



**ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes**

Date: February 7, 2024

1. Attendance.

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

Primary				
E	Atkinson	Ross	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD DOI, BLM-Alaska Fire Service
N/A	Berrian	Keith	Deputy Chief	Municipalities North, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue
T	Cole	Henry	Mr.	SOA DOT
T	Goggia-Cockrell	Tammy	Ms.	Municipalities Central, Vice Chair
T	Kalwara	Erann	Ms.	Municipalities Southeast
T	Kroona	Jon	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD DOJ, FBI
T	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA
N/A	Nelson	James	Officer	Federal Non-DOD All Others, US Forest Service
N/A	VACANT			DOD USAF, Eielson AFB
U	Murtiff	Zachary	MSgt	DOD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Rockwell	John	Mr.	SOA DPS, Chair
	VACANT			DOD US Army - Alaska

Alternate				
N/A	Brown	David	Mr.	Fed Non-DOD DOJ, FBI
T	Carter	Bobby	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD All Others, TSA
N/A	Clendenin	John	Mr.	SOA DOT
T	Edwards	Karl	Mr.	DHS, SOA All Others
T	Endres	Benjamin	Lieutenant	SOA Department of Public Safety
T	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
N/A	Goodman	Jim	Mr.	Municipalities Central, MatSu Borough
U	Hammer	Nathan	SMSGT	DOD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
U	Herman	Mary	Captain	DOD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
U	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DOD USAF, Eielson AFB
U	Peace	David	Mr.	DOD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Redington	Robert	Mr.	Federal Non-DOD DOI, US Fish and Wildlife Service
	VACANT			Municipalities Southeast
E	Williams	Rick	Mr.	DOD, US Army - Alaska

Supporting Staff and Guests

P	Bortman	Penny	Ms.	Document Specialist
P	Fahnestock	Nik	Mr.	System Manager
P	Fussey	Paul	Mr.	Operations Manager
T	Garland	Barry	Mr.	BLM-Alaska Fire Service



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T	Haas	Zach	Mr.	Motorola Solutions
P	Reed	Dave	Mr.	Security Manager
P	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS CISA
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	APSCS Manager
T	Thometz	Tim	Mr.	Icom America
T	Woodall	Tim	Mr.	ALCOM PM/COR

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
Call to Order	Mr. John Rockwell called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of User Council (UC) members in attendance for the meeting.	
Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements	There were no special announcements or guests.	
Previous Meeting Minutes	<p>John inquired whether everyone had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any questions, comments, updates to the meeting minutes. There were no responses.</p> <p>John requested a motion and a second to approve the meeting minutes.</p> <p>Motion: Approve the January 3 monthly User Council meeting minutes.</p> <p>Motion: Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell Second: Mr. Bobby Carter</p> <p>There were no objections or further discussion. The motion passed.</p>	
Action Items	Review	Resolution
	John stated the action status regarding the functionality of the APX next radios is still on hold and when it's closer to having them approved on the systems, he was hoping to get Motorola to give a thorough overview of the functionality and technology.	
Issues & Risks Log	Updates	Action Items Assigned



