



**ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date: March 6, 2024**

1. Attendance.

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

**User Council Members**

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

<b>Alternate</b>				
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
N/A	Endres	Benjamin	Lieutenant	SOA Department of Public Safety
T	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
E	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
	<b>VACANT</b>			DOD US Army
	<b>VACANT</b>			Municipalities Southeast

**Supporting Staff and Guests**

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	Naciuk	Tony	Mr.	OMO
P	Reed	Dave	Mr.	Security Manager
T	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS CISA
T	Rodriguez	Joe	MSgt	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies
T	Shafer	Sherry	Ms.	OMO
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	APSCS Manager
T	Thometz	Tim	Mr.	Icom America
T	Ulrich	Naomi	Ms.	Motorola Solutions

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Call to Order</b>	Mr. John Rockwell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.	
<b>Roll Call</b>	Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of User Council (UC) members in attendance for the meeting.  Fire Marshal Kyle Green, Mr. Bruce Richter, and Mr. Tim Thometz all joined after the roll was read.	
<b>Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements</b>	There were no special announcements or guests.	
<b>Previous Meeting Minutes</b>	John asked the council members if they had a chance to read the minutes and asked if there were any questions, comments, or updates to the meeting minutes. There were no responses.  John requested a motion and a second to approve the meeting minutes.  <b>Motion: Approve the February 7 monthly User Council meeting minutes.</b>  <b>Motion: Mr. Henry Cole</b> <b>Second: Mr. Scott Nelsen</b>  There were no objections or further discussion. The motion passed.	
<b>Issues &amp; Risks Log</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
	John asked Ms. Sherry Shafer if there were any updates to the Issues and Risk Log since the February meeting.  Sherry responded the only update was the Birch Hill Master Site power issue had been repaired but she did not have the exact date on that and had requested that from Mr. Williams at U.S. Army.	



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Action Items	Updates	Action Items Assigned
	John asked Sherry if there were any updates from the action item since the last meeting and she replied that it remained the same.	
	<b>Issues closed at, or since, last meeting</b>	
	N/A	
<b>Operations Management Office</b>	<b>Mr. Paul Fussey, Operations Manager</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Training</b>	<p>1. Mr. Paul Fussey stated he had attended the PCO training on signal boosters for in-building radio coverage on February 26 and that it had really good information and he had sent out the slide decks to individuals who have been looking to having a BDA put into their building.</p>	
<b>Outreach</b>	<p>Paul noted that Mr Dan Nelson had created a new training video on "Radio Usage and Transmission Protocols," and it is posted on the website.</p>	
<b>February Document Reviews</b>	<p>2. Paul briefed that ALMR had a meeting with the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) on February 22 on becoming members and they had discussed approved radios, possible airtime costs, and coverage maps. He added that CBP would get back with him and the reason they were looking at ALMR was due to losing the lease on one of their tower sites as well as the interoperability and how they would be able to use the system.</p>	
<b>February System Metrics</b>	<p>3. Paul noted the February document review task was kind of light this month with only the Strategic and Operational Plan and the Operations Management Office (OMO) had also received the final signature for the Service Level Agreement (SLA) on February 27, which was now posted on to the website.</p> <p>4. Paul advised he had a lot of discussion points to go through and he wanted to remind everyone that there was a large military exercise from February 8 - 22 up by the Fort Greeley area and that put an additional 10,000 people into that area, so as he starts going into the metrics, he would discuss that in further detail. Paul stated, looking at individual calls, there were 1,441,872 which was down just a little bit. He added the monthly push to talks did go up and were at 2,366,963. While addressing the "busies" slide, Paul remarked it was a disconcerting slide that he would talk about in detail and the increase was attributed to that large exercise. He noted that looking at the busies, they were at 2,068 and</p>	



