



**ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date: August 3, 2022**

1. Attendance.

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

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

<b>Alternate</b>				
N/A	Brown	David	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD DOJ, FBI
N/A	Acone	Abigail	A1C	DOD USAF, JBER
N/A	De Hart	Kaitlyn	A1C	DOD USAF, JBER
T	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
T	Goodman	Jim	Mr.	Municipalities Central, MatSu Borough
T	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DOD USAF, Eielson AFB
E	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA, <b>Vice Chair</b>
	<b>VACANT</b>			SOA DOT
E	Reddington	Robert	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD DOI, US Fish and Wildlife Service
N/A	Roberts	Rick	Captain	SOA DPS
N/A	Scott	Heath	Chief	Municipalities Southeast, Haines Borough PD
T	Williams	Rick	Mr.	DOD, US Army - Alaska
T	Carter	Bobby	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD All Others, TSA

**Supporting Staff and Guests:**

T	Butcher	Jacob	Mr.	MATCOM
T	Clarke	Buckley	Mr.	APSCS
T	Clendenin	John	Mr.	DOT
P	Fahnestock	Nik	Mr.	System Manager
T	Knapp	Tom	Mr.	L3 Harris
P	Nelson	Dan	Mr.	Operations Manager
T	Patterson	David	Mr.	Motorola Solutions
T	Reed	David	Mr.	ALMR ISSM
T	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies



**ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date: August 3, 2022**

T	Shafer	Sherry	Ms.	ALMR Document Specialist
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	APSCS
T	Ulrich	Naomi	Ms.	Motorola Solutions
T	Weber	Jennine	Mr.	L3 Harris
P	Woodall	Timothy	Mr.	ALCOM J6

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
<b>Call to Order</b>	Mr. John Rockwell called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.	
<b>Roll Call</b>	Roll call was taken, and a quorum of User Council (UC) members was in attendance.  Mr. Jacob Butcher, Ms. Naomi Ulrich, and Ms. Erann Kalwara joined the meeting after the roll was taken/read.	
<b>Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements</b>	Mr. Dan Nelson reminded the group there were some representatives from L3 Harris and they would be doing a demonstration following the business meeting today. He noted he would introduce that group when the regular meeting concluded.	
<b>Previous Meeting Minutes</b>	John asked if everyone had the chance to read the July meeting minutes and requested any questions, comments or updates. Hearing none, John requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes.  <b>Motion: Approve the July meeting minutes as presented.</b>  <b>Motion: Mr. Jon Kroona</b> <b>Second: Fire Marshal Kyle Green</b>  There were no objections or further discussion. The motion passed.	
<b>Issues &amp; Risks Log</b>	<b>Updates</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
	John noted there were no changes to the Issues and Risks Log since the July meeting.	
	<b>Issues Closed at, or since, last meeting</b>	
	N/A	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
	John noted there was still one open item and the Executive Council was scheduled to meet on August 18.	
<b>Operations Management Office</b>	<b>Mr. Dan Nelson, Operations Manager</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>



***ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes***

***Date: August 3, 2022***

<p><b>Annual Inventory Confirmation</b></p>	<p>1. Mr. Dan Nelson briefed it has been a certainly a busy time here in the Operations Management Office (OMO) and through the ALMR system, as a whole. He started with the annual inventory confirmation and stated he appreciated everybody that got those in and that is now 100% complete, so the OMO is checking that item off for the year.</p>	
<p><b>Annual Membership Agreements</b></p>	<p>2. Dan advised the FY23 agreements had been distributed to all the agencies. He reminded everyone in the years past the OMO generally tried to have this done by July 1st, but there was some delay getting those out, but the OMO appreciates that 82 of the agencies have returned them so far. Dan added that he understood some agencies may have to go through their legislative body, but certainly appreciates them keeping us in the loop on that.</p>	
<p><b>System Software Upgrade</b></p>	<p>3. Dan stated the Motorola team is currently doing their off-site preparation work and there will be some staging work in Anchorage next week. He added they are then expected to start working on the dispatch sites, which is scheduled for August 15th to September 1 and that will support the new system version which is 2021.1.</p>	
<p><b>GTR Upgrade</b></p>	<p>4. Dan advised there are still two sites left, so we're almost done. He pointed out that at Sunny Hay the weather has not cooperated, so we're still trying to get helicopter access up there. Dan also stated with the Atwood site in Anchorage they did some prep work yesterday and they are trying to engineer that site carefully due to the challenges encountered.</p>	
<p><b>July Document Reviews</b></p>	<p>5. Dan briefed there were several reviews in July, none of which had any substantive changes. He noted those included our High Level Communication Strategy, the OMO Customer Support Plan, the user Council Charter, the Interoperability Policy and Procedure, and the Key Management Facility Policy and Procedure.</p>	
<p><b>Fairbanks Windstorm</b></p>	<p>6. Dan noted he was going to talk about an issue that wasn't on the agenda at this point and that was up in the Fairbanks area and Zone 2.</p> <p>Dan stated many of council members were aware that our responders experienced quite the windstorm and resulting power outages that occurred, which also did affect the master site at Birch Hill. He explained from his understanding of what happened there is redundancy built into all the different ALMR systems, an A side and a B side, which includes power and there was an issue with essentially one half of that redundancy that caused some of the components to go down. Dan briefed those components that were plugged into the A side had an issue which resulted in</p>	



