



**ALASKA LAND MOBILE RADIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(A Federal, State and Municipal Partnership)**



MEMORANDUM FOR ALMR Executive Council

July 30, 2024

FROM: Operations Management Office

SUBJECT: July 25 Meeting Discussion Notes

TO: See Distribution

Executive Council Members:

Colonel Nicholas DeAngelis	Department of Defense (DoD) – Director of Communications, ANR, and ALCOM
Bradley Wayland	Alaska Federal Executive Association Assistant Federal Security Director (via teleconference)
Captain Gina Burington	Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) – Anchorage Police Department (via teleconference)
Assistant Chief Alex Boyd	Alaska Municipal League – Anchorage Fire Department (via teleconference)

ALMR Support Team Members and Guests:

Mr. John Rockwell	State of Alaska (SOA) and User Council Chair
Mr. Paul Fussey	ALMR Operations Manager
Mr. Nikalus Fahnstock	ALMR System Manager (SMO)
Mr. Scott Stormo	Alaska Public Safety Communication Services
Mr. David Reed	Information Systems Security Manager
Mr. Timothy Woodall	ALCOM PM/COR
Ms. Mary Burnham	Operations Management Office (OMO)

1. Deputy Commissioner Leon Morgan was unable to attend the meeting and had requested Mr. John Rockwell, State of Alaska (SOA)/User Council Chair, chair the meeting. However, Mr. Rockwell is not an Executive Council member, and a pro tem

was not appointed at the beginning of the meeting. The discussion began at 1:47 p.m. Mr. Rockwell thanked everyone for their patience while working through some technical difficulties.

2. Opening Statements and Other Announcements.

The new Executive Council members introduced themselves.

Colonel Nicholas DeAngelis stated it was nice to meet everybody in person and virtually. Colonel DeAngelis commented he is replacing Colonel Timothy Meerstein as Alaska Command ALCOM and J6 ANR. He also mentioned he is working with Mr. Timothy Woodall.

Captain Gina Burington commented that she is with the Anchorage Police Department, and that this is her first meeting. Captain Burington stated that she is looking forward to figuring it all out with the council.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes. The motion to approve the April 18, 2024, minutes will take place at the next Executive Council meeting on October 17.

4. Old Business.

a. State Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB). (**TABLED**) Mr. Rockwell stated that at the April meeting, Deputy Commissioner Bryan Barlow presented the subject, and Mr. Rockwell noted this item was still tabled.

Mr. Rockwell stated that the subject will probably be tabled for quite a while and explained to the new members that the SIGB is the State's Interoperability Governing Body. He stated the concept was to place everything connected to interoperability communications underneath it. Mr. Rockwell noted that meant one system to support ALMR, 911, GIS, etc. He also noted that originally Governor Bill Walker signed the administrative order (AO) to establish it, but it has since been cancelled, and work is being done with the current administration.

b. Long-term Cost Share Solution. Mr. Rockwell noted there were no updates for the meeting. Mr. Rockwell asked if there were any questions or comments, or if anybody had other ideas.

Mr. Woodall requested that Mr. Rockwell provide some background information for the new members.

Mr. Rockwell went on to explain that the council has been searching for a methodology to support ALMR long term. He noted that currently ALMR is mostly funded through State General Funds (GF) and then capital requests for large projects, which the Legislature questions. Mr. Rockwell commented that ALMR is working with the chief of

staff and other entities to come up with another way to be able to sustain the cost of ALMR.

Mr. Rockwell mentioned that one of the items ALMR has discussed is what Motorola calls SUA, which is basically a program that includes ongoing maintenance, hardware, and upgrades. He added at the next Executive Council meeting Motorola will be providing a presentation to describe the details. Mr. Rockwell noted that Mr. Paul Fussey will go into more detail during his brief.

c. Fiduciary Responsibility Documentation.