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	Mr. Rockwell indicated the Issues and Risks Log had one item open regarding the Southeast representative alternate position which stated on January 8 that Sergeant Josh Dryden of the Haines Borough Police Department had volunteered to fill the position and that a letter of endorsement was sent to Erann Kalwara at Juneau PD on January 8.	
	Issues closed at, or since, last meeting	
	N/A	
Operations Management Office	Mr. Paul Fussey, Operations Manager	Action Items Assigned
Training	1. Mr. Paul Fussey briefed that he was starting with training and that there were two new video vignettes posted to the web site called "Emergency Button Activation" and "Bi-Directional Amplifiers." He stated that on January 2, Mr. Dan Nelson had come to the ALMR office, and they went over the yearly training schedule, which is now posted on the ALMR website under the training and presentation tab. Paul suggested everyone should take a look and see what is upcoming. He also asked if anyone had any training suggestions to reach out to Mr. Nelson or him as they want to produce videos and training pertinent to our members.	
Outreach	2. Paul briefed that the AFEA had their quarterly meeting on February 1 to discuss electing a new representative for the ALMR Executive Council and a new representative from TSA has been tentatively selected and he was working with the AFEA president to get a letter for appointment to the Executive Council.	
January Document Reviews	3. Paul advised that in January the New User Policy and Procedure, the Catastrophic Natural Events (CNE) Contingency Plan, the Grant Guide, and the Service Level Agreement (SLA) were all reviewed and updated and those could be seen on the ALMR website. Mr. Fussey inquired if there were any questions before moving on to System Metrics. There were none.	
January System Metrics	4. Paul stated the January metrics for individual calls were 1,451,747 and for the push to talks, there were 2,358,761, and looking at the monthly busies, there were 290. He noted the percentage reflected .0001%, which is a very small amount. Paul advised there were three sites below three 9s for January which were Hill 3265, Pole Hill, and Quarry Hill and that all were from a failed microwave link and the teams were working on repairing this. Paul briefed on the website that there were 420 sessions and viewings were up 18%.	



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<p>Other Items</p>	<p>5. Paul advised that he had attended the Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection (APIP) meeting on January 18.</p> <p>Paul noted the next quarterly zone controller rollover would be February 27-28, and that is when we come in early to do the reset for all the zones, including with Mr. Newman with Zone 4.</p> <p>Paul briefed the NICE loggers were updated on January 16 and if agencies had not done so already, please restart their systems for the upgrade. He stated he has contacted entities to reboot for the MOTOPATCH upgrade and wanted to thank everyone since the ISSM report showed there were less than 12 remaining to reboot and that each month is getting less and less.</p> <p>Paul stated the ALMR Executive Council meeting was held on January 18 and the information and recording are available on the website.</p> <p>Paul informed everyone that he attended the APCO meeting on January 25 and Alaska Police Officers' Association (APOA) meeting on Feb 6.</p> <p>Paul noted that on January 30, the OMO, SMO, and the APSCS had met with Motorola where they were introduced to the new project manager and regional representative.</p> <p>Paul stated for Zone 2 that there was a newspaper article stating on February 8-22, the military will be holding a Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness exercise near Fort Greely where there will be 10,000 soldiers participating. He noted that ALMR has documented that, and the SMO and he will be keeping track to see if there are any issues with busies or the system.</p> <p>Paul briefed that Mr. Nelson was working with a Firefighter Grant for ALMR subscriber units and it is moving forward; however, they are still looking for a lead agency. He explained this is a grant that is also being supported by the Alaska Municipal League for fire department radios. Paul encouraged any department that wanted to participate to fill out the survey distributed by the Fire Chiefs' Association this week or reach out to Mr. Nelson or Mr. Abner Hoage for more information.</p> <p>Paul encouraged everyone to read the ALMR Cooperative and Mutual Aid Agreement, specifically Appendix D which is our Service Level Agreement (SLA), which explains the system infrastructure and which entity is responsible for each item under Appendix C. He added this will show each</p>	
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	tower and who is responsible for them, the infrastructure, batteries, and support structure.	
System Management Office	Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager	Action Items Assigned
Site/Tower Traffic Indicator Issues	<p>Mr. Fahnestock stated that there has been some interference around the Birch Hill area and that the System Management Office had dispatched technicians to troubleshoot. They had determined where it originated from and handed the information to the DOD. He noted the issue is still ongoing and it needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Mr. Tim Woodall requested that Nik send the information to the Joint Frequency Management Office-Alaska, and they would know what is assigned and operational in that area. Nik agreed to send Mr. Woodall the information.</p>	
State of Alaska	Mr. Scott Stormo	Action Items Assigned
SLA Responsibilities and Going Forward Request	<p>Mr. Scott Stormo briefed that the Service Level Agreement, in a more elevated view for many of us, is not living up to its expectations and in some cases, it could be fiscally staffing constrained or just not knowing who is responsible for what. He stated he had asked the DOD to identify the POCs for all the RF sites and POCs for the backhaul to their console sites, so the SMO could meet with them quarterly to create a better relationship and help each other and discuss what is going on. Scott noted with the lessons learned from the ongoing upgrade and the 'chatter' from the last few years, we could have helped Motorola do their job a bit better.</p> <p>Scott presented examples of annual performance maintenance and not having the right equipment or the budget for a technician to do the work and indicated the costs of annual maintenance takes a lot of effort and expense and they are nowhere near set up to where they should be, so they need to work closer together among ourselves and continue to generate partnerships.</p> <p>Scott mentioned a particular situation in Skagway where relationships resolved an issue at one of the shelters when a site was down. He explained it is extremely difficult to have employees at every site and these relationships will help everyone. He advised that the users need to be accountable for what could happen if we become too complacent with our equipment and that the user community, and the User Council should try and hold infrastructure owners accountable a bit more toward the Service Level Agreement. Scott emphasized they need to be aware of the problems so when something breaks down, they have a budget for equipment replacement and the customers need to carry more of the weight.</p>	



