2S with 13 corrected deficiencies between those rings. There was nothing out of the ordinary to report. Jaime noted that there were 47 and 41 pole transfers pending on those rings respectively. Chris said that it was not GAATN's turn to transfer yet so they are noted on the inspection report. Jaime said it seems like the pending pole transfers is higher than on other rings and asked Chris if he knows why that is; Chris said he didn't know but it's been consistently high number of attachments awaiting transfer but GAATN has to wait until its turn to transfer.

#### B. Inventory report

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There were no changes to this report since the previous meeting.

### 5. Network Manager's Report

#### A. Project status report

Frank reported on the following upcoming and recently completed projects:

- B1S emergency repair at Terry-O Lane – completed 10/7
- COA A1N PARD Lions Golf Course new node – scheduled to complete 10/27

#### B. Network status report

Frank reported that on 10/7, there was an emergency damage on B1S at Terry-O Lane which was due to some lashing wire that was torn and then someone came out and actually cut the cable in half. He said they were not able to identify a responsible party or reason for the damage. He noted this will be a repair that stays in place until the Capital Extension TxDOT project requires this be replaced. He does not recommend GAATN make a permanent repair at this time due to the pending TxDOT project. Jaime asked Chris if he had permits for the UT Mansfield Dam project, Chris said that the AE permit should be submitted tomorrow and the TxDOT permit is still pending. Leslye asked Chris if they were still pending the permit for the COA Lions Golf Course; Chris said they received the permit and it is now scheduled for the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.

#### C. Job budget report

Sarah reported that, with the placeholder for the three Ronald Earle Building projects, management is tracking 37 jobs totaling \$1.9 million. She said that three jobs have been completed in FY23 and \$110k has been invoiced for projects. She said the current bottom line for the project fund balance is \$450k.

### 6. Committee Chairperson's Update – discussion and possible action on:

#### A. FY2024 GAATN Site List

Sarah noted that she sent an email to all Board and Tech members to day prior that the preliminary FY24 site list is now on SharePoint for their review. She asked members to review the changes to the site list noted on SharePoint and, if they had any changes for their entity, to download the spreadsheet and make the appropriate corrections on their entity's tab and send back to her by November 18. She noted that all changes will be compiled into the master document which will then be brought to the December 1 Board meeting for approval.

#### B. GAATN procedures for topped poles

Frank stated that this agenda item was requested at the October Board meeting. He clarified that the pictures that Tina from Austin Energy (AE) showed during the Board meeting of stub poles near Whole Foods are not poles on which GAATN is attached. He further clarified that AE showed another picture of more stub poles to which GAATN fiber is attached, however they were not the eight poles on San Antonio pertaining to the Ronald Earl Building projects. Frank said, per the action item from the last Board meeting, he contacted the City of Austin Right-of-Way (ROW) division manager to see about replacing those eight stub poles and is awaiting a response. He said he had a very productive meeting with Tina from AE since the last Board meeting regarding those poles and how GAATN can process and work stub poles in the future. He also met with Syd to discuss the creation of a stub pole procedure and asked Syd to speak about his thoughts on that. Syd said that Frank told him that the industry practice is that whomever performs the maintenance on an abandoned pole assumes ownership of it. Syd said the question would be what does GAATN want to do with poles that have been abandoned by AE and what criteria would GAATN apply to decide who maintains the pole including administering the pole agreements with the other communications companies (comms) that are attached to those poles. Syd also said that it has to be determined whether ROW has a basis for denying GAATN's request to replace those poles. Dain said he requested this agenda item because

