



ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: September 4, 2024

1. Attendance.

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

Primary				
U	Atkinson	Ross	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD DOI, BLM-Alaska Fire Service
E	Berrian	Keith	Deputy Chief	Municipalities North, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue
T	Cole	Henry	Mr.	SOA DOT
T	Draves	Kayla	MSgt	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Goggia-Cockrell	Tammy	Ms.	Municipalities Central, Vice Chair
T	Kalwara	Erann	Ms.	Municipalities Southeast
T	Kroona	Jon	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD DOJ, FBI
E	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA
U	Nelson	James	Officer	Federal Non-DoD All Others, US Forest Service
T	Rodriguez	Joe	MSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
T	Rockwell	John	Mr.	SOA DPS, Chair
T	Smith	Eric	Mr.	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
E	Clendenin	John	Mr.	SOA DOT
T	Edwards	Karl	Mr.	DHS, SOA All Others
T	Endres	Benjamin	Lieutenant	SOA Department of Public Safety
U	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
P	Goodman	Jim	Mr.	Municipalities Central, MatSu Borough
N/A	Hammer	Nathan	SMSgt	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
N/A	Herman	Mary	Captain	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Higginbotham	Dave	MSgt	DoD US Army - Alaska
N/A	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
N/A	Peace	David	Mr.	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
	VACANT			Federal Non-DoD DOI
N/A	Dryden	Josh	Sgt	Municipalities Southeast



ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: September 4, 2024

Supporting Staff and Guests

P	Burnham	Mary	Ms.	Operations Management Office (OMO)
P	Fahnestock	Nik	Mr.	System Manager (SMO)
T	Farrell	Kevin	Mr.	Motorola Solutions
T	Flores	Mickey	Mr.	BK Technologies
P	Fussey	Paul	Mr.	Operations Manager
T	Long	Josh	Mr.	JVCKenwood
C	Marlow	Ryan	Mr.	State of Alaska (SOA)
P	Neuman	Mark	Mr.	Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)
P	Reed	Dave	Mr.	Security Manager
P	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS - CISA
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies
T	Sasai	Richard	Mr.	Motorola Solutions
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	State of Alaska (SOA)
T	Thometz	Tim	Mr.	iCom America
P	Ulrich	Naomi	Ms.	Motorola Solutions

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
Call to Order	Mr. John Rockwell called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum of User Council (UC) members in attendance for the meeting. LT Erann Kalwara, MSgt David Higginbotham, Mr Mickey Flores, and Tim Thometz joined the meeting after the roll was taken.	
Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements	No guests or special announcements noted.	
Previous Meeting Minutes	John proceeded to the next agenda item, which was the review and approval of the July meeting minutes. He stated he would entertain a motion to approve. Motion: Approve the August 14 monthly User Council meeting minutes. Motion: Mr. Henry Cole Second: Mr. Jim Goodman John asked the council members if there were any updates, questions, concerns, additions, or deletions to the August 14 th meeting minutes. Hearing none, John stated the motion was approved.	



ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: September 4, 2024

Issues & Risks Log	Review	Resolution
	John moved on to the next agenda item which was the review of the Issues and Risk Log. He stated that he believed there was only one update to the active Issues and Risk Log. John noted that Mr. Nik Fahnestock briefed that the item regarding the Birch Hill Master Site B system failure was completed and stated that this issue can be removed from the issues log and consider it closed.	
Action Items	Updates	Action Items Assigned
	<p>John noted that the next item on the agenda was the Action Item List, and that there is only one item which is a carryover from the October 2023 meeting. He commented that the council would like to have an update and demonstration of the technology of the APX NXT radios, and they are waiting for that until they get closer to Smart Connect before asking Motorola to provide some highlights.</p> <p>John inquired if there were any questions on either the Issues and Risk Log or the Action Items.</p> <p>Mr. Scott Stormo noted that he and Nik are going to do some follow-up with the Department of Defense (DoD) on the Northern Zone power system to ensure everything is complete there.</p> <p>John stated that he appreciated the comments from Scott, and asked if Scott would respond back with an update. He noted that he was moving on to the Operations Management overview and is turning the meeting over to Mr. Paul Fussey.</p>	
Operations Management Office	Mr. Paul Fussey, Operations Manager	Action Items Assigned
Training	1. Paul briefed that the September training video vignette is Subscriber Unit Maintenance, which has been posted on the ALMR website. Paul noted that Mr. Dan Nelson is working on a few other items for training, but for right now the newest video is out there.	