*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

<p><b>July System Metrics</b></p>	<p>about three hours of downtime where the Zone 2 sites were in site trunking. He explained technicians were able to get that handled as far as getting things patch over to that other side, but there are still some repairs and asked Mr. Rick Williams if there was any status update on that, or if that was still in the process of repairing. Dan stated he though they were temporarily working on things, but Rick might have more information since he did not get a chance to call him before the meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Rick Williams briefed they needed new AC controllers and although they had done a battery replacement about a year ago, whatever happened with this windstorm they lost one side, so he planned on replacing both sides. He noted this was a discussion for the higher headquarters that funds their maintenance planning. Rick stated there will be more to follow but right now it's limping along, but it is definitely in hazardous condition.</p> <p>Dan thanked Rick for his update and noted although it was still functioning, ALMR would work on that permanent fix. He pointed out there had been some concern from users that were in site trunking, so he was thankful the ALMR technicians were able to get that back up and running after about three hours downtime. Dan requested that any of the Northern agencies feel free to share any reports or experiences they had and any notes/feedback with the OMO.</p> <p>Rick added there was one thing he was still unclear about and that was he did not know if the Transector (surge protection) had blown or not. He stated he was not sure about the power coming into the building and if anyone had any feedback on that it might help drive the type of investment that he needed to make for this work repair.</p> <p>7. Dan briefed the system was still quite busy although a little bit lower than the peak last month. He noted there were 1,679,000 group and individual calls and 2,692,000 push talks, which is still a fairly good increase from 2021, when it was 2,258,000. Dan stated there is a lot more traffic throughout the system, which doesn't seem to be correlated to any particular user or any particular incident. He added obviously there are still wildfires and other incidents that are occurring throughout the state, but in general, the traffic just seems to be spread across most every site and most every user, so it has just been a busy summer.</p> <p>Dan advised that corresponding to that increase in traffic, we do have an increase in system busies although they decreased from the last month. He briefed there were 771 and he reminded everyone that he had talked about the Nenana site last month which was being used quite a bit for</p>	
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*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

<p><b>Other Items of Interest</b></p>	<p>wildfire operations, but they were able to switch that over to some conventional resources. Dan pointed out that of the 771 busies, 230 of those came from the Nenana site and for the rest of the sites, there was not any other site that was particularly high versus another.</p> <p>Dan stated on the system there was now total 24,922 subscribers which is a gain of 58 for the last month. He noted the OMO and SMO had a discussion this morning to remind folks who are starting to get the TDMA radios in and maybe doing some lifecycle replacements that when they are adding those radios to the system to please ensure they are decommissioning old radios and sanitizing them to make sure the ALMR information is all out. Dan also briefed agencies need to delete those radios from the system so we can keep an accurate count and we don't have radios on the system that are unused. He added agencies can contact the Help Desk if you have any questions on how to do that.</p> <p>Dan apologized that there was a bit of an error on the sites under three nines slide as it was showing 22 sites down but there was actually a total of 30. He explained a number of these sites had to do with the Zone 2 outage, but also in southeast Alaska earlier that same day on the 25<sup>th</sup>, there was a GCI circuit outage and all those southeast sites fell under that. Dan noted everyone was still waiting for information from GCI as to what the fix is for the issue.</p> <p>Dan briefed the Divide site is also down to move to a temporary tower and a new tower is going up and that downtime is being coordinated with the state to move that to its temporary location.</p> <p>Dan noted there have also been some antenna repairs and optimizations that had to be done related to the upgrade and TDMA, as well as some bracket issues which required downtime for repair/replacement as well as a couple of PMI inspections sprinkled in there.</p> <p>For the website, there were 592 page views, mostly from a desktop device, so certainly appreciate and remind everybody that we do try and keep that website continually refreshed and chances are you might find an answer to your question there, but also feel free of course to call us and we can point you in the right direction.</p> <p>8. Dan advised the SMO/OMO did an acceptance test procedure this month, which was the first one in eight or nine months. He added they ATPd two new radios from Icom. the ICF7010, which is a portable radio, and the ICF7510, which is a mobile radio. Dan pointed out Icom had actually been working with ALMR for quite a while and had needed to</p>	
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*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