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	<p>Mr. John Rockwell thanked Scott for the ‘hard topic and added that we do have limited resources, staffing, and everything.</p> <p>Fire Marshall Kyle Green offered to communicate by phone or email for anything up in the Fairbanks area and agreed that they need collaboration for improvements and keeping the communication and system relevant with feedback and picking up the phone and calling Anchorage with their needs. He stated the documents online are daunting, but the resources are available, and it is best to lean on each other and there are a lot of experts to lend what they know.</p> <p>Scott stated there are two P25 trunk systems in the State and that we have a great P25 system, and we cannot get any better than that, but we are not taking care of it.</p> <p>Lastly, Scott briefed Motorola is getting close to Smart Connect FedRamp approval.</p> <p>Mr. Rockwell agreed with Scott that we have an awesome system connecting 135 agencies and all different components and that the Executive Council and the User Council have been touted as the best in the United States as far as managing LMR systems.</p> <p>Kyle mentioned his counterpart in Washington is having issues with FirstNet and making the systems interoperable, but we have a robust system that is incredible.</p>	
<p>Department of Defense</p>	<p>Mr. Timothy Woodall</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>New Upcoming Contract</p>	<p>Mr. Timothy Woodall concurred with Scott’s comments and stated they had sent out a request for the DoD entities to send their information to Scott about who the point of contact for their infrastructure is and he thanked those who responded and asked others to make it a priority.</p> <p>Mr. Woodall suggested that we frame the context of Scott’s requirements with the infrastructure owners when they work on the new contract coming up and to look at equipment that is not covered as part of operations and maintenance and identify critical infrastructure and spare requirements. He stated that planning the upgrade schedule and addressing the fiduciary responsibilities of the agencies that participate in this system is critical so long as it does not create any administrative burdens when facilitating contract administration or other type activities. Mr. Woodall suggested when everyone gets together, they will have a better understanding to frame this out to work better in the future.</p>	