Mr. Woodall noted the shared responsibility approach is related to the primary infrastructure owners, those who own the radio towers primarily, which would be the SOA, DoD, and MOA. He went on to say that the responsibility of those agencies to fund and sustain the infrastructure has always been an expectation, it is summarily addressed in the cooperative agreement, but because we have over time experienced some issues related to people executing their responsibilities effectively and timely. Mr. Woodall stated that ALMR thought it was a good idea to move towards a fiduciary agreement or an agreement that deals with financial responsibility of the primary parties, the signatories to the SOA, and local cooperative in doing so.

Mr. Woodall briefed that ALMR reached out to the Air Force staff and the Army staff at the national level, which manages the community partnership program. He stated that the community partnership program, which was passed by Congress back in 2013, authorizes federal, state, and local government agencies to share structures and contracts, and to do so under an interagency government support agreement. Mr. Woodall explained the Air Force and Army own that process, so ALMR has reached out to them, and they are doing the coordination at the Air Force and Army levels to get that part of the program documented. Mr. Woodall commented that it will then come to the State of Alaska to go through their legal processes and put any terminology and requirements that the SOA has within the agreement. He stated that it will then go to the municipalities, which is also another infrastructure owner, to provide their input and when the process is all done the partnership would be signed by the main parties, which would then be an addendum to the standing cooperative and mutual aid agreement that was already signed by the major parties of the infrastructure, which includes SOA, DoD, and MOA.

Mr. Woodall concluded that there is nothing more to report at this time, and that the program is still at the national level, and they are working on it. He noted that it is expected that they will have an update sometime in early August.

Mr. Rockwell added that a meeting should be held to bring the members up to date. He thanked Mr. Woodall.

d. Radio Inventory (TDMA vs Non-TDMA). Mr. Rockwell asked Mr. Fussey if he could give a little background on why it is being done.

Mr. Fussey stated for the new members of the council that by December 31, 2026, all radios on the system have to be Phase II TDMA, and he noted that currently many of the radios are still FDMA. Mr. Fussey noted that the State and DOD are currently modifying the system to go to TDMA, which will double the available voice channels. Mr. Fussey said, for instance, if ALMR has a tower right now that is a three-channel site, one of those channels is a control channel, so only two people can talk at this time. He continued to say once ALMR goes to TDMA, it will double the capacity for people to talk on there.

Mr. Fussey briefed that he has been reaching out to all the individual members and sending them emails to double check to see where the members are at in the progress of updating their radios. He noted that recently, at the request of the state OMB and User Council Chair, he was sending out forms to all the state agencies and local municipalities requesting an accurate account of all their radios that are TDMA or need a flash to the software to become TDMA, and then any that need to be replaced which are FDMA radios. Mr. Fussey noted that 114 emails have been sent out to the agencies and he has only received 20 responses. He stated it is a struggle, and with the cutoff date of August 9, he will be reaching out to all those agencies again.

Mr. Fussey commented that is the crux of where he is at, and he is trying to make sure that everybody is putting in for money to get the upgrade and money for radios. He noted that there recently was a grant that was fire department centric through Alaska Municipal League, and 25 fire departments joined that grant to get money for radios.

Mr. Fussey noted this item will stay in Old Business for the Executive Council up until December 31, 2026.

Mr. Rockwell thanked Mr. Fussey for his brief and asked if there were any questions for Mr. Fussey regarding this topic.

Mr. Rockwell said he would like to clarify that when Mr. Fussey said that all radios have to be TDMA capable, that ALMR does have the option and infrastructure to have non-TDMA radios work on the system after that date. Mr. Rockwell noted that ALMR is not going to say the system is going to crash if everybody does not have a TDMA radio. He recognized that there are some limitations that other entities do not have funding, not even money for gas for their vehicles. Mr. Rockwell stated he understands that some have taken advantage of the grants as well as doing some other work for other state agencies to secure some funding, which some small agencies are unable to do at this time. Mr. Rockwell reiterated that, just to clarify, the upgrade date set by ALMR, who is strongly encouraging upgrades, should be completed by the end of December 2026 for the members that have FDMA radios, which are 15 years old. He advises to take advantage of whatever funding mechanisms you can. Mr. Rockwell wanted to ensure that nobody misunderstands the fact that if for some reason they cannot upgrade, first of all please work with us, but your radios will still be able to work for a period of time after that date.

