



*ALMR User Council  
Meeting Minutes*

*Date: July 3, 2024*

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
T	Berrian	Keith	Deputy Chief	Municipalities North, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue
T	Cole	Henry	Mr.	SOA DOT
U	Draves	Kayla	MSgt	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Goggia-Cockrell	Tammy	Ms.	Municipalities Central, <b>Vice Chair</b>
T	Kalwara	Erann	Ms.	Municipalities Southeast
T	Kroona	Jon	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD DOJ, FBI
T	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA
U	Nelson	James	Officer	Federal Non-DoD All Others, US Forest Service
U	Rodriguez	Joe	MSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
E	Rockwell	John	Mr.	SOA DPS, <b>Chair</b>
U	Smith	Eric	Mr.	DoD US Army - Alaska

<b>Alternate</b>				
N/A	Brown	David	Mr.	Fed Non-DoD DOJ, FBI
E	Carter	Bobby	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD All Others, TSA
N/A	Clendenin	John	Mr.	SOA DOT
N/A	Edwards	Karl	Mr.	DHS, SOA All Others
N/A	Endres	Benjamin	Lieutenant	SOA Department of Public Safety
E	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
T	Higginbotham	Dave	MSgt	DoD US Army - Alaska
U	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
U	Peace	David	Mr.	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
N/A	VACANT			Federal Non-DoD DOI
N/A	Dryden	Josh	Sgt	Municipalities Southeast



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**Supporting Staff and Guests**

T	Benzon	Daniel	Mr.	
P	Burnham	Mary	Ms.	Operations Management Office (OMO)
P	Clarke	Buckley	Mr.	SOA
P	Fahnestock	Nik	Mr.	System Manager (SMO)
P	Fussey	Paul	Mr.	Operations Manager
P	Neuman	Mark	Mr.	MOA
P	Reed	Dave	Mr.	Security Manager
P	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS-CISA
T	Ulrich	Naomi	Ms.	Motorola Solutions
T	Thometz	Tim	Mr.	iCom America

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Call to Order</b>	Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell called the meeting to order at 1:32 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.  Ms. Erann Kalwara, Mr. Bruce Richter, MSgt Chris Higginbotham, Mr. Daniel Bazon, Ms. Naomi Ulrich, and Mr. Tim Thometz joined the meeting after the roll was taken	
<b>Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements</b>	No guests or special announcements.	
<b>Previous Meeting Minutes</b>	Tammy 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.  Tammy requested a motion and a second to approve the meeting minutes.  <b>Motion: Approve the June 5 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>



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	<p>Tammy asked Mr. Paul Fussey if there were any updates to the Issues and Risk Log.</p> <p>Paul briefed that item UC95, regarding MSgt. Kayla Draves' appointment letter was received on June 24<sup>th</sup> from Colonel Meerstein and this item has been closed.</p> <p>Paul also noted that item UC96 was added on June 27<sup>th</sup> because notification was received from Mr. Robert Redington stating he was retiring as of June 28 and no replacement at this time has been found. This item is open, and work is being done to get a replacement.</p> <p>Tammy asked if there were any questions concerning the Issues and Risks Log. No comments were heard.</p>	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Updates</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
	<p>Tammy asked Paul if there were any updates to the Action Items list since the last meeting.</p> <p>Paul briefed that action item 1 will continue to stay on the list until the APX NXT radios arrive and that ALMR is still standing by for federal approval and nothing has been updated at this time.</p> <p>For action items 2 and 3, Paul stated he did receive some feedback from the User Council Chairperson, other individuals and the letters will be sent out on Friday since tomorrow is a holiday. He added the letters will be going out to the carriers asking them to coordinate with ALMR whenever they are trying to shut down or do any updates on their circuits so there are not any issues of towers dropping down with the microwave backhaul. Paul stated those two items will be closed out by next month.</p> <p>Tammy inquired if there were any questions regarding the Action Items list. No comments were heard.</p>	
<b>Operations Management Office</b>	<b>Mr. Paul Fussey, Operations Manager</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>Training</b>	<p>1. Paul noted that Mr. Dan Nelson has finished the Regulations and Requirements video for the July training video and reminded everybody the ALMR website has been updated and it is a lot more user friendly to access the videos. Once again, he recommended that everyone take a look at it.</p>	