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User Council Representative Reports		Action Items Assigned
<p>SOA DOT</p> <p>SOA DPS</p> <p>SOA All Others</p>	<p>1. Mr. Henry Cole thanked Mr. Stormo and Mr. Green for their words and added his agreement to what they said.</p> <p>2. Lt. Ben Endres stated that they are looking at the Iridium radios from ICOM for testing where ALMR doesn't have service and had met with Scott and Paul regarding how it would interact with the ALMR system. He added the radios will be deployed and tested at four locations and would let everyone know how that worked.</p> <p>3. Mr. Scott Nelsen noted he had nothing to add, but he is interested in the Iridium radios because they do send people out of ALMR coverage and to send them out with one device instead of two is advantageous</p>	
<p>DOD US Army Installations</p> <p>DOD JBER</p> <p>DOD Eielson</p>	<p>1. There was no representative present.</p> <p>2. There was nothing from JBER.</p> <p>3. There was no representative present.</p>	
<p>Federal Non-DOD DOJ</p> <p>Federal Non-DOD DOI</p> <p>Federal Non-DOD All Others</p>	<p>1. Mr. Kroona stated nothing from the FBI.</p> <p>2. Mr. Redington stated that there was nothing from DOI.</p> <p>3. Mr. Bobby Carter said he had nothing to add.</p>	
<p>Munis-Central</p> <p>Munis-North</p>	<p>1. Ms. Goggia-Cockrell stated there was nothing for Muni-Central but expressed her gratitude towards the SMO – Chris, Nik, Scott, and the OMO – Paul, for their responsiveness. "The professionalism and turn around is phenomenal and I appreciate such positive experiences."</p> <p>2. Fire Marshal Kyle Green said he wanted to thank Nik and his team for coming to Fairbanks and working on the interference at the Birch Hill site that Deputy Chief Berrian had reported. He wanted to acknowledge that Fairbanks was having minus 40 to minus 50-degree weather when they were looking for the RF signal interference.</p> <p>Kyle also noted he was in Anchorage a couple of weeks ago for the State Fire Marshal's building and fire official's forum and that they discussed code updates from the 2021 building and fire codes and the 2024 updates. He explained that the fire codes for new buildings are pushing for building coverage requirements for radios and how they</p>	



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	<p>are becoming more and more robust and that building and fire officials are becoming more aware of the requirements and more engaged with what that will look like in their respective areas.</p> <p>Kyle thanked Nik and Paul for the quick turnaround and allowing him to visit the ALMR office as it was kind of last minute and he encourages everyone if you have never been to the building to go check it out as it is an interesting tour and always a good discussion.</p> <p>Kyle stated he was able to meet with Mr. Rockwell while he was there and discuss what next generation looks like, what that could look like for ALMR and really high level in the sense that how do we communicate what is possible, what is coming into play here as ALMR has the opportunity through Smart Connect to become broadband based. He noted that it is a little bit oversimplified to say it is getting connected to the Internet, but what that means though is that anywhere that you can that you have a broadband signal, you can connect to the ALMR system and have that infrastructure there to run your incident and run your communications infrastructure.</p> <p>Kyle added that this means within our day and times of satellite connectivity that is anywhere in Alaska, with limitations about how satellite coverage works up in the Alaska, within probably the next decade, which is going to be here sooner rather than later, we will have Internet connectivity in all parts of Alaska. He emphasized that ALMR will have complete Alaska coverage, and not only complete coverage but the ability to be interoperable and that is one heck of accomplishment.</p> <p>Kyle stated if the comes back to where the next possible Exxon Valdez oil spill is, especially with our Northern Sea routes opening to transiting trade, and you think about the remoteness of that and the fact that you have a communications infrastructure that can be stood up and then a backhaul that can go to a Common Core area where the EOC can be run. It plays out. He briefed he would let everyone think it out and play it out nonetheless, and he conceded there are some limitations that have to be acknowledged with the system and so the conversation that he had with Mr Rockwell and that they have engaged Mr Bruce Richter with the DHS, Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA, is to help put together a foundational outline of what the next generation looks like for additions on to the ALMR system and that way when you get to the Kyle Greens of users who come and say I have this technology, I want to use it as part of the power of our PACE outline for our communications system and how can</p>	
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<p>Munis-Southeast</p>	<p>we make this happen, there are going to be some limitations with the technology. He stated that we need to acknowledge that and provide some type of road map of what the capabilities are, what the limitations are, and in that road map, if users identify well what we need doesn't quite fit within that.</p> <p>Kyle explained he was hoping that this also furthers the discussions of how we can better augment the system and advocate for the system to grow in that area where need naturally develops. He continued that one of the big things that he wants to make sure does not happen, and he said this coming from my fire world, is he did not want to create Fire Chief trophies because the technology that you choose as a as a user chooses needs to be driven by the mission, not the technology driving the mission, which is the wrong way. He re-emphasized that it needs to be your mission that is driving the technology and how best can that technology fit within the ALMR infrastructure when it comes to communication.</p> <p>Kyle concluded by noting that it is a small thing that is just getting started and there have been not even a half dozen emails yet to outline that, and he is looking forward to continue working with ALMR, with Mr Rockwell, and then Mr Bruce Richter, with CISA, to bring something to the User Council, hopefully sooner rather than later.</p> <p>3. Ms. Kalwara stated she had nothing new to add to the group.</p>	
<p>New Business</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>CISA Update</p>	<p>Mr. Bruce Richter, DHS/CISA, shared a threat advisory on actions from the Peoples Republic of China against critical infrastructure including communications infrastructure looking for vulnerabilities as of late in Oregon. He stated he would share a link with Paul and John on the CISA.gov website where the Director, Ms. Jen Easterly, spoke in front of Congress stating, "every victim of a cyber incident should report it to CISA or the FBI every time recognizing that a threat to one is a threat to many." Bruce noted CISA.gov has a little red button on the upper right corner where you can report a cyber issue.</p> <p>He explained everyone should establish a relationship with the local system team and enroll in their free services, particularly the vulnerability scanning program to identify and repair vulnerabilities being exploited by Chinese cyber actors. Bruce said they offer a free remote vulnerability scanning service and report what they find back to the agency that is the client.</p>	



