



**ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 4, 2022

1. Attendance.

P = Present	T = Via Telephone	E = Excused	U = Unexcused	N/A = Not required
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User Council Members

Primary				
T	Angell	James	SSgt	DOD USAF, JBER
E	Atkinson	Ross	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD DOI, BLM-Alaska Fire Service
T	Goggia-Cockrell	Tammy	Ms.	Municipalities Central
	VACANT			DOD US Army - Alaska
				Municipalities North, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue
T	Berrian	Keith	Deputy Chief	
E	Kalwara	Erann	Ms.	Municipalities Southeast
T	Kroona	Jon	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD DOJ, FBI
N/A	Nelson	James	Officer	Fed Non-DOD All Others, US Forest Service
T	Martin	Chris	Mr.	DOD USAF, Eielson AFB
T	Cole	Henry	Mr.	SOA DOT
T	Rockwell	John	Mr.	SOA DPS, Chair
T	Skinner	Nate	Mr.	SOA All Others, DNR Forestry

Alternate				
U	Boyce	Timothy	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD DOI, National Park Service
N/A	Brown	David	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD DOJ, FBI
N/A	Carrier	Chasen	A1C	DOD USAF, JBER
T	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
E	Goodman	Jim	Mr.	Municipalities Central, MatSu Borough
N/A	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DOD USAF, Eielson AFB
T	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA, Vice Chair
E	Nicolazzo	Jill	Ms.	SOA DOT
E	Reddington	Robert	Mr.	US Fish and Wildlife Service
T	Roberts	Rick	Captain	SOA DPS
U	Scott	Heath	Chief	Municipalities Southeast, Haines Borough PD
T	Williams	Rick	Mr.	DOD, US Army - Alaska
T	Young	Sam	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD All Others, TSA

Supporting Staff and Guests:

T	Butcher	Jacob	Mr.	MATCOM
T	Butcher	Joel	Mr.	Wasilla PD
P	Conant	Travis	Mr.	System Manager
T	Crisp	Brian	Chief	Nikiski Fire Department
P	Fahnestock	Nik	Mr.	System Management Office
P	Nelson	Dan	Mr.	Operations Manager
T	Reed	David	Mr.	Information Systems Security Manager
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies
T	Shafer	Sherry	Ms.	ALMR Document Specialist
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	SOA APSCS SATS/ALMR Manager
P	Woodall	Timothy	Mr.	ALCOM PM/COR



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
Call to Order	Mr. John Rockwell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was taken, and a quorum of User Council (UC) members was in attendance. Mr. David Reed, Mr. Jacob Butcher, Ms. Sam Young, Mr. Rick Williams, Fire Marshall Kyle Green, Mr. Brian Crisp, Mr. Nate Skinner, Mr. Joel Butcher, Mr. Jon Kroona, and Captain Richard Roberts all joined the meeting after roll call was completed.	
Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements	There were no guests or special announcements.	
Previous Meeting Minutes	John opened the floor for any comments, suggestions, changes to the meaning to the April meeting minutes. Hearing none, John requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Motion: Approve the April meeting minutes as presented. Motion: Mr. Scott Nelsen Second: Ms. Henry Cole There were no objections. The motion passed.	
Issues & Risks Log	Updates	Action Items Assigned
	John asked Ms. Sherry Shafer if there were any updates. Sherry stated for UC80, the move of Mr Henry Cole from the alternate to the primary position for DOT and the appointment of Miss Jill Nicolazzo was approved by the Executive Council and that item is now closed. She noted the updated for UC85 would be discussed under New Business.	
	Issues Closed at, or since, last meeting	
	N/A	
Action Items	Review	Resolution
	John stated there were no additions or updates	
Operations Management Office	Mr. Dan Nelson, Operations Manager	Action Items Assigned
Annual Inventory Confirmation Forms	1. Mr. Dan Nelson briefed 129 forms had been returned and there were 8 left and 3 of those had approved extensions. He added he would be making phone calls to the other five agencies shortly.	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