***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: September 4, 2024

<p>Outreach</p>	<p>2. Paul briefed that for Outreach it has been a little busy. He noted the Operations Management Office (OMO), and System Management Office (SMO) are going to meet with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) tech assistant team on the 10th of September.</p> <p>Paul stated he attended the monthly Alaska Peace Officers Association (APOA) meeting on 3 September and that he is continuing to conduct the quarterly outreach emails for all organizations. He noted every group should have received an email from him with the subscriber numbers asking what radios they have that are Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), which needed a flash upgrade, and what needs to be replaced.</p> <p>Paul noted that the OMO finalized the membership agreement for the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol that morning, and that Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) will be working with them to get their individual ALMR numbers and start putting radios on the system.</p> <p>Paul briefed that on 23 August that he, the SMO, the State Fire Marshal, Anchorage Fire Marshal, and Alaska Public Safety Communications Service (APSCS) engineers met with individuals from G-WAVE Solutions regarding the new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and International Fire Code (IFC) codes for the installation, inspection, and acceptance testing of Bi-Directional Antenna (BDA) and Distributed Antenna System (DAS) systems. He noted that the national fire codes and international fire codes have had a lot of updates to them with the BDAs and going through the installation of them, and they have-to-have official paperwork for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of any organization that is using radio signals and licenses and acceptance testing of them. Paul added that the new regulations on BDAs mandate they have to be inspected at least once a year.</p>	
<p>Upgrades</p>	<p>3. Paul briefed that ALMR has another meeting set up on 5 September to discuss the upgrade project. Nik's team has conducted 7 preventative maintenance inspections (PMIs) for August; however, it has been a very busy summer even with all the rain and high winds and they have completed 34 PMIs since 1 July.</p> <p>Paul also noted that the OMO and SMO are going to start contacting agencies that currently have all TDMA radios and are going to look at beginning to activate their talk groups to TDMA. They are going to do it slowly and not system wide, which is another reason why they are asking who has TDMA radios. He commented they are going to reach out to the</p>	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>smaller groups, start out small and activate the talk groups and start watching to see if there are any issues or any hiccups. Paul stated when the groups start working on the TDMA system, the OMO and SMO want to make sure that it is a smooth transition, which is why they are not going to do it system wide, just small groups at a time. He stated one thing they are going to make sure that the groups have enabled their radios, and the phase two voice capable box is checked on the programming software, and they are also going to monitor the groups for a short time period and as things look like it is progressing then they will start reaching out to other groups and activating them on TDMA.</p> <p>Paul stated that he knows a lot of folks think that December 31, 2026, is the start for TDMA, but it is not, since the upgrade is pretty much done, the OMO and SMO are going to start contacting groups to start going to TDMA. Paul also noted one other thing on the system upgrade is that he has had some agencies saying that their Frequency-Division Multiple Access (FDMA) radios are going to be kicked off the system on December 31, 2026. Paul commented that he wanted to direct people to the ALMR website "Approved Equipment" page where the "TDMA Transition Plan/Policy" from April 13, 2022, hyperlink is located, and it has been on the website for quite a while.</p> <p>Paul briefed for the record that the last two paragraphs of the TDMA Transition Plan that was adopted by the User Council reads as follows: 1) "The ALMR User Council directed by the OMO and SMO to proceed with the transition of TDMA for the ALMR system. This transition will result in a responsibility for all member agencies to transition to TDMA Phase 2 compatible subscriber units. No non-TDMA compliant radios are able to be added to the system as announced in January 2021." 2) "All agencies will take immediate steps to plan for the replacement of any non-TDMA radios, which may no longer be supported by the manufacturer. It is the goal of the user council that all non-TDMA radios be replaced by member agencies by December 31, 2026. Further, it is the intent of the user council to not remove FDMA radios that may still be in use on that date." He reiterated that this policy/procedure in the plan has been in effect since April 13, 2022.</p> <p>Paul asked if there were any questions on this topic before he proceeded to the next item.</p> <p>John thanked Paul for clarifying that and that he knows there have been discussions and he thinks he was probably one of the first people that said that he heard ALMR is going to kick members off if they are not done.</p> <p>Paul said, he just wanted to put it on record.</p>	
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ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>MSgt. Kayla Draves from Joint Base Elmendorf – Richardson (JBER) asked if they are not getting kicked off on 1 January 2027, is there a date of when that will happen.</p> <p>Paul commented that the goal is to have the radios TDMA by December 31, 2026, but ALMR realized it may not happen, and that is why it was put in the policy back in 2022, that not everybody will be able to find money to transition over, and since ALMR is a public safety system they are not going to go around and turn off radios, especially for the military, police, fire, and EMS, but keep in mind that if one FDMA radio is on that talk group and on that system, then it defeats the whole purpose of having TDMA. He stated it can be discussed later on but for right now the goal is to have everybody transition over to TDMA, but it was never the goal to kick everybody off.</p> <p>Kayla responded that, that works, and she thanked Paul.</p>	
<p>August Document Reviews</p>	<p>4. Paul continued to the document reviews and mentioned that the Cybersecurity Policy and Procedure, Privileged User Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure, and the Spectrum Licensing and Management Policy and Procedure have all been updated and they have been posted on the ALMR website.</p>	
<p>August System Metrics</p>	<p>5. Paul briefed that the monthly groups and individual calls were at 1,448,998; the monthly push to talks were 2,389,460; and the monthly busies were at 430, which was a pretty good drop from last month. He noted the subscriber counts were 32,240.</p> <p>Paul stated the sites below three 9s dropped down to 11, and it can be seen that there were PMIs, router upgrades, power outages, and then also the GCI circuit went down.</p> <p>Paul asked if there were any questions on the metrics, hearing none, Paul moved on to the Other Items.</p>	
<p>Other Items</p>	<p>6. Paul noted that the quarterly security patch was completed on August 28 and 29.</p> <p>Paul briefed that the SMO and OMO completed an Acceptance Test Procedure (ATP) for the Viking Kenwood Mobile on 20 August and they will also conduct an ATP with L3 Harris for the week of September 9th.</p> <p>Paul commented for anyone that was not aware, the officials with Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport conducted a</p>	



ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>mass casualty exercise that involved an active shooter scenario. Paul noted that Nik and his team ran several reports to see how the ALMR system handled the extra radio traffic for that large exercise. There was a spike in site utilization compared to the prior week; however, the number of busies were actually lower than the previous week. He stated the ALMR system once again handled the large uptick in radio traffic for the large exercise.</p> <p>Paul stated that this completes his report, pending any questions from the group.</p> <p>John thanked Paul and asked if there were any questions. John did say he had a quick one and asked earlier on when Paul was talking about outreach, Paul said either that Paul was meeting with or met with the tech assistant team, and John asked who they are.</p> <p>Paul responded that they are the CISA team and ALMR will be meeting with them. Paul recommended that Mr. Bruce Richter from CISA could expand on the meeting.</p> <p>Bruce briefed that generally CISA has a team of people that are some of their subject matter experts that will be coming up to meet with John, Paul, and whoever he wants to include, and then they will be traveling up to Fairbanks to meet with Fire Marshal Kyle Green, which will be happening next week. Bruce noted the team will arrive in town on Monday and they will be meeting here Tuesday afternoon at the APSCS conference room, and Bruce will need to pin down with John where he would like to meet in the morning and whether it would be in John's office or where. Bruce stated the team will be flying to Fairbanks and meeting with Kyle and going to several locations on Wednesday. He mentioned that David Dato and Woody Sandy are two of the three team members, and they have helped with a number of projects and states all over the country. Bruce said they are looking forward to the dialogue and the discussion and hopefully a good technical assistance deliverable that Kyle requested.</p> <p>John thanked Bruce and Paul, and stated he did recall it and it just threw him off on the term tech assistance team, and that he is looking forward to the whole connected vehicle concept discussion as well.</p> <p>John asked if there were any other questions for Paul, hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item which is the system management office overview by Nik.</p>	