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	<p>Mr. Richter briefed he had shared the CISA Alaska Cyber Security Advisor contact information with Paul and John and emphasized that we all must double down on our commitment to resilience, to expect and prepare for an attack, and test and exercise the continuity of critical systems to ensure the ability to operate through disruption and recover rapidly. Bruce acknowledged his agreement with Mr. Stormo that physical maintenance is needed on our equipment and that there are issues with natural hazards acting against our system, but it is a big threat when overseas countries are looking for a variety of weaknesses in our critical infrastructure. He suggested everyone should go to CISA.gov and watch the video of Ms. Easterly's speech to Congress.</p>	
Next Meeting	Discussion	
	John stated the next meetings were on March 6 and April 3.	
Adjournment	Discussion	
	<p>John asked if there was any other discussion, and he added that the Arctic Games are going to be held in the Mat-su Borough on March 10 -16 with increased traffic and a lot of international people.</p> <p>Fire Marshall Kyle Green inquired about the DOD exercises happening and the GPS blocking technologies and what to do if there was some sort of interference with the ALMR system.</p> <p>Mr. Richter sent an email to the Operations Manager and the System Management Office with the NCC notice that there may be some interference, but mainly aircraft will notice it more in their navigations.</p> <p>Kyle asked if there was something For Official Use Only for the Fire Chiefs and Police Chiefs that use GPS in their service areas and this way he could relay it back to ALMR to learn from this.</p> <p>Mr. Woodall stated his office is the Joint Frequency Management Office Alaska and DOD Area Frequency Coordinators Office-Alaska and they are cognizant of all the electromagnetic spectrum use in the State and all GPS jamming would go through their office and they have visibility of that and any interference. He explained they have databases that tell them what is authorized, and they have all the records, the coordination, the assignments, the time that they are authorized to operate, and they also have the cease buzzer. Mr. Woodall added his office is the correct office to contact, either call him at 907-885-8087 or 907-552-7181 to a Mr. Jim Kortbein and they would be happy to share that information.</p>	



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	<p>Mr. Rockwell asked if there was any other business before he entertained a motion to adjourn and hearing none, he requested a motion to adjourn.</p> <p>Motion: Adjourn the February 7 User Council meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. Scott Nelsen Second: Fire Marshall Kyle Green</p> <p>There were no objections or further discussion and the motion passed.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned: at 2:28 p.m.</p>	
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