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of the proposed Ronald Earl Building GAATN 192-count upgrade projects. He said the discussion of stub poles is relatively new and that when he spoke to Tina at AE she told him that AE doesn't want to be in the business of supporting infrastructure that they've "abandoned." Dain said his fear is that a tornado comes through and tears of a large section of a ring, including stub poles to which GAATN is attached, and then has to figure out who takes ownership and can replace those stub poles in an emergency. Dain said he wants to make sure GAATN is protected and on supported infrastructure. Frank clarified that GAATN has never gone underground with AE since they do not permit it. Frank said that GAATN infrastructure is on hundreds of stub poles in the field but the vast majority of them are awaiting transfer to a new AE pole; he noted that the pole transfers and attachments awaiting transfer are part of the monthly maintenance contractor plant inspection report that Chris spoke to earlier. Frank said the rule of thumb in the field is that the last entity remaining on each pole becomes the owner. Frank said that one of the questions GAATN needs to pose to AE is who can replace those poles in an emergency event like Dain referenced. Frank said in emergency situations, he has seen comms and electrical work together and divvy up who will replace the poles. Dain said he understands that AE has several other poles that GAATN is on which are slated for removal; he asked what protections GAATN has against AE removing a pole while GAATN is still attached; Frank said he will pose that question to AE and he doesn't know what their pole attachment agreements with other comms include but it should include a certain amount of notice for the comms to move their cable. Frank said that Syd would need to work with AE's legal to determine what protections GAATN has on any AE pole; Syd said that is a good question to pose to AE regarding GAATN's protections of its attachments. Syd said that Frank should ask AE if they do consider the final entity on the pole as being the owner of the stub pole. Syd said that AE has the right to abandon and not maintain their abandoned poles. Syd said that GAATN has to answer the question of how important the poles are to them and whether it wants to take over the maintenance and possible replacement of such poles. Leslye asked that if there were more than one comm on the pole, who would be responsible for replacement if there was damage to the pole. Frank said that would have to be worked out between who is left on the pole; Dain said that is messy. Dain asked if there is some registry of who owns which poles and also if GAATN were to take ownership of some of those poles whether it would need pole attachment agreements with the other comms; Syd said yes GAATN would need those agreements in place. Syd said that GAATN could get an inventory from AE of who is on the poles and then work out an agreement with the other comms of who is responsible for maintenance/replacement going forward; he does not know if there is some master list of pole ownership but he believes that whoever places those poles becomes the owner and whoever wants to attach to those poles must have an agreement in place with the owner. Jaime asked if GAATN could replace those eight stub poles on San Antonio adjacent to the poles that are currently there. Jaime said perhaps GAATN could do a rudimentary inspection of stub poles it's attached to and then if there is an upgrade project, the installation of new poles would be included in that project proposal. Jaime asked if Brycomm inspects the poles that GAATN owns; Frank said yes. Dain said that GAATN needs an inventory of stub poles that it is on so it can understand the scope and then Syd needs to determine what legal protections GAATN has with regards to those poles. Frank said he would recommend GAATN having the maintenance contractor do an audit of all stub poles that GAATN is attached to and determining which ones are not awaiting transfer to a new pole (i.e. where AE has gone underground) and are slated for removal by AE. Frank said then the poles could be categorized by highest risk/ priority. Dain said he is glad that GAATN is looking at this and working toward being only on supported infrastructure. Frank said that AE is being very helpful in looking at a process for these types of poles going forward. Jaime asked if he thinks that AE will allow GAATN to attach to the eight poles in question; Frank said he thinks they will and that is why they invited GAATN to reapply for reattachment and submit a pole load analysis. Frank said that AE is becoming

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more aware of what GAATN is and who it serves, and the relationship between AE and GAATN is definitely improving. Jaime said AE's response to the Ronald Earl Building project poles might inform what GAATN chooses to do with those types of poles in the future.

**C. Seeking recommendation for A2N/SRS – COA Capital Improvement Project Maintenance Hole Relocation Lamar Blvd and Toomey Rd GAATN-funded project**

This agenda item was reviewed in executive session under Texas Government Codes 551.089 and 418.181. Upon reconvening in open session, Jaime Guerra moved to recommend for Board approval the design of A2N/SRS COA Capital Improvement Project maintenance hole relocation at Lamar Blvd and Toomey Road GAATN-funded project; Leslye Conoley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**D. Seeking recommendation for C2S – TxDOT Oak Hill Parkway GAATN-funded project**

This agenda item was reviewed in executive session under Texas Government Codes 551.089 and 418.181. Upon reconvening in open session, Jaime Guerra moved to recommend for Board approval the design of C2S TxDOT Oak Hill Parkway GAATN-funded project; Steve Pyle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- 7. Executive Session:** At 2:20 p.m., Jaime Guerra adjourned the GAATN Technical Subcommittee for closed session, under Tex. Gov't Code sections 551.089 and 418.181 ("H.B. 9"), to preserve confidentiality as permitted by law regarding Agenda Items 6C and 6D.

At 2:40 p.m., Jaime Guerra reconvened the GAATN Technical Subcommittee in open session for discussion and actions, if any, on matters considered in closed session. Agenda Items 6C and 6D were the only items discussed. Any additional discussion held or action taken on agenda items discussed in executive session will be noted in the summary for that agenda item.

**8. Updated roll call upon reconvening in open session (only if Executive Session taken):**

An updated roll call was taken and all that announced as present at the opening roll call re-confirmed their presence during the updated roll call.

**9. Confirm date, time, and location for the next Technical Subcommittee meeting as November 15, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. at City of Austin Permitting and Development Center 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Dr, Room 1202, Austin, TX 78752 and via Microsoft Teams Videoconference.**

The date, time and location for the next Technical Subcommittee meeting were confirmed; the meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.