Mr. Rockwell inquired if there were any questions for Mr. Fussey regarding this topic, and hearing none he moved onto the next topic regarding the BDA at the courthouse.

e. Fairbanks Rabinowitz Courthouse BDA. Mr. Rockwell stated that in the April meeting, Deputy Commissioner Barlow advised that he was sure that he was going to be able to obtain funding.

Mr. Rockwell briefed that it is in the \$375,000 realm for that project, but unfortunately that has not happened yet. He stated that the State of Alaska is transferring budget years, and along with that, a lot of discussion on antennas regarding funds came up. Mr. Rockwell noted that the issue is still being discussed, and the State understands the need, but, unfortunately, it is unable to support the project at this time. Mr. Rockwell asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Woodall stated he did have a comment, which relates to the last meeting. He stated that it will relate back to TDMA as well, but since the council is addressing bi-directional amplifiers (BDAs), he thought Motorola attended the last meeting and there was a question about those that have a BDA for in building coverage. Mr. Woodall inquired would they need to upgrade that equipment to somehow facilitate TDMA emission levels over FDMA. Mr. Woodall stated he was unsure if ALMR was tracking so that if yes, then that needs to be added to what is being communicated to those people that they need to upgrade their subscribers, their mobile units, and consoles that they to be able to do so. Mr. Woodall commented that this is also a question that needs to be addressed, and if BDA needs to be updated to operate TDMA, or do TDMA radios communicate through it, then that would be a clarification that needs to happen as soon as possible so people would have time to work that into their financing, budget, and budget processes.

Mr. Nikalus Fahnestock commented that for BDAs, he believed manufacturers are probably going to handle it a little differently. Mr. Fahnestock would highly anticipate that BDAs would need to be upgraded in one form or fashion. He stated he is not talking about just a general garbage in/out type amplifier, it is a very specific type of waveform and emission between TDMA and FDMA.

Mr. Woodall stated there is a big difference in antennas and different transmitter within the BDA process.

Mr. Fahnestock noted again that every manufacturer might be different, and maybe they accounted for that, and it is a matter of just flipping a switch or something, but he would definitely check in on it.

Mr. Woodall asked Mr. Fussey if he was addressing that when sending out emails to the BDA owners.

Mr. Fussey responded that he has not but that he can reach out. Mr. Fussey noted that he has been talking with the State Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal, and also Bart Meinhardt, who is the Fire Marshal for the City of Anchorage, on where BDAs are and who owns them. He stated that he is still working on that process because there are

some that are out there that ALMR is not aware of, especially down in the Kenai Peninsula, where there are a couple that he has heard about and he is trying to track down the owners so he can contact them.

Mr. Woodall noted that he could think of one BDA, which runs through the Whittier Tunnel.

Mr. Fussey briefed that he has spoken to the Fire Chief, Mike Sweet, for the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel (a.k.a. Whittier Tunnel), who is supposed to get the information back to Mr. Fussey. Mr. Fussey also spoke to Mr. Casey Cook with the valley for the one in the Menard Center.

Mr. Rockwell thanked everyone for their input and moved onto the next topic.

f. Motorola Operations Services Contract. Mr. Rockwell asked whether Mr. Scott Stormo or Mr. Woodall had any updates.

Mr. Stormo stated that other than the fact that ALMR has met with Motorola regarding the System Upgrade Agreement (SUA), which may or may not factor in because it is purchasing those capital requirements, or that SUA is available through our current contract, but as we do a follow-on contract that information would need to be incorporated in that. ALMR has not yet gathered different DoD representatives with the state representatives to kind of put together the initial requirements for what will be done going forward.

Mr. Woodall inquired if there is a timeline when the contract statement of work process will begin.

Mr. Stormo responded that it can begin this quarter. Procurement has not felt that we, as in the state and DoD, is not there yet, but Mr. Stormo thinks that it can get started this quarter, and they, as in the state and DoD, can try to get it moving through the fall.

Mr. Woodall asked Mr. Stormo, for those that are new on the Executive Council, if Mr. Stormo could let them know the period of performance for the existing contract and when a new contract would need to be in place.