<p>April Document Reviews</p>	<p>2. Dan advised the council that the OMO had completed the annual document reviews in April for the Employee Termination Policy and Procedure, the Facility Security Penetration Policy and Procedure, the Emergency Operations Policy and Procedure, the System Change Request Management Policy and Procedure 400-3, and the Outage Reporting Policy and Procedure and there were no substantive changes.</p>	
<p>April System Metrics</p>	<p>3. Dan stated group and individual calls for the month of April were 1,614,000 and change, which is a pretty significant increase from last April. He briefed the push to talks were 2,587,000 and that was down. Dan reminded the group in March; the system had a lot of traffic related to the Arctic Edge exercise and some of those exercise-related things were still happening but compared to last April traffic is quite a bit higher. He briefed there were 250 busies compared to last month when there were 969, again mostly related to Arctic Edge and mostly concentrated in a few sites and Zone 2, but still down significantly from last April despite a significant increase in traffic. Dan stated there were a total of 24,726 subscribers on the system, an increase of 22.</p> <p>For the web site, Dan noted there were 768 page views for the month of April, so there was good traffic. He added he had talked a little bit at the town hall about some of the features of the website and encouraged folks to continue to use that. Dan advised the OMO had been making some changes to the site as of this morning and requested if anyone noticed any errors or was not able to get something to load to give the OMO a quick call and so it could get resolved.</p>	
<p>Other</p>	<p>4. Dan briefed the ALMR Town Hall was yesterday and there were 47 attendees. He added he didn't get much feedback and advised the group if any of them had attended he would certainly appreciate feedback if this was something worth doing again. Dan explained that was designed to be an open forum to talk about TDMA and brief members on some of the decisions that have been made and some of the next steps to be taken as we get the message developed as well as discussing a few other things that are on-going.</p> <p>Dan also notified the group another short 5-minute training video on "What is TDMA?" had been posted to the website that gives a little bit more explanation of the technology behind TDMA and it is available under the training session</p>	
<p>UC Representative Reports</p>	<p>5. Dan invited the central representatives to provide an update.</p>	



**ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell reported they were working on a nominee to submit as an alternate representative for the Municipalities Central area and the OMO should be receiving that letter either tomorrow or Friday.</p> <p>Dan thanked Tammy and moved on to the Southeast but stated he was unsure if anybody was able to make it.</p> <p>Hearing no one, Dan moved on to the North region and asked if there were any updates.</p> <p>Deputy Chief Keith Berrian advised he and Fire Marshal Kyle Green had gotten a chance to meet with one of the federal FirstNet representatives, who was up there doing some things and had some good conversations with her about what the future can maybe hold if they could get ALMR and FirstNet altogether. He added he had another meeting next week to talk with Verizon about some of their offerings which they've been trying to push their direction and advised once he had some more information, he'd pass it along.</p> <p>Dan noted there is still quite a bit of discussion about the different layers to some of the integration between those two, and he appreciates the updates.</p>	
<p>System Management Office</p>	<p>Mr. Travis Conant, System Manager</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>Current Motorola Projects</p>	<p>1. Mr. Travis Conant stated there are four on-going Motorola projects. He noted the current one is a State of Alaska GTR replacements with six remaining sites to be done with five down in southeast. Travis added they would start on the 16th with Ketchikan and would be moving to Skagway and then finishing up in Juneau. He stated the last site would be Atwood and they were hoping to get that portion of the project done by mid-June.</p> <p>Travis advised on the DOD side, the contract is getting ready to begin and they would be doing the site walks in the next few weeks for the microwave upgrade and the RF sites. He noted there were still currently questions for the Army side getting upgraded at their sites, but the Air Force will be moving forward.</p> <p>Travis briefed the third project was for AWARN Zone 4 and they would be doing a software and hardware upgrade to their simulcast system. He added he had talked to Mr. Jason Beach this morning and the Municipality was looking at getting started at the end of the month and should be finished in late June.</p> <p>Travis advised the fourth project is the system upgrade in September for all three zones for phase one and then phase</p>	



**ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 4, 2022

<p>Contract year-end PMIs</p> <p>Departure and New System Manager</p>	<p>two to replace the routers and also move away from the T1 lines and going to Ethernet at all the locations.</p> <p>2. Travis briefed now that the weather is finally nice outside, there will be a big push for PMIs for the end of this contract year. He stated there would be working around this area in the next few weeks and then there are also quite a few sites around Fairbanks that will be finishing before the end of June. Travis noted they would be reaching out with the Help Desk in their daily reports, so member agencies could track where the SMO was going to be and where they can expect outages.</p> <p>3. Travis announced he had accepted a job opportunity and would be moving on. He advised his last full day would be the 15th of May, but he would stay on part time for probably at least a month to help in the transition. Travis briefed Mr. Nik Fahnestock, who has been the lead technician for the last three years and brings a lot to ALMR, would be stepping in and taking over the System Manager position.</p> <p>Travis sated he appreciated the all the support over the years and thanked everyone.</p> <p>Dan congratulated Travis and stated he was sorry to see him leave but assured him that he would continue the same good working relationship with Nik.</p> <p>Mr. Henry Cole congratulated Travis and thanked him for the help Travis had given to him.</p> <p>John thanked Travis for all his hard work over the past 10 years that he'd been working on ALMR and stated he believed that we couldn't have been as far as we are without Travis' support.</p>	
<p>State of Alaska</p>	<p>Mr. Scott Stormo</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>OMO and SMO Follow-on Contract Years</p>	<p>Mr. Stormo stated they are in that time of year when they are working with procurement to execute the follow-on option years for the OMO and SMO contracts, and at the moment, he didn't see any reasons to have any concerns over those continuing.</p>	
<p>Department of Defense</p>	<p>Mr. Timothy Woodall</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>IOMS and OMO Contracts</p>	<p>Mr. Timothy Woodall stated Scott had provided the validated costs for the IOMS contract and OMO services and that has been passed on to the paying agencies within DOD and they were on track for being able to move forward on the next contract here.</p>	
<p>System Upgrade</p>	<p>Mr. Woodall noted the Air Force is all lined up and ready to go for the upgrade and they were still working with the Army</p>	



***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>on coming up with a funding solution for upgrade of their assets. He noted if the Army was unable to fund their portion, the DOD understood there will be a certain operational impact to both the Army and probably more drastically to the civil agencies that rely on those sites, but they will certainly assist in any way we can to identify and mitigate those issues but it is something that we should probably be mindful of and planning for as we go forward.</p> <p>Mr. Rick Williams reiterated that Army was not prepared to accept the loss of those sites, so this is something that is very much still in discussion.</p>	
New Business	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
User Council Representative Removal	<p>1. John advised in accordance with the User Council Charter, Chapter 6 section 5.1, it states where "Unless excused in advance by the User Council Chair, council members are required to attend at least 9 of the 12 monthly meetings in a calendar year. Unexcused absence from three meetings in any calendar year may cause for removal from the User Council seat."</p> <p>John pointed out other members would like to be a part of the User Council and at this point Mr. Timothy Boyce, who was appointed to the council on January 19, 2021, as the alternate of the Department of Interior representative, has attended no meetings and has not participated in any other matters brought forth. He then presented the following motion for removal due to non-participation to the council members for their consideration.</p> <p>Motion: Approve the removal of Mr. Timothy Boyce as the alternate Federal non-DoD Department of Interior Representative and appoint Mr Robert Redington, US Fish and Wildlife Service.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. John Rockwell Second: Mr. Scott Nelsen</p> <p>John opened the floor for discussion.</p> <p>Mr. Scott Nelsen asked if the individual had been nonresponsive to any attempts to contact him, and Sherry noted</p> <p>Sherry briefed she had sent him that same excerpt out of the Charter a while back and I never got any response from it, and that he is also included on all the correspondence that is sent out and has never responded to anything that's been sent out from the council members.</p>	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