<p><b>UC Representative Updates</b></p>	<p>make some updates to their firmware, which they did, and the radios passed very easily. He stated they have been added to the approved equipment list, which is located on our website, so feel free to look at that.</p> <p>Dan noted we are looking also at hopefully another ATP soon for a Harris radio, which is a replacement to the current Harris radio on that approved equipment list. He stated he was waiting on a response from them to schedule the ATP.</p> <p>Dan briefed he would be out of state next week as he was headed to the APCO conference to attend a lot of P25 related training sessions and some technical things as well as a lot of dispatch operations and the Motorola user group sessions. He requested if any of the members were going to be down and needed time to meet and talk anything ALMR to let him know and they could set up a time.</p> <p>Dan advised there were a few training videos coming out and the next vignette video would talk a little bit about radio purchases and things to consider. He noted he was dealing with a little technical issue with editing and then it would be out on the website.</p> <p>Lastly Dan mentioned the TDMA update and reminded everyone that as John said at the beginning of the meeting, that hopefully the timeline would be approved by the Executive Council on July 18 and after that time, the OMO would be doing some outreach to respond to questions about the TDMA transition deadline. He noted there would probably be some checklists developed and packets provided for those agencies with flash upgrades once the summer season starts to wind out and we can focus on some of those things.</p> <p>9. Dan started with the northern region and asked if anybody has anything to share or any feedback from the outage or anything else.</p> <p>Fire Marshal Kyle Green stated he had sent Dan an e-mail this morning asking about some particulars about what occurs during the site trunking situation like they had encountered with the power outage here in the borough and the reply was great. He also extended his sincere appreciation for the crews that responded from ALMR to get that get things back up and running as soon as possible. Kyle noted he wouldn't say that Fairbanks has never had a windstorm like that before because they have certainly had their share of windstorms, but it just seems the all the cards fell at the same time. He explained that in addition to ALMR going down their primary dispatching center at Fairbanks Emergency Communication Center lost power completely</p>	
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*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

	<p>when the generator blew up a radiator hose which then defaulted 9-1-1 calls to AST which had its own calamities. Kyle stated that many of the agencies are now in discussions about how to prevent that scenario from happening again. He explained most of their radios defaulted back to their VHF channel and they have simplex channels still in use, some of which are repeated and are agency based. He added some ideas have popped up about going to a regional model for those VHF now that they're kind of secondary, but there are some challenges administratively bringing that up. Kyle pointed out this is a reminder for folks in this business to maintain your VHF sites, because as we've all been told before, ALMR is not the 100 percent replacement and it is important to have backup to your backup, and the backup to ALMR for us here in the northern region is the VHF channels. He thanked everyone again and stated as they hear more and more feedback and discover more of what happened with that wind event that took power out to well over half the borough population, they will reach back to the Operations Management Office.</p> <p>Dan thanked Kyle and stated the OMO/SMO will get some of this documented for an after-action type process just so we have it captured. He then asked the Central representative if they had anything to report.</p> <p>Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell stated she did not have anything to report.</p> <p>Dan next asked if there was anything from the southeast.</p> <p>LT Erann Kalwara stated they are working on getting some console upgrades in Juneau and those are scheduled for August 22. She added they are hoping to eventually have more capabilities and to tie their consoles into ALMR.</p> <p>Dan asked about Iron Man that's coming up this weekend.</p> <p>Erann briefed they would be providing 13 portable radios and thanked Dan for sharing those. She noted they would be doing radio intro training with the volunteers tomorrow although they are very accustomed to using radios, they may not be following all the rules that we all have to follow. Erann also advised the fire department will have a lot of responders staged and they will be shutting down roadways, providing medical assistance, triaging in tents, and all sorts of things, so it's a lot of parts and pieces are coming together. She stated they have never done this before, so she was sure they would learn a lot and do better next year with it, but they are excited to host it.</p>	
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***ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes***