Mr. Stormo noted the last option year for the existing contract would end in June 2026, and that is the last year of a 10-year effort, which would mean a new one would need to be in place before that.

Mr. Woodall inquired if there are any options to extend that timeline by six months, if we, as in the state and DoD, run into any award issues.

Mr. Stormo stated that it should be able to if the state has the ability to do that, and if it has to happen, but he does not anticipate that happening at the moment.

Mr. Woodall asked if this will not be a sole source, this will be a completed approach.

Mr. Stormo noted that is not necessarily known yet as to which avenue would end up happening.

Mr. Rockwell thanked Mr. Stormo and Mr. Woodall for the qualifying questions and answers. He noted that when the use of acronyms, like BDAs, and the contracts, new people are like which one, what are they talking about, is it software or hardware or both, support services, but essentially it is everything that Mr. Rockwell just mentioned, by the way. He commented that the contract that we, as in Motorola, the state, and DoD, currently have is with Motorola, and sub-contractor Bering Straits Technologies, to be able to support and maintain some of the infrastructure and software, as well as they manage the help desk. Mr. Rockwell asked Mr. Fahnestock if he wanted to add some other things that are being done by him to the contract to help support everything.

Mr. Fahnestock added it includes the maintenance of the radio frequency (RF) sites and the master sites.

Mr. Stormo noted it is just the Motorola equipment.

Mr. Fahnestock also added the security of the systems, subscriber requests, adding and removing, etc., but he did not want to get too deep into it.

Mr. Rockwell commented that he wanted to note that as Mr. Stormo mentioned this if for the Motorola, which if you walk into a master site there are racks dedicated to the Motorola push-to-talk side plus other parts and pieces to this, everything from batteries to generators, towers, etc. that need to be maintained and supported.

Mr. Stormo made a correction that it is not the master site but an RF site. The point is they do not climb the towers, cut the brush, plow the road to get to the site, test or change the batteries, refuel the generators, check to generators if it does not start, that is the infrastructure owner. He noted the City of Anchorage has staff that takes care of their sites, the State of Alaska takes care of its sites, and the DoD takes care of their sites.

Mr. Fahnestock stated that it is all one team, one fight and if he or his team can help with something they will, or he will find someone that can.

Mr. Rockwell asked if there were any questions regarding the contract, support, and time frame.

g. Tudor Road Electrical Work. Mr. Rockwell asked if Mr. Scott Stormo had any updates and if he could explain what about this topic.

Mr. Stormo briefed that this building, which houses the Alaska Public Safety Communication Services (APSCS) offices and ALMR, has needed a power upgrade and it is not going as straightforward as the proposal initially was, and now Chugach Electric has said they have to change out the transformer. He noted the work is currently paused

and some work on it for the moment, the battery plants are being changed out for the master site to make sure it is rock solid in the backup system. Mr. Stormo also commented that it is not looking as if Chugach Electric is going to be able to get this on the schedule so it could get pushed off to next year, but the site will end up with a new transformer and new power system at the building to modernize the electrical system and put power in places where it is needed that is not currently here. The intent was there would be no downtime or impact to ALMR and it would be planned to not have that happen and everyone is working to make sure that does not intentionally and even accidentally happen.

Mr. Rockwell thanked Mr. Stormo and noted that he knows that the planning for this has been going on for quite a while. Mr. Rockwell also wanted to thank some of the other infrastructure owners that have offered to bring over generators and different equipment pieces to help support.

5. User Council Update.

Mr. Rockwell briefed that he did not have much of an update and that the last meetings main focus has been around the FDMA to TDMA upgrades as well as the system support that they have, and how they would like to grow it, how to fund it, and how to encourage everyone to make sure that they meet the upgrade timeline. As far as the User Council itself, Mr. Rockwell believed that there were positions still open and asked Ms. Mary Burnham to recall what they are.

Ms. Burnham stated that only one position is vacant and that is the alternate position for the U.S. Department of the Interior, which Mr. Robert Redington recently retired from.

Mr. Rockwell thanked Ms. Burnham and stated that was all for the update as well.