***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: September 4, 2024

System Management Office	Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Nik briefed that, as Paul mentioned, the SMO has been doing a lot of PMIs and he said thank you to the members for being patient with the SMO as they complete them.</p> <p>Nik added that some of the radio usage and the metrics aspect of push-to-talks and call durations are caused by improper radio etiquette. Even though he does not know every single scenario that goes on or what is being discussed on the radio, however, Paul can confirm that there are calls they have seen, single calls one push-to-talk, that lasts four to five minutes long. He states again that he does not know the full scenario of the situations, just keep in mind to use the proper radio etiquette and be aware other people might need to use that radio channel as well.</p> <p>Nik noted outside of that, dealing with the TDMA talk group transition, when they go to switch the talk groups over to be TDMA, if you start to experience bonks on the channels, these are not the system denying users, in this case it might be something related to the code plug itself. He stated if users do start to experience this, please call us up immediately and they can revert that set of talk groups back until it is determined what is actually going on with that particular issue</p> <p>Nik state that completed his brief.</p> <p>John thanked Nik and asked if there were any questions for Nik, hearing none, he moved on to the State of Alaska (SOA) and DoD overviews and turned it over to Scott with the SOA.</p>	
State of Alaska	Mr. Scott Stormo	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Scott briefed regardless of the status of the Motorola upgrade for the state and DoD, unless Mr. Tim Woodall or somebody else is here, but the Juniper routers have all been done at the radio frequency (RF) sites. He stated the RF sites are all set up for TDMA and as previously discussed they will start the process to start moving people over to using TDMA. Scott noted the Juniper routers still need to go in at the dispatch centers and a few other places, and those have arrived at Motorola's staging facilities and Motorola is working out the plan to implement those that are at the state and local sites.</p>	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>Scott commented on the federal side, the microwave project is still trying to be restarted, and Motorola has a solution to put Nokia routers, as the state has done at its sites, at a few of the DoD sites where they are needed so they can cut over to the Ethernet microwave. The hope is to get that done before it gets too cold because there is still a lot of tower work that has got to be done to finish that project. Scott mentioned the state will assist with programming the Nokia routers because they will basically be joining the state's multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) network at that point, and that should get the new microwaves finished off for the DoD. Scott stated he does not know if there is a Juniper router conversation happening for the DoD or not, or if that is going to be covered in this current project or may be another phase unless there is another reason to do that, but he thinks they were looking at doing that at a different phase.</p> <p>Scott stated at that point, he thinks they are pretty close to final acceptance on the state side, and he thinks the microwave is done on the DoD side, but he cannot speak entirely for the DoD side on that to know if they had anything else, to be done on their proposal. He commented they are pretty close to the end of what has been going on for quite a few years now, which is good news. Scott mentioned it will be about time to start the next system upgrade if they can get funding to get it off version 2021, which will be approaching the yellow and red zone of support abilities, that is why they continue to see the single use accounts (SUA) program, which gets users on the books for automatic upgrades every two years that is a lot easier than these big capital upgrades happening periodically.</p> <p>Scott also briefed there are a couple of antennas that went in on the state's projects that are having issues and those are being worked on by Motorola under the warranty repair side of the project, which is not done by the project team but it is done by the maintenance team so the state is working with Motorola to get that scheduled and done especially before winter.</p> <p>Scott stated he did not have anything else to add unless there were any questions.</p> <p>John thanked Scott and asked if there were any questions for Scott, there were any questions.</p>	
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***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: September 4, 2024

Department of Defense	Mr. Timothy Woodall	Action Items Assigned
	Mr. Timothy (Tim) Woodall was not present at the meeting today.	
User Council Representative Reports	Represented Areas	Action Items Assigned
SOA DOT SOA DPS SOA All Others	<p>John called for updates from DOT, DPS, and All Other State Components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Henry Cole stated he did not have any updates, but he did want to express his appreciation for Paul's patience with waiting while he took his time getting the TDMA breakdown report back to Paul, and Henry apologized that it took so long. 2. Lt. Ben Endres from DPS stated that he did not have any updates. 3. Mr. Karl Edwards stated there were no updates. 	
DoD US Army Installations DoD JBER DoD Eielson	<p>John called for updates from DoD US Army, JBER, and Eielson.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Eric Smith stated he wanted to express his appreciation to Scott for the SOA taking the lead on that project, and that he and MSgt. David Higginbotham are filling in for these roles. He noted he will let the team know the Army is trying to recruit a dedicated person to this council so it gets the attention that it needs and will continue to participate as they are able to in the upgrade project. t they appreciate the SOA for all the financial and technical assistance they have provided to the Army to meet that requirement. 2. Kayla stated that Elmendorf did not have any updates. 3. MSgt. Joe Rodriguez stated there were no updates from Eielson. 	