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	<p>to break that down even further, the towers that were having the most busies were near the Fort Greeley area. Paul briefed Donnelly Dome had 1,011 Nenana had 311, Fort Greeley had 249, and Birch Hill had 143. He explained that as ALMR started pulling the data from there and looking at what was going on, there were several things that they noticed. Paul added one was obviously Donnelly Dome, and the Fort Greeley area was getting inundated with immense radio traffic and, the radio traffic seemed to last quite a while. He advised as they watched, some radio traffic calls were lasting 45 seconds to almost a minute, which is a long time to take up a single channel. Paul pointed out as they started looking at it, the military exercise from February 8 - 22, the total affiliated talk groups from January were 779,552; however, for February there were 811,362, so that was an increase of over 31,000 talk groups in one month alone. He briefed the reason he was going through a lot of detail was because he wanted to make sure everybody understood what was going on and why that number shot up precipitously, but even with that larger amount of talkgroups and push to talks, we are still only at .008%. Paul opened the floor to any questions or discussion before he went further.</p> <p>John asked how many channels were at that site (Donnelly Dome) and Paul responded that it is a four-channel site.</p> <p>John stated that it is one of the smaller sites, as well.</p> <p>Paul added to keep in mind that it is a four-channel but with one control channel, we are down to three.</p> <p>Fire Marshal Kyle Green requested to be reminded who owns the Donnelly Dome site whether it was a Fed resource or state resource.</p> <p>Paul responded that it was a federal site and asked if there were any other questions before he continued to make sure everyone had any questions or concerns answered before he moved forward.</p> <p>Kyle stated he had one more and asked if the busies are directly because of the site's inability to handle those calls and there was no impact with the microwave work that was going on.</p> <p>Paul clarified that it was just radio traffic itself, not the microwave backhaul.</p>	
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<p><b>Other Items</b></p>	<p>Paul continued noting that for the sites below three nines, the count did go up a little bit from January when it went from three to five and the sites were Ester Dome and Peger Road with PMIs and Hill 3265, Pole Hill, and Quarry Hill and this was what Kyle was asking about where the microwave hop upgrade was incomplete . Scott clarified the hop has not been worked on yet and it is the route between Quarry Hill and that is not done yet, and the route there has been failing. He noted it is rerouting on some other DOD circuits around the state, but it is to the Master Site now, so it is a temporary path.</p> <p>Paul stated the subscriber count was 26,007 for the month.</p> <p>5. Paul advised that the quarterly zone control rollover took place February 27 - 28, and there were no problems.</p> <p>Paul briefed he attended a meeting on February 15 on the Genesis system completed upgrades, and the system inspection for the software that was completed today.</p> <p>Paul stated he had conducted a walkthrough of Zone 1 Master Site to check for fire protection compliance. He noted he had put in a request with the State Marshal's Office, and they came over to take a look and will have a report back to him sometime next week.</p> <p>Paul briefed the cyber group for Alaska had its meeting on March 21, and if you want to be a part of that, Mr. Richter would be the point of contact for that meeting.</p> <p>Paul advised at the end of this month that individuals from APSCS, the OMO and the SMO are scheduled to attend the IWCE conference and he would do a report on that and put it into the newsletter.</p> <p>Paul stated one last thing, and this is a more for the User Council themselves, on March 5, GCI conducted an upgrade to their circuits; however, ALMR did not get advanced notice when they were going to start on the work, and they like to let the dispatch centers know when that is going to be going on. He explained this is similar to when they do the quarterly zone control rollover, they like to let dispatch centers know in case there are any issues. Paul briefed unfortunately, the centers were not contacted because ALMR did not know that GCI was going to be starting their work which caused all of Kodiak and the Southeast towers to go down for a while, and they had to scramble and contact the dispatch centers and let them know what was going on. He recommended the User Council forwarding this issue to the Executive</p>	
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	<p>Council. He stated this was not the first time this has happened, and it is a major safety issue for our members out there, especially if the troopers, law enforcement, or fire departments had an ongoing emergency. Paul concluded that completed his report.</p> <p>John thanked Paul and added he would like to thank him and his team for the website. He explained as some of the attendees may know, he has a new boss, Director Lisa Perrington, and she has been utilizing the training sessions and the website to become more familiar with the Alaska Land Mobile Radio system and the division under her with APSCS, so again he thanked Paul for all the work that ALMR been doing on that. John opened the floor for questions and hearing no questions, he moved on to the next agenda item</p>	
<b>System Management Office</b>	<b>Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Radio Protocol</b>	<p>1. Mr. Nik Fahnestock reiterated what Paul had already said dealing with the radio etiquette. He noted the numerous occasions that they saw at the times go up and stated if anyone happens to notice someone on the radio and they seem like they are talking for a long time, to gently remind them to keep it simple and say what they are trying to say, and nothing more or nothing less.</p>	
<b>Increasing Periodic Maintenance Inspections</b>	<p>2. Nik reminded the group as we start to end the winter timeframe, his guys have started to get back into the PMI role and they will start to see those popping up more. He noted that currently they are out right now doing PMI sites and had finished Atwood and Fire Station 12 already and he believed they were at Portage today. Nik noted they have a couple more this week and the following week to come. Outside of that, he did not think he had anything else unless there were any questions.</p>	
<b>State of Alaska</b>	<b>Mr. Scott Stormo</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Microwave Work</b>	<p>1. Mr. Scott Stormo reminded the group that as the weather starts warming up, they will be doing a lot of work at the sites as well. They were getting an early start because they have to change some microwaves out on the Parks Highway, so that may cause brief outages as they reroute it. He clarified that it should not necessarily take a whole site down with the few possible exceptions where sites are on a spur. Scott explained they have to get this done this month because the railroad trains are going to start running again and there cannot be an outage when the trains are moving because it makes the trains slow to a crawl because of the positive train control system.</p>	