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<p><b>Outreach</b></p>	<p>2. Paul briefed outreach work on the membership agreement is taking place, and Ms. Mary Burnham has been sending out emails for membership agreement signatures and also verifying point of contact (POC) information. He requested if agencies received an email from Mary asking for verification on members' latest POC emails and phone numbers, to please send a reply. Paul noted there has been no response yet from 27 members, so work is being done to try to get in touch with them so they can get their membership agreements signed. He added membership agreements with the cost share amounts have been sent to the DoD, Federal non-DoD agencies, and ALMR is waiting on signatures from some of the DoD agreements and some Federal non-DoD, State, and municipality signed agreements have started to be received.</p>	
<p><b>Upgrades</b></p>	<p>3. Paul noted the Motorola team continues to install Juniper routers around the state, and Motorola personnel are conducting the TDMA ATPs this week by going around, making sure that the Juniper routers are working as advertised, so that when they are ready to switch to TDMA, everything is ready to go. He stated there have not been any issues reported so that is positive and then, hopefully, weather dependent, ALMR is still looking at the time frame of September to be completed with the Juniper router and TDMA upgrades. Paul noted for Nik's team, they have completed 11 PMIs for June, which included both drivable and helicopter sites and as they get this nice weather and in between all the wildfires, they will be sending the helicopters up to try to finish up those sites, too.</p> <p>Paul commented that the Executive Council meeting has been moved to July 25<sup>th</sup>, so please remember to update your calendar.</p> <p>Paul stated he received an upgrade update today from the Civil Engineering Squadron (CES) that they have gone to the R1 North site to inspect the batteries for replacement. They have told the Personal Wireless Communications System (PWCS) management that they will be able to complete the battery upgrade for R1 North. He added that CES will be working with Mr. Rose on the progress and when the generator connection to commercial powers integrated, but there is not a timeframe mentioned. However, they just let Mr. Rose know that CES will be able to complete that work for R1 North.</p>	
<p><b>June Document Reviews</b></p>	<p>4. Paul mentioned that the June document reviews that have been completed were the Risk Management Plan; the Technology Policy and Procedure; the Standard Channel Naming Conventions Policy and Procedure; the Concept of</p>	



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	<p>Operation (CONOP); and the Operations and Maintenance Organizational Chart.</p> <p>Paul inquired if there were any questions before he moved on to the metrics brief, and Deputy Chief Keith Berrian said yes, he had a question.</p> <p>Keith asked if when Paul is saying R1 North is he talking about Birch Hill.</p> <p>Paul said that R1 North is on JBER and there are two battery projects that are being reviewed. Birch Hill, which is up in Keith's area, in Zone 2 and R1 North, which is down here in Zone 1, at JBER.</p> <p>Keith stated that at some point, he would like to talk about the issues they had at the end of June with Birch Hill.</p> <p>Paul responded that he had some notes he was going to talk about towards the end of his brief. Paul then asked if there were any other questions and hearing none moved onto the metrics.</p>	
<p><b>June System Metrics</b></p>	<p>5. Paul briefed that looking at the calls, there were 1,576,633 calls last month. The monthly push to talks were 2,580,765. He added the monthly busies were 856, which was only .0005% and the subscriber counts were up a little bit from last month at 31,656.</p> <p>Paul stated the sites below three 9s, were 11 which included Haines, Hope, Lion's Head, Pillar Mountain, Saddle Mountain, Sitka, Skagway, Summit Lake, Sunnahae, Wolcott, and Women's Bay. He mentioned a lot of the sites were below three 9s due to the PMIs and that is due to the work that Nik and his team have been doing. Paul noted that for Pillar Mountain and Women's Bay, the state shop is working on the microwave configuration, just regular maintenance, nothing out of the ordinary.</p> <p>Paul noted the website had 84% of new users looking at the website, which is very encouraging.</p>	
<p><b>Other Items</b></p>	<p>Paul asked if there were any questions on the metrics, hearing none Paul moved on to the Other Items.</p> <p>6. Paul stated the OMO (Operations Management Office) received the yearly contract renewal, which is effective as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p>Paul briefed he had completed the monthly security check and offsite inspection on June 10<sup>th</sup>.</p>	