6. Operations Management Office.

Mr. Fussey briefed the following topics:

- a. Training and outreach. Mr. Dan Nelson, with training, finished up the July training video, which was regulations and requirements. This focused on if a radio is lost, how members report it, and how members keep track of the radio. For those that are new council members, Mr. Fussey noted that Mr. Nelson lives in Kenai and works for Wostmann and Associates as part of the OMO, and that Mr. Nelson creates training vignettes, usually 5 to 6 minutes long that are on the ALMR website. Everyone can go on there and take a look, and every month another training video is uploaded with topics that are received from members during outreach communications and by talking to different agencies, who let us know what they are interested in or what they want to see more training on.

Also, for outreach, Ms. Burnham has been sending out the reminder emails for membership agreement signatures, and as the agreements are coming in Mr.

Stormo, Mr. Bradley Wayland, and myself have been signing them. Mr. Fussey noted to keep in mind that the membership agreements are only good for the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), so if you have one for Ms. Burnham make sure to sign it and get it back, however, it is understood that every agency operates a little bit differently. Some, for example, have to wait for a borough meeting for the mayor to sign, etc. He stated that there are still 24 members that have not been heard from and the cost share amounts have been paid by the DoD, but there are a few that need a signature. Mr. Fussey noted that Ms. Terri Warren from the APSCS office let him know that the DoD members have sent their invoices already for this year.

b. Project status update

The Motorola team continues to install Juniper routers in anticipation of TDMA around the state, and there are only three (3) left for the state sites and ten (10) left for the DoD sites, that is not counting all the dispatch centers this is just RF sites. Mr. Fussey noted that right now the upgrade is expected to be completed around September and that is after the testing is all done to make sure everything is TDMA capable.

Mr. Fussey stated that Mr. Fahnestock and his team has been working diligently, going out and doing preventative maintenance inspections (PMIs), and they have completed 20 PMIs for July, and those include both drivable and helicopter sites, unfortunately, there were a couple of RF towers they were trying to get to, but the with the weather having been rain and fog they were unable to get there.

Mr. Fussey noted that Mr. Jeremy Rose, with Motorola and in charge of the DoD sites on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER), and the Civil Engineering (CE) squadron went over to the R1 North site, inspected it for the battery replacement, and the CE squadron told the Personal Wireless Communication System (PWCS) that they can complete the project, and that Mr. Rose is keeping Mr. Fussey up to date on that, so the CE is working to get a quote to replace the batteries and work that is being done for the building generator connection. Mr. Fussey noted there are a few issues with the generator set up to the R1 North site, but the civil engineering squadron is working with PWCS to fix that issue.

c. June system metrics

Mr. Fussey commented that he will go over the June metrics, since the July metrics are not completed yet since it is not the end of the month. He noted the monthly calls were 1,576,633, which is higher than May but a little bit less than last year, still a robust system. He went on to brief the monthly push-to-talks were 2,588,765 and the monthly busies were 856, however, after looking at the push-to-talks and the total call systems on there, ALMR was only at 0.005% busy, so with the amount of calls that are getting a push-to-talk there are a few busies in there but it is negligible. Mr. Fussey stated that the sites below three nines dropped to 11 this month, and on the next slide it is easy to see why there are 11,

since Mr. Stormo's and Mr. Fahnestock's teams have been performing a lot of PMIs, and looking at the PMIs there are Haines, Hope, Lion's Head, Saddle Mountain, Sitka, Skagway, Summit Lake, Sunnahae, and Wolcott.

Mr. Fussey commented that Pillar Mountain and Women's Bay, there were issues with the microwave configuration, so Mr. Stormo's team has done a phenomenal job going out to Kodiak. Once there are issues with them, the troopers, police, and fire departments in those areas can only talk locally, and they could not be dispatched out of Fairbanks. Mr. Fussey noted that Chief Putney from Kodiak Police Department was kind enough to let the troopers and the other entities, through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), were being dispatched out of Kodiak itself. Mr. Fussey stated that Mr. Stormo's team got parts out on the ferry, sent teams and trucks, and they were able to go in and replace the microwave dish, and now the site is back up and dispatch is running out of Fairbanks. Overall, he noted the site was down for about a week due to weather issues and water.