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<p><b>FedRamp Approval</b></p>	<p>2. Scott briefed there was no update on FedRamp approval.</p>	
<p><b>System Upgrade</b></p>	<p>3. Scott stated there was not really an update on the progress of the ongoing upgrade, but the Juniper routers are supposed to be arriving and being installed throughout the summer, which would result in the cutovers to TDMA, but he did not think there were any firm dates yet to give on that.</p> <p>Scott advised when they get closer to having information on that, they will be passing that out because as an example that was discussed earlier with the Donnelly Dome site, the DOD is also upgrading to TDMA and that site, instead of having three voice channels, it would have the equivalent of six voice channels if all the subscribers involved were also TDMA. He noted, as discussed multiple times, that this is not the case at this point in time either. Scott stated this is part of the push to not only get off the radios like the XTS5000, which ended sales in 2013 and support ended in 2018. He briefed they have gone a decade past when you could last buy one, which is a lot of use for the money spent on those, but way more than we should be using them. Scott advised that was all he had unless there were any questions.</p> <p>John thanked Scott for the reminder that it is time to upgrade TDMA from our older FDMA radios and if everyone recalled, the date that was set to try to be 100 percent TDMA is December 31, 2026, and that is coming up quicker than we realize, especially with the budget cycles that we all have in front of us. He asked Scott for more details on the FedRamp approval on what we are actually asking for that , just to remind everyone in the meeting.</p> <p>Scott stated that Motorola has been working with the GSA office of the federal government that runs the federal program and they have been working with them for several years now to get their cloud services approved through the federal process. He noted this will allow them to have a connection to the Motorola cloud, which in our instance, will support our Location on Push to Talk (LoPTT) and Smart Connect, which is what will allow properly provisioned and programmed radios to do either Wi-Fi connectivity to talk on the radio system or LTE connectivity to talk on the system. Scott added for example if you go into a place in Alaska that has cell service that is generally at this point Verizon or AT&amp;T where there is not an ALMR site, you can roam onto that LTE network and talk on ALMR. Another example would</p>	