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	<p>Paul noted the ALMR Newsletter is complete and will be sent out to everyone on July 15<sup>th</sup>, and hard copies will be sent to all the legislative contacts for Juneau and Washington D.C.</p> <p>Paul commented, as Keith mentioned before, Zone 2 went offline on June 27 due to commercial power failure. He noted that the Edge routers, after being connected to the side without power, have been moved to the operating side of the battery backup until new batteries are installed. Paul briefed that Nik had his team go up after what happened and because the power company, DOYON, had a turbine failure which resulted in the Birch Hill master site losing power. Due to the already existing issues with the battery plant not being replaced both Edge 1 and 2 routers lost power, which brought all of Zone 2 into site trunking mode. Paul added, after about 10 minutes, the router came back online. However, Nik and his team went up and they did move the routers over to the side of the battery pack that is still functioning, but that ALMR is still waiting for the battery plant to be replaced up in Zone 2. He asked Keith if that covered what he was looking at.</p> <p>Keith responded that his big concern is there have been multiple situations happen there over the last year or so, where Birch Hill keeps dropping offline and if that is going to be the master site for the interior there needs to be some redundancy in the power supply, so this does not continue to happen.</p> <p>Paul commented that he completely agrees and ALMR is working with the Army to get that up and running and hoping that more comments will get the ball rolling faster at Birch Hill.</p> <p>Keith noted that currently he didn't see anything on the Issues and Risk Log concerning the Birch Hill batteries. Keith also mentioned that every day he gets a system status report that states that there is an ongoing issue with service degradation from a source that is under investigation. He states they have not heard anything about this, and it is not listed in the Issues and Risk Log and he was wondering what is happening.</p> <p>Mr. Nik Fahnestock, from the System Management Office (SMO) responded to the comment by Keith regarding the service degradation from a source that is under investigation. Right now the ball is kind of in the FCC court, but essentially it is a NTIA frequency, and it is an issue that has been elevated up to their level. The SMO is waiting for them to give us feedback or take action, something along those lines. Nik stated he has been in contact with Mr. Tim Woodall, to ensure he is well informed of all of this.</p> <p>Nik also stated the Birch Hill issue is in the tracking log, it is item OP16.</p>	
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	<p>Keith stated that the item talks about B side bus, replacing the batteries, replacing the rectifier and that this has been a two year long ordeal with Birch Hill.</p> <p>Nik and Paul agreed with Keith, but Nik said they are working with the Army and can only go as fast as their maintenance personnel will allow.</p> <p>Keith apologized regarding this and said that it is nothing personal, but he is catching a lot from the end users about why is the main control system to their area, for all of the North, keeps going down. He isn't frustrated with anybody at the meeting, and he is sorry for being the squeaky wheel, but he has a lot frustrated ALMR users.</p> <p>Nik stated he completely agreed with Keith and that the SMO is getting the same thing, constant calls about the master site issue. Nik stated he does not know how to answer any better than he already has, unfortunately.</p> <p>Paul noted again that ALMR is working with the Army regarding this complaint and let Keith know that his complaint is not falling on deaf ears. He briefed that ALMR has a lot of conversations about this and the frustration of what's going on with our end users. Paul stated that Mr. Woodall, his team, and other individuals are working to try and get it rectified, but, unfortunately, this had been going on before he came onboard, but and all he can tell Keith is that he is working at it. Paul emphasized they are not ignoring complaints from Keith or any of the users up in Zone 2, and that when he does his quarterly calls to members, he is also receiving feedback. Paul would like to get this item off the plate, and it is on the Issues and Risk Log and whenever a complaint is received, he runs it up the chain, over to the powers that be at the Army, for Birch Hill.</p> <p>Keith noted he appreciates that and the time and work, but it seems like it is not moving forward, and lately it seems it is going backwards with that site. He noted their issue is that with it dropping off suddenly, they go into site trunking and then they all have to scramble to come up with a way to communicate with each other, which some of that is obviously in the end user themselves needing to have communications plans and go to help plans for all their stuff set up. However, the main system should be functioning at a higher level than it seems like it is currently.</p> <p>Keith commented that he brought this up at a previous meeting that if they are going to have issues with the system, with Birch Hill being the master site, that cannot be rectified because they have to wait on the military, maybe ALMR</p>	
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	<p>should be looking at another site as an alternative plan to move the master site to something that is not going to be slowed down continually by the response time for the military.</p> <p>Paul stated ALMR completely agrees, and they will work on that.</p> <p>Keith thanked everyone, and stated he disliked being the guy who is usually quiet to being the squeaky wheel the last couple of meetings, but it has been a crazy month and a half there.</p> <p>Nik told Keith he is fine and stated that they get similar complaints from a lot of folks.</p> <p>Paul reiterated that the User Council meetings are the member representatives time to bring up concerns, any questions, and that this is the forum to do that, so it is encouraged and what these meetings are for.</p> <p>Paul stated that this completes his report.</p>	
<p><b>System Management Office</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager</b></p>	<p><b>Action Items Assigned</b></p>
	<p>Nik briefed the Birch Hill stuff could have been partially avoided had the SMO known whoever did the initial install of those Edge routers did not install them correctly where the power supplies should have been half on one side and half on the other. Nik explained when they had that issue, within the first 10 minutes, Nik had a technician up there rectifying that issue. He stated that does not fix the battery plant side of the issue, but it does help alleviate the pain for the rest of the system, in case any issues come up later with the batteries.</p> <p>Nik stated as far as the interference, they have narrowed it down to the who, the where, the what, etc. He noted they have even added extra stuff to the channels that are being affected, ultimately the interference is put into a protected mode. The interference will be considered the last channel to be used when a call takes place. So long as there are other channels involved, those channels will not be used. That will also help alleviate any pain or frustration with the interference, as long as there is nothing new that goes on.</p> <p>Nik commented, with that, there are a lot of PMIs going on. This is the summer months, so everyone is going to see the SMO going through a lot of them. He added that they are going to try to hit as many of the hard ones as they can before it turns into the fall season.</p>	