<p>Site Prioritization</p>	<p>There was no further discussion, so John asked for a verbal vote and requested all in favor please say aye, to which council members responded. John then asked for any opposing votes and there were no responses. Therefore, the motion was carried and approved.</p> <p>2. Dan noted this was a follow-on discussion from the last meeting. He reminded the group this was a request to evaluate areas that may have needs to increase site coverage or to improve portable coverage, or where there are currently issues. Dan pointed out the list on the slides were identified in the annual survey that the OMO sent out to members, as well as adding some areas from discussions both at the last meeting as well as some follow up emails that he received in the interim.</p> <p>Dan explained the prioritization process hasn't been formally done by the council since 2016 although the OMO does track that data internally. He pointed out the purpose of this is not to say that some areas are absolutely the priority, or that other areas aren't important, but what we're looking at here is if there was a political action or something that came into play where we have funding become available, or there is another opportunity we want to be able to have a ready-made list with a prioritization that we've already done. Dan explained he wanted to share and suggest to the council some recommendations from the OMO to think about and possible offer a motion for approval of these as kind of our top recommendations.</p> <p>Dan noted the recommendations were divided into the two zones. He highlighted in Zone 1 there were two main areas, one was Big Lake, and the other was Nikiski. Dan stated in Big Lake there are some coverage gaps due to the area population growth and those have been noticed by DPS and other agencies. He noted with Nikiski it's in an area in between two other sites and in the middle of that is very, very poor coverage in some areas even on a mobile radio. Dan stated he was making those two site recommendations for prioritization because both of those potentially have some tower infrastructure or partners in place that wouldn't make this a completely new site build and possibly providing a cost benefit of being able to have the best bang for public money possible.</p> <p>Dan briefed in Zone 2 there are also two areas. He noted one was the Chena Dome/Chena Hot Springs area and that was a difficult one because there is no real infrastructure out there. Dan did point out that we've heard from Fairbanks fire and police that there are some conventional sites out there, although that is not the most ideal solution.</p>	
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***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>Dan added the other area in Zone 2 is the Tok Cutoff area which has no coverage at this point, so he thinks these are certainly good places to start with in Zone 2. He also noted there are two three-channel sites, Nenana and Blueberry, which could use a capacity increase. He stated Nenana is consistent with busies especially with some of the military activities.</p> <p>Dan advised he felt these were good places to start with in order to be ready for anything that may come down the line politically or from other actions here. He suggested that the council continue to revisit this each year to be sure it's up to date.</p> <p>John asked for any questions or suggestions at this point and if anyone felt there are any sites that should be on the list that are not. He stated he wanted to ensure it was an open forum and that we are looking at the whole infrastructure. John also stated he appreciate Dan doing the survey and showing the results of that survey and making some strong recommendations.</p> <p>Henry briefed that after polling all the different DOT regions and districts, he had a couple of requested additions to the broader list. He stated in the northern region one was the Montana Creek area on the Upper Steese Highway, basically Montana Creek and central because there is no coverage up there other than the local talk channels. Henry also clarified the discussion regarding Tok Cutoff noting it was specifically the northern half of the Tok Cutoff, from Clearwater Creek mile 77 up to mile 91. He added there was one more area for consideration for increased coverage on the Thompson Pass section of the Richardson Highway. Henry stated he knew there were already repeaters down there, but there are enough dead zones to warrant another look. He stated in the central region on the Kenai Peninsula, Skilak Lake Road and Bay Crest Hill/Sterling Highway in Homer needed more coverage.</p> <p>Dan stated the OMO had another spreadsheet where they keep the running list of things so they are able to look back on all of this and he would certainly get these suggestions added. He encouraged the council if there were any other additions or suggestions to please let him know.</p> <p>Keith pointed out one of the things that I noticed is on the metrics performance report this month was that Birch Hill was underperforming and asked if there was any information on that because it is one of the primary sites for the City of Fairbanks and the surrounding areas.</p>	
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*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>Travis explained his technicians had performed a periodic maintenance inspection on the site and when that occurs each of the different channels are taken offline and then the site is also off for approximately 30 minutes which could contribute to the site being below the five nines.</p> <p>John asked what the next step was on the site prioritization process.</p> <p>Dan advised it was probably the best thing if the if the council wanted to by motion just to ratify the recommendations or make some of their own as the top issues. He explained this process is so ALMR has something in their back pocket but there is no action item, and this didn't have to be accomplished today. Dan reiterated this is so if there is legislative contact or contact with the DOD and funding is available, we want to be able to say this is a ratified list that represents the will of the User Council. Therefore, he suggested the next step of the council, if they wished to do so, would be to confirm the priorities.</p> <p>John stated he would like to see a rough order a magnitude of cost for any new sites, especially if it was something where they would have to bring power in for 10 miles or 20 miles or on the other hand, if it is close. He noted before he considered making any type of recommendations those were his personal thoughts and he would not want to ratify something that could be potentially so expensive that it would cause it to be dropped.</p> <p>Dan concurred that made good sense and he could detail out the sites a little bit more, but he did not have cost estimates. He pointed out he could differentiate between green builds for new sites or potential partnership opportunities, and it wouldn't lock us into either and he could bring that back at another meeting with these recommendations so folks can see it visually. He asked the other members of the council what their thoughts were on ratifying the list or what additional information they would need before ratifying it</p> <p>Henry Cole agreed with John on having additional details if it was a new site or would it be a matter of adding a new antenna on an existing tower and then also prioritize the list further down to priority one, priority, etc.,</p> <p>John stated that was what he was also thinking, is this going to be a \$4 million or \$1M even if the new green site and that could depend on you know where it is, whether it is a high site, is there power nearby, those types of things that are beyond the partnering type thing. He suggested perhaps Dan and Scott could come together with an estimate.</p>	
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*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>Scott advised there were a lot of open-ended questions, such as is it possible to get connectivity to that location and is it possible to get a permit to do anything at that location? He pointed out that these are the limitations which should probably be identified which then leads to the complexity of meeting that that requirement. He offered that a quote for the equipment costs could probably be obtained from Motorola.</p> <p>Scott noted a power line running up the mountainside, assuming it's available amount could easily be \$1M. He also noted the process to get a permit could take up to five years and you could still get told no, you can't do it. Scott also recommended the potential frequencies to support it be identified because now you've got a long pole in the tent going up through the FCC and the NTIA to get approval for them to meet that requirement. He emphasized they no longer have the people who did this a long time ago, they have all retired, so it would all need to be contracted out, even the permitting, so the only thing they could really do would be to get the rough order of equipment costs with some caveats (i.e., power line costs, etc.).</p> <p>Scott offered an explanation on how APSCS does their deferred maintenance without having all the details in that they prioritize the list based on where they feel the highest priority need is and then when and if money does become available at some point, they look at that list, and decide whether they might be able to do the number one priority or if they could do several other maintenance activities for the same cost. He added they can probably come up with some rough order of magnitude but the ones that are out in nowhere, those are a lot harder. Scott stated they could probably make a phone call to the power company to use their power line and then get ballpark on what would it cost for them to run us a mile and a half of power line if we needed something, but he emphasized we wouldn't want anyone to think you said it was going to cost \$1.2 million or it turns out to be \$2M.</p> <p>Fire Marshal Kyle Green offered his perspective stating there probably are some opportunities, but especially among the users with the Fire Chiefs and police chiefs, where they could be advocating for ALMR and having a ballpark figure is a great conversation starting point with our representatives and our senators. He noted there is a real need to be able to help get that money discussion out there, and if we can be proactive and have the information that would be super helpful. Kyle also stated if it's a matter of finding out the stakeholders in these zones, he's a User Council representative in the area, and he's willing to at least pitch in</p>	
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**ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 4, 2022