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<p><b>State Agency Radios</b></p>	<p>be if you are in a trooper post that does not have good coverage inside the building, but you have Wi-Fi access in there, you could have your radio programmed to use that Wi-Fi to get into the system, as well.</p> <p>4. Scott reminded the other State of Alaska agencies to work with his radio shop on getting quotes for radios or parts and materials to repair them. He emphasized to them to make sure to work with them, so they can make sure agencies get the right feature sets required and get the right programming done and that they are consolidating purchases to get as good a deal as they can for everybody.</p> <p>John asked if there were any questions from Scott and hearing none moved on to the User Council representative updates.</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 was not present for the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>User Council Representative Reports</b></p>	<p><b>Represented Areas</b></p>	<p><b>Action Items Assigned</b></p>
<p><b>SOA DOT</b></p> <p><b>SOA DPS</b></p> <p><b>SOA All Others</b></p>	<p>John moved on to the user Council representative updates and started the State of Alaska component with DOT.</p> <p>1. Mr. Henry Cole stated he had nothing to add at this time.</p> <p>2. For DPS, John stated he did not know if Lieutenant Endres was on, but he had no further updates either.</p> <p>3. Mr. Scott Nelsen advised he had no new updates and Mr. Karl Edwards stated he had nothing to add.</p>	
<p><b>DOD US Army Installations</b></p> <p><b>DOD JBER</b></p> <p><b>DOD Eielson</b></p>	<p>1. John started with the U.S. Army installations but there was no representative present.</p> <p>2. MSgt Murtiff advised there was nothing for JBER.</p> <p>3. MSgt Rodriguez stated there was nothing from Eielson.</p>	





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<b>Federal Non-DOD DOI</b>	1. Mr. Robert Redington from DOI stated he had nothing.	
<b>Federal Non-DOD DOJ</b>	2. There was no response from the representative.	
<b>Federal Non-DOD All Others</b>	3. There was no response from the representative.	
<b>Munis-Central</b>	1. John stated that Miss Tammy Goggia Cockrell was not joining today, and Mr Jim Goodman called him up and was unable to meet with the council, so he moved on to the Municipalities North.	
<b>Munis-North</b>	2. Kyle Green stated there was nothing new to report.	
<b>Munis-Southeast</b>	3. John asked if Lieutenant Kalwara was online, and Sherry advised she was out of state.	
<b>New Business</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>CISA Update</b>	1. Mr. Bruce Richter from the Department of Homeland Security, CISA thanked Sherry and Paul for posting the upcoming free Alaska Cyber Security Conference information on the ALMR website and reminded the group that it will be on June 5 <sup>th</sup> at the Egan Center with also a virtual option.  John thanked Bruce for all that he does from CISA and asked if there were any questions for Bruce, other new business or even questions or comments.	
<b>User Council Action Regarding GCI Outage</b>	2. Kyle advised he had a question for Paul regarding the User Council making a motion to inform the Executive Council about the safety concerns regarding the GCI outage. He stated he was willing to do that since there was not a representative from Southeast. He asked for help understanding what actions the Executive Council would be taking with such a motion from the User Council.  Paul noted his concern was with the GCI circuit and there are a lot of issues coming up for safety, so he was thinking that if the User Council made a motion or at least brought it up to the Executive Council, what is going on that they could write a letter or something to GCI to let them know the grave dangers of having all the towers go down and dispatch centers not being able to talk to anyone. He explained when all the towers went down with the GCI circuit, if there was a firefighter or trooper down in southeast or Kodiak trying to contact their	