***Date: August 3, 2022***

	Dan added he looked forward to a report from them on how that all went and as a reminder for folks that these big events, or even these smaller events, are really good communication exercises and he was glad that Juneau was able to do some of that. He stated if any other agencies have events and need a little advice on planning their communications exercise to feel free to reach out to him.	
<b>System Management Office</b>	<b>Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Console Upgrades</b>	1. Mr. Nik Fahnestock briefed the console upgrade is starting next week so a lot of prep work is happening right now. He noted that starting August 15 is when Motorola will start visiting sites and getting consoles upgraded.	
<b>ALMR Core Upgrade</b>	2. Nik stated that along with the console upgrades, there's the core upgrade that is coming and that ALMR is still working on details from the upgrade team as far as dates and times. He added that we are also still waiting on equipment for the core upgrade. Nik stated that with the core upgrade, the System Management Office (SMO) will be doing a database freeze on September 12 and what that ultimately means is Motorola will take a snapshot of all ALMR databases and then begin the core upgrade itself. He advised any radios, core equipment, items that are added to the system after that snapshot is taken could be lost when the core upgrade is completed, so the SMO is asking that during that timeframe no new radios be added to the system. Nik clarified they can still do it manually, but to keep in mind that there may be a day or two that the manually added radios go back down before the SMO is able to re-add them back into the system.	
<b>Quantar Replacements</b>	3. Nik stated that right now, the SMO doesn't have any upcoming PMIs, but the Atwood and Sunny Hay GTR cutovers are going to be happening soon. He clarified that, more specifically, the Atwood site will start next week on the 9th and 10th. Nik stated it will start off with a slight degradation in the system, but the system will still be up until they are ready to actually cut in the GTR to this site. He briefed the following day; they'll do the internal work and it is anticipated that the work will mostly after hours and everything will be coordinated from the Help Desk.	
<b>State of Alaska</b>	<b>Mr. Scott Stormo</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>SE Outage</b>	1. Mr. Scott Stormo briefed he has reached out to GCI couple of times trying to get the response on what exactly happened with the commercial outage to our sites in the southeast and the Kodiak. He noted all of those links are through commercial circuits with one site in the southeast on ACS, but they all feed back into GCI circuits to get back to Anchorage. Scott explained they all have a physically diverse path that was procured that way, but it was clear that	





*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

<p><b>Divide Site</b></p>	<p>there is some place where it is all meeting up, and then they all, and that piece of equipment apparently failed at this time, and we're waiting for more information from GCI and what can be done to make that more robust.</p> <p>2. Scott clarified the change at the Divide site was not a new shelter but that they have a new partner who is interested in doing some expansion up there and it required a new tower, so the ALMR equipment had to be removed off the tower. He added they are now going to have somebody come in, yank down the old tower, and put up a new tower at no cost to the state other than the impact of having to move some equipment and potentially having some downtime. Scott stated this a win for everyone to get rid of one of the less robust towers we have at our sites and get it replaced with the new tower. He noted that was a pretty good benefit from one of the partnerships that they have, and they have quite a few, but they are always looking for opportunities to minimize cost and share infrastructure.</p> <p>John stated there was one question just came up regarding the APX NEXT infrastructure and asked Scott if he could address that.</p> <p>Scott advised they were still waiting for fed ramp approval and Customs and Border Control was the lead for working with Motorola to get it. He stated he was hesitant to give any date because the latest date was the middle of July and that clearly didn't happen then. Scott added the expectation was that at some point, hopefully sooner rather than later, that APX NEXT equipment will be authorized to be on the system then they could get the paperwork cleared up and get the equipment installed and updated on the system to enable that capability. He briefed once that is up, for those of you who don't know, the platform allows you to roam onto Verizon or FirstNet sims that you can have in the radio, so if you were in a place where you maybe don't have ALMR coverage at all and you could get FirstNet or Verizon that would in theory, allow you to use that FirstNet/Verizon coverage to communicate just like you were on one of our sites.</p> <p>Scott added that in many places, I think that's probably more of an advantage for like in building coverage or places where maybe you get cell coverage that you're not getting the radio system coverage in Alaska. He stated there are a lot of opportunities in remote places where we don't have a lot of coverage that you might have some form of cell coverage, so there's some potential with that. Scott added it is certainly a lot cheaper than building ALMR sites all over the state if we can take advantage of some of that cellular infrastructure.</p>	
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*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