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	Tammy asks if there are any other discussions or questions for Nik. Hearing none, the council moved to the next item.	
<b>State of Alaska</b>	<b>Mr. Buckley Clarke</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
	<p>Mr. Buckley Clarke briefed that there is not a whole lot of updates on the state side.</p> <p>Buckley noted the state is currently in their summer mode, which means lots of travel, doing a lot of preventative maintenance at the sites out there.</p> <p>Buckley commented that they are currently tracking multiple fires near multiple sites. He noted the one in the Denali area was a little over a mile away from the state's site and that there is also one near Livengood DOT that has cut off the road to reach that side if they lose power. Buckley stated there is one over off the Harding Lake area, up the north Richardson Highway that is also close to another one of their sites, and that they are tracking those fires and trying to make people aware of what that infrastructure means and why it does not need to burn up.</p> <p>Buckley briefed that the state is tracking a current microwave issue over at Kodiak that is affecting the Pillar Mountain and Women's Bay sites, which they have a trip planned for next week to go take care of that issue.</p> <p>Nik noted he had one thing to add on to Buckley's statements regarding tracking the fires and those of you that do not know that there are two methods that you can view active fires. He briefed there is an Alaskan BLM website (<a href="http://akfireinfo.com/maps">akfireinfo.com/maps</a>), or Google maps now has a Fire feature where you can see active fires and air quality and the surrounding area, or not even where you are, you can check fires in other areas like Florida.</p> <p>Tammy thanked Nik and commented that is very interesting and she will have to look that up.</p>	
<b>Department of Defense</b>	<b>Mr. Timothy Woodall</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>