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	<p>dispatch center, the dispatch center would not know that the connection was down by looking at their console. Paul added that was where he was looking at, something strongly worded to GCI to let them know of what could happen.</p> <p>Kyle asked if that action from the Executive Council would encourage better communications with the ALMR Operations Office to ensure that there's better coordination.</p> <p>Paul stated that was his hope for that.</p> <p>Kyle asked to be reminded of what the date was of that outage so he can include that in my motion and Paul responded it was March 5.</p> <p>Kyle stated he would like to make a motion to have the OMO inform the ALMR Executive Council of the safety concern of an uncoordinated outage with GCI services that occurred on March 5.</p> <p>John suggested Kyle amend that motion to include sending a letter to GCI.</p> <p>Kyle agreed to amend it and stated his motion was to:</p> <p><b>“Have the OMO inform the ALMR Executive Council of the safety concern of an uncoordinated outage with GCI services that occurred on March 5, and to encourage the Executive Council to communicate with GCI of this concern.”</b></p> <p>John stated the motion was on the floor at this point.</p> <p><b>Henry seconded the motion</b> as made and asked to add a comment for discussion. He suggested it would be worth adding in the other telecommunications agencies up here, at least AT&amp;T, Verizon, and MTA, because perhaps the outage happened with GCI, but we rely on a lot of commercial services and a similar outage could happen on AT&amp;T for example, and it might just be worth expanding the scope of the communication.</p> <p>John asked for any comments on Henry's discussion.</p> <p>Kyle agreed with Henry's comment and clarified that something directed to GCI should be specific and perhaps a separate ask should be made with those other vendors to share that concern. He thought GCI should be a specific outreach by the Executive Council and the other ones could be separated out.</p>	
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	<p>Paul stated Mr. Reed would like to add something.</p> <p>Mr. David Reed said he had a question for Bruce Richter on this, if he had any information on any oversight that system would have over TSP surface within Alaska and if the circuits that went down would fall under that heading.</p> <p>Bruce advised the FCC is the regulatory authority for that, but he would be happy to make that connection and he also asked for the email direct contact for Heather Handyside who is a corporate communications director at GCI. He noted he was fully supportive of getting the Executive Council engaged, but he was thinking there could be a little quicker action if he volunteered to compose a direct email to her.</p> <p>Paul stated he would try and track down Heather's email, but they could go offline and discuss that further.</p> <p>Bruce stated he would be happy to follow up with Paul because he knows there will be some kind of delay before the Executive Council is able to meet and take any action and he thinks this is the kind of thing where just little bit of direct communication may pay off, but the information on the TSP circuit and going down is news to me so I would be happy to follow up on that as well.</p> <p>John provided Bruce with Heather Handyside's email and then requested him to get back to the discussion on the floor and opening up to other telcos. We had the first and the second on that motion, so the motion is still on the floor to have the Executive Council send an email to just GCI, are there any other discussions regarding that motion?</p> <p>Sherry asked for clarification if Bruce was suggesting putting this on hold before we approach the EC for a direct communication with GCI on this and Bruce stated not to hold anything but that he was offering to give an initial heads up and see if there can be a quicker resolution.</p> <p>John asked for any further discussions regarding the motion and asked Henry if he still would like to discuss other telcos and whether to look at amending Kyle's or possibly another motion.</p> <p>Henry stated he thought separating the two issues was fine, so GCI was obviously immediate for recent outages versus other ones that are theoretical, so he was fine</p>	
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	<p>separating them out and proceeding with the one at hand for now and was happy to leave it there.</p> <p>John asked again for any other discussion regarding the motion on floor and hearing none, stated <b>the motion was approved.</b></p> <p>Kyle asked if the Executive Council necessarily needed a motion or initiative from the council to do the outreach with the other telcos or is the ALMR Operations Office able to do that outreach without an initiative from them.</p> <p>John stated that was a good question and Sherry volunteered to take it as an action item for the OMO.</p> <p>John stated that it was a good idea to make sure that we encourage all telcos to communicate and however we write it, that hopefully it will be fairly strongly worded. He stated the floor was open for any other new business, questions, comments, even complaints, and there were none.</p>	<p><b>1. OMO to prepare correspondence to commercial telecommunications providers regarding advance notification of outages.</b></p>
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	
	John stated the next meetings are currently scheduled for April 3 and then May 1.	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	
	<p>John stated he would entertain a motion for adjournment.</p> <p><b>Motion: Adjourn the March 6 User Council meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Motion: Fire Marshall Kyle Green</b> <b>Second: Mr. John Rockwell</b></p> <p>There were no objections or further discussion and the motion passed.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned: at 2:11 p.m.</p>	