Mr. Stormo wanted to comment on the push-to-talks in general and when looking at the numbers and doing all the math each year for air (talk) time, it was noted that some of the larger agencies like the troopers and dispatch centers had push-to-talks that were down significantly. Mr. Stormo commented that Mr. Fussey spoke with the troopers, at least in particular, maybe the FBI, and somebody else, that they noticed a big change and there is a good explanation for it. Mr. Stormo didn't think it was ever pointed out to the community that the numbers are lower, and it is not a miscalculation in our count, but it is actually some procedures have changed.

Mr. Fussey went on to brief that they started looking at the numbers, and as you can see, it has dropped quite a bit from last year, about 400,000 push-to-talk. He stated that they, as in Mr. Stormo, Mr. Fahnestock and himself, as operations manager, started to reach out to these different agencies and talked to them. Mr. Fussey did not go into specific numbers but the Department of Public Safety, in particular, are down a lot of positions and because of that it changed how they do some of their patrols. The Chugach National Forest numbers were down quite a bit because of vacancies. He noted that the state park rangers are another entity that has a large number of vacancies, but they have just had a bunch of recruits graduate from the academy, which will boost their numbers. Mr. Fussey commented that due to the large vacancies, there are not as many people, and they are not going to talk on the radio as much. He added that the state parks used to issue a radio to all their campground hosts, but they do not do that anymore, so that is 25 to 30 campground hosts that no longer have radios, which with all of that going on it will account for the numbers dropping at the agencies. Mr. Fussey summarized that if there is a larger number of vacancies, there would be less radio traffic on there, so it is not that the system cannot handle it, but it is just nationwide issue that agencies have vacancies, and that is what is driving the numbers down.

Mr. Stormo asked if there were some procedures that the troopers were changing and Mr. Fussey stated that he did not want to go into too much detail, just that because of the large vacancies, they have changed how they do some things.

Mr. Stormo added one other comment about the number of busies, in that busies are not generally a system wide problem, it is an area wide problem, for example if there is a wildfire, an accident on the highway, etc. He then said when looking at the numbers, you think that is not a lot of busies so why go to TDMA, but what it is trying to do is not solve the system wide percentage of vacancies but it is trying to solve the challenge of the wildfire or accident on the highway scenario that completely busies out that site, or even an exercise that the DoD is doing up around the Donnelly Dome area. Mr. Stormo stated this will go a long way towards remediating those site type issues and short of trying to find extra frequencies to do extra channels or adding channels, TDMA is a much more efficient and modern way to increase out top channel capacity at those locations. He noted most of the systems around the state and the country are going TDMA, and ALMR is just kind of modernizing to that.

d. Other Items

Mr. Fussey briefed that he completed the monthly security check on July 15 and it is required every month for the off-site inspection.

He stated that the ALMR Insider newsletter was completed, sent out on July 15, posted on the website, and printed out to send a hard copy to every legislature in Juneau and Washington D.C.. This is done quarterly, and can be seen on the ALMR website, which has the current and all previous ones posted.

7. New Business.

8. Next Meeting.

Mr. Rockwell stated that the next meeting is scheduled for October 17 at 1:30 p.m. at the Alaska Public Safety Communication Services' conference room, 5900 E Tudor Road.

9. The meeting discussion ended at 2:28 p.m.

Distribution:

SOA/DPS - Deputy Commissioner Leon Morgan
USNORTHCOM/ALCOM J6 - Colonel Nicholas DeAngeles
AFEA - Mr. Bradley Wayland
MOA - Captain Gina Burington
AML - Assistant Chief Alexander Boyd
SOA ASPCS SATS/ALMR - Mr. Scott Stormo
SOA DPS - Mr. John Rockwell
ALMR OMO - Mr. Paul Fussey

ALCOM/J64 - Mr. Timothy Woodall
MOA - Mr. Trygve Erickson
SOA ASPCS SATS - Mr. Buckley Clark