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	Tammy asked if Mr. Woodall was present, which Mary confirmed that he was not in attendance. Tammy confirmed that there were no representatives for the DoD and moved on to the User Council representative updates.	
<b>User Council Representative Reports</b>	<b>Represented Areas</b>	<b>Action Items Assigned</b>
<b>SOA DOT</b>	Tammy called for updates from DOT, DPS, and all other SOA entities.	
<b>SOA DPS</b>	1. Lt. Ben Endres from DPS noted the only update would be that at the end of the fiscal year, they were able to get an order in for 54 portables. They are looking forward down the road sometime after December to get those and looking forward to hopefully getting FedRamp approval soon. Those radios have the LTE capability, which cannot be put to use without FedRamp. They are optimistically waiting for that.	
<b>SOA All Others</b>	2. Mr. Henry Cole from DOT noted that they have a research project going on to incorporate Starlink and other communications things to see if there are maybe other ways that they can get their messages out without needing the mission critical nature that ALMR provides. They have a research grant that they just received, which will be over the next 20 to 40 months that they expect to learn more.	
<b>DoD US Army Installations</b>	Tammy called for updates from the DoD components and there were no updates.	
<b>DoD JBER</b>		
<b>DOD Eielson</b>		
<b>Federal Non-DoD DOI</b>	Tammy called for updates from the Federal Non-DoD, DOI, DOJ, and all others and there were no responses.	
<b>Federal Non-DoD DOJ</b>		
<b>Federal Non-DoD All Others</b>		



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<p><b>Munis-Central</b></p> <p><b>Munis-North</b></p> <p><b>Munis-Southeast</b></p>	<p>Tammy called for updates from Munis-North and Munis-Southeast, and there were no responses.</p> <p>1. Tammy stated for Munis-Central that she had nothing other that it is a busy summer like all have indicated who have spoken, and that they have an active water rescue right now.</p>	
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<p><b>Action Items Assigned</b></p>
<p><b>Bruce Richter – CISA</b></p>	<p>Mr. Bruce Richter just wanted to share some news from the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. He stated they hosted an active shooter training course at the Anchorage Fire Training Center last week, which was very well attended by over 14 different agencies from municipal, state and federal were involved, and it's building up to an August 21 exercise at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. Bruce explained that every three years, the airport has had to do a multi casualty exercise to keep their FAA certification as an airport and usually it's been an airplane crash scenario. However, this year and they got permission to do it as an active shooter type scenario, which certainly if you look at the history around this country, it has happened in Fort Lauderdale Airport, in Los Angeles International Airport, and it has happened in the parking garage and Philadelphia Airport, so it is certainly not out of the realm of possibility here. Bruce noted it may impact ALMR because obviously it is a state agency that is on the ALMR system, but they get their medical support through Anchorage Fire. Anchorage Fire is implementing what they call a rescue task force concept where they have some additional training and some additional equipment to help more quickly with evacuating the wounded and provide triage and get that whole process going.</p> <p>Bruce recapped that the exercise at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport is August 21 and there will be more details as it transpires and there's some planning meetings still ahead, but Corporal Adam White is the superstar behind this exercise out at the Airport Fire and Police Training Department right now.</p>	



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Next Meeting	Discussion	
	<p>Tammy stated the next meetings are currently scheduled for August 14 and September 4.</p>	
Adjournment	Discussion	
	<p>Tammy stated she would entertain a motion for adjournment.</p> <p><b>Motion: Adjourn the July 3 User Council meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Motion: Deputy Chief Keith Berrian</b></p> <p><b>Second: Mr. Henry Cole</b></p> <p>There were no objections or further discussion and the motion passed.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.</p>	