	<p>for investigating any type of scoping and take one bite out of the elephant. He explained this way ALMR is less likely to end up in the predicament where they throw a million and a half at us, but we turn out we need two and a half million, so having that scope would be super helpful</p> <p>Dan stated the OMO could put together a wish list and will work with the state group to provide a rough scope.</p> <p>Scott noted they had built the site at Chena Hot Springs up above the campground and it is an off-grid site. He stated it currently has a DOT frequency repeater, a DNR frequency repeater, and AST frequency repeater, so it's like how the system used to be but was also designed with the idea if they could ever get power and connectivity to it they could make it in a lower site. Scott briefed there is already a lot there if they could just figure out whether off grid power, which is painful, would work or if power could be run in, but they would still have to find the transport.</p> <p>Scott stated at Tok Cutoff they do have someone that they have partnered with in other places that has fiber along that highway that they have had discussions with already. He added that it would be possible to acquire shelters and put some stuff at their places and then get the transport to them, so there is a reasonable chance those could be executed if funds became available.</p> <p>Scott noted at Big Lake, there is a fire department and if they were able to locate at a place like that has a tower and the ability to put equipment out there, that could be fairly inexpensive, as well. He added they were paying about \$300,000 when we had a site that we put the trunked equipment in before, so he would estimate it could range anywhere from you know \$500,000 to \$1.5M now assuming you don't have to run five miles worth of power line, but they could come up with some numbers.</p> <p>Dan advised this sounded good and the OMO would move forward and bring this back to the council at a later date.</p>	
Next meeting	Discussion	
	John reminded everyone the next meetings are scheduled for June 1 and July 6.	
Adjournment	Discussion	
	<p>John asked if there was any other discussion and hearing no response, he requested for a motion to adjourn the meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Adjourn the May monthly User Council meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. Chris Martin Second: Mr. Henry Cole</p>	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: May 4, 2022

	There were no objections. The motion passed . The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.	
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