***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: September 4, 2024

<p>Federal Non-DoD DOI</p> <p>Federal Non-DoD DOJ</p> <p>Federal Non-DoD All Others</p>	<p>John called for updates from the Federal Non-DoD components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John called for updates from DOI, and there were no responses. 2. John called for updates from DOJ, and there were no responses. 3. John called for updates from all other Non-DoD components, and Mr. Bobby Carter stated nothing from TSA for the good of the order. 	
<p>Munis-Central</p> <p>Munis-North</p> <p>Munis-Southeast</p>	<p>John stated the council would move to the municipal components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John called for updates from Munis-Central, and Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell stated there were no updates. 2. John called for updates from Munis-North, and there were no responses. 3. John called for updates from Munis-Southeast and Lt. Erann Kalwara said nothing from Juneau. 	
<p>New Business</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>
<p>Cyber Security Awareness Month</p>	<p>John stated that the council would move to the next agenda item, New Business, but asked if there were any questions about anything that had been covered, hearing none he moved on to the first item of new business and turned the meeting over to Bruce Richter from CISA.</p> <p>Bruce briefed that coming up in October is Cyber Security Awareness Month, and people do not need to wait until October. He commented that CISA had their deputy director up here to visit in June and gave a speech at the cyber conference at the Egan Center, and the deputy director pointed out that CISA does not get paid by the product that they release in terms of when they release advisories or warnings and when they do there is usually a reason for it and people might want to pay attention to that.</p>	



*ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes*

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>Bruce mentioned the CISA link with the latest cybersecurity alerts and advisories.</p> <p>Bruce noted that there is kind of a trend, for instance, on July 8th, CISA released an advisory that the People's Republic of China, Ministry of State Security tradecraft in action and it went through some recent server attacks that they can attribute to China. Bruce stated that even if members do not want to read all the technical details, he would really encourage members to read the first couple of paragraphs, just to understand the scope of what is going on. He also noted that on July 25th an advisory was released, and these joint advisories from the FBI and some of the country's international partners, that North Korea Cyber Group connects global espionage campaigns with advanced regimes military nuclear programs, and again, even if members do not want to read the whole advisory, take a look at the first couple of paragraphs and just be aware of the scale of that. Bruce commented that on August 28th, just last week, Iran based cyber actors enabled ransomware attacks on U.S. organizations, which CISA will follow that the next day with some shareable information on the latest ransomware attacks called Ransom Hub.</p> <p>Bruce stated that CISA has a pretty good website, , and he would encourage members to bookmark that and just be aware of what is going on. He notes the threat is very real and it is an intelligent adversary that is actively looking to exploit opportunities and weaknesses and being on the Pacific Rim and being a state with such a large military presence, we are living in a town of a heightened threat environment, so do not wait for October to be cybersecurity aware. Bruce commented he looks forward to meeting with some of the members next week when the CISA tech assistance team is in town and will be happy to answer any questions.</p> <p>John asked if there were any questions or comments for Bruce.</p> <p>Mr. David Reed briefed that the only addition he has is that while ALMR is more secure it is still a target for these things, it is very important for members to remember that home computers, those other networks you use at work, all of these are targets, so while it is mentioned in the ALMR meeting, what is talked about here, is not specific to ALMR as far as cybersecurity threats go.</p>	
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***ALMR User Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: September 4, 2024

	<p>John noted that was an excellent point and thanked Bruce and David.</p> <p>John asked if there was anything else, and he opened the floor for any new business that anybody would like to bring up, and if not new business, if there are any comments, questions, or concerns anybody would like to just bring up, some stories of how members are using the network or radio system, anything at all the mic is open. None being heard, he moved onto the next meetings schedule.</p>	
Next Meeting	Discussion	
	John briefed the next meetings are currently scheduled for October 2 and November 6.	
Adjournment	Discussion	
	<p>John stated that the floor is open for any questions, comments, or observations, and hearing none he would entertain a motion to adjourn.</p> <p>Motion: Adjourn the August 14 User Council meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. Jim Goodman</p> <p>Second: Mr. Bobby Carter</p> <p>There were no objections or further discussion, and the motion passed.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.</p>	