<p><b>Motorola Solutions Visit</b></p>	<p>3. John asked Scott if he wanted to invite or let people know that Motorola is going to be here on the August 17 and is going to be providing some updated information on some of their new equipment and if you want to give details to that meeting, maybe a time, a place and then ask if anybody wants to be invited to contact you maybe through Dan or Sherry.</p> <p>Scott noted he would I'll talk to the OMO about that, see if they can send out a Teams meeting to everybody, and we should probably just bring that up from right here in the conference room.</p> <p>John stated that would be excellent and asked Scott if he had any additional update on what that meeting is about.</p> <p>Scott briefed they were going to talk about subscribers to get answers to any questions on features. He explained one of the things the state was looking at adding to subscribers that they were starting to purchase is Wi-Fi and the reason to do that is it has the potential to do remote programming in the future. Scott provided the example where if there is state Wi-Fi in a trooper post that did not have good ALMR coverage, you could have that radio connect to that state Wi-Fi to program and to potentially communicate on ALMR. He added this is something similar to what the APX NEXT radio is doing, and we are adding that feature now because of how difficult it is to add a feature set after you have already bought the radio.</p> <p>Scott noted they are in the process of making a fairly large purchase and we are working to get Wi-Fi enabled on those just so we have that option in the future, without having to go back and physically reflash every single radio later, which is always a much more expensive process than getting it upfront so that was just something they have learned from conversation with Motorola, and the state wanted Motorola to come up and just talk about their other radios.</p> <p>Scott stated he didn't know if everybody saw that Motorola recently announced a new radio. He advised it's not currently going to be released in VHF; the first release is going to be UHF/700/800 and then VHF and other bands would come sometime next year accordingly to Motorola projections, but Motorola didn't have an actual date to give. Scott pointed out that Motorola made it quite clear the APX line of radios is not end of life, but that the platform has been out a while and the APX NEXT radio has similar use of broadband technology, it is just a little bit different than what the current models are. He advised this is an opportunity to go through the new subscriber lineups and feature sets which might be useful to</p>	
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***ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes***

***Date: August 3, 2022***

<p><b>State Radio Purchase</b></p>	<p>us that we're not currently buying that we could be using and give us a chance to ask them any questions.</p> <p>Scott stated if anyone is interested in seeing that I will get that information again and have a Teams meeting that can go out for everybody.</p> <p>4. John noted that Scott had already mentioned DPS is putting a large radio order in for approximately 300 portables and 300 mobiles as they got the budget increase to replace the some of the current XTS5000 radios which are 20 years old. He added they were looking forward to getting that refresh.</p> <p>Kyle asked if the procurement process had started for those radios already and if that procurement available to other state agencies.</p> <p>John stated that was an excellent question and they encourage anytime that they have large orders that we get to combine them and then they often can get an even bigger discount. He suggested they the discussion offline and he would send Kyle a copy of what DPS is looking at ordering and they could compare that with what Kyle's agency was going to order and work with Scott's group to see about maybe joining forces.</p> <p>Kyle stated he appreciated that because many members were asking that question of how they upgrade their radio fleets.</p>	
<p><b>Department of Defense</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Timothy Woodall</b></p>	<p><b>Action Items Assigned</b></p>
	<p>Mr. Timothy Woodall stated he had nothing at this time.</p>	
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<p><b>Action Items Assigned</b></p>
	<p>John asked if anyone had any New Business and there were no responses.</p>	
<p><b>Next meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	
	<p>John reminded everyone the next meetings are scheduled for September 7 and October 5.</p>	
<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	
	<p>John asked if there was any other discussion and hearing no response, he made the motion to adjourn the meeting.</p> <p><b>Motion: Adjourn the August monthly User Council meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Motion: Mr. Jim Goodman</b> <b>Second: Mr. John Rockwell</b></p>	



*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: August 3, 2022*

	There were no objections. The motion <b>passed</b> and the meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.	
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