



ALMR User Council Meeting Minutes

Date: February 5, 2025

1. Attendance.

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

Primary				
E	Atkinson	Ross	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD DOI, BLM-Alaska Fire Service
T	Berrian	Keith	Deputy Chief	Municipalities North, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue
T	Cole	Henry	Mr.	SOA DOT
E	Draves	Kayla	MSgt	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
T	Goggia-Cockrell	Tammy	Ms.	Municipalities Central, Vice Chair
E	Kalwara	Erann	Ms.	Municipalities Southeast, Juneau PD
T	Kroona	Jon	Mr.	Federal Non-DoD DOJ, FBI
T	Nelsen	Scott	Mr.	SOA All Others, DMVA, Chair
T	Nelson	James	Officer	Federal Non-DoD All Others, US Forest Service
E	Rodriguez	Joe	MSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
T	Rockwell	John	Mr.	SOA DPS, SWIC
E	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
P	Endres	Benjamin	Lieutenant	SOA DPS
E	Green	Kyle	Fire Marshal	Municipalities North, University Fire Department
T	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
N/A	Higginbotham	Dave	MSgt	DoD US Army - Alaska
N/A	Maley	Christopher	TSgt	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
N/A	VACANT			Federal Non-DoD DOI
N/A	VACANT			Municipalities Southeast



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Supporting Staff and Guests

T	Adams	Nathan	Mr.	DoD USAF, Eielson AFB
T	Barry-Garland	Eli	Mr.	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
T	Benzon	Daniel	Mr.	iCom America
P	Burnham	Mary	Ms.	Operations Management Office (OMO)
T	DeHart	Kaitlyn	Ms.	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
P	Fahnestock	Nikolas	Mr.	Bering Straits IT (BSIT) - SMO
T	Flores	Mickey	Mr.	BK Technologies
P	Fussey	Paul	Mr.	Operations Manager - OMO
P	Jones	Ryan	SPC	Army National Guard
T	Lane	Donald	Mr.	State of Alaska (SOA) DPS
T	Merkouris	Paul	Mr.	BK Technologies
P	Nelson	Dan	Mr.	Operations Management Office (OMO)
P	Neuman	Mark	Mr.	Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) (AWARN)
T	Ray	Dante	SSgt.	DoD USAF, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
P	Reed	David	Mr.	Motorola Solutions – Security Manager
T	Richter	Bruce	Mr.	DHS - CISA
P	Rockwell	Evan	Mr.	Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF)
T	Rose	Teresa	Ms.	State of Alaska (SOA)
T	Rogell	Pete	Mr.	BK Technologies
T	Sasai	Richard	Mr.	Motorola Solutions
P	Stormo	Scott	Mr.	State of Alaska (SOA) DPSCS
T	Thometz	Tim	Mr.	iCom America

2. Meeting Minutes and Action Items.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
Call to Order	Mr. Scott Nelsen called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 1:30 p.m.	
Roll Call	Roll call was presented by Ms. Mary Burnham, and there was a quorum of User Council (UC) members in attendance for the meeting. Mr. Bobby Carter and Mickey Flores joined the meeting after the roll was taken.	
Introduction of Guests/Special Announcements	Scott N. asked if there were any special guests on the line. Mr. Paul Fussey introduced Mr. Dan Nelson, who is the training coordinator for the OMO office, and stated Dan will be giving a brief training session on the user council since the council has new representatives and a new chair. Paul noted that after the user council meeting, due to the opens meeting act, there will be a pause while the document specialist stops	



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	<p>the recording and transcription of the meeting and re-starts both for about 30 minutes for Dan's presentation.</p> <p>Scott N. thanked Paul.</p>	
Previous Meeting Minutes	<p>Scott N. proceeded to the next agenda item and inquired if everyone had a chance to look over the January meeting minutes or had any requested changes. Hearing none, he asked if he could have a motion and a second to approve the January minutes.</p> <p>Motion: Approve the January 8 monthly User Council meeting minutes.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. John Rockwell Second: Mr. Henry Cole</p> <p>Scott N. stated that if there are no objections or calls for any further discussion, and hearing none, he stated the motion has passed.</p> <p>Scott N. commented that the council could move on to the Issues and Risks Log.</p>	
Issues & Risks Log	Review	Resolution
	<p>Paul briefed that the only change he had was that the R1 North batteries should be here March 1st and shortly after that the Civil Engineers (CE) and Personal Wireless Communications Systems (PWCS) will be installing the new battery bank in R1 North. He stated that back in January the batteries were supposed to arrive in the middle of February, but it has been confirmed on March 1st they will be at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). Paul noted that was the only change that he had.</p> <p>Scott N. then moved on to the Action Items.</p>	
Action Items	Updates	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Paul briefed that the one action item is a holdover from the October 2023 meeting, and that when Motorola finally gets federal approval of Smart Connect, ALMR will work with the Motorola team to give a demonstration on the APX NXT radios.</p> <p>Scott N. asked if there were any questions, and hearing none, he asked Paul to provide the Operations Management Office (OMO) updates.</p>	



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Operations Management Office	Mr. Paul Fussey, Operations Manager	Action Items Assigned
Training	1. Paul briefed that Dan uploaded the February cybersecurity video to the ALMR website, so Paul recommended members go on to the website and view the training video vignette, which is part of a three-part series on cybersecurity.	
Outreach	<p>2. Paul briefed that a meeting has been set up with the Mat-Su Borough management team later in the week to discuss their radio system, so he, Mr. Nikolas "Nik" Fahnestock from the SMO, and Mr. Scott Stormo with his team will be going out to meet with the Mat-Su Borough management team.</p> <p>Paul noted that the Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection (APIP) meeting is coming up on Thursday, February 20th.</p> <p>Paul also noted that the FEMA Region 10 meeting, which includes Alaska, is scheduled for Thursday, February 27th.</p> <p>Paul stated for the members that deal with wildland interface or wildland firefighting, that he, Nik and Scott had a really good meeting with the state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Division on their proposed radio order. He noted that if members are not aware, there is a federal act called the Dingell Act Resource Tracking (DART), which is used to remotely track the location of active resources and display the location of each fire resource on real time maps. Paul commented that it is a federal requirement for wildland interface firefighting, so he recommends the fire department representatives research it for any future radio inventory or radio purchases.</p>	
Upgrades	3. Paul briefed that he and Nik have been very busy working with ALMR agencies, and that last week they worked with Fire Marshal Kyle Green and the UAF Fire Department (FD) up in Fairbanks. Paul noted that he and Nik activated the UAF FD talkgroup for TDMA and it worked out really well, with the radios transmitting in TDMA. He stated that several radio checks were performed right after their roll call and it all worked smoothly. Paul noted that talkgroups for the state troopers in Fairbanks were also activated for D Dispatch and D NCIC. He stated that the issue they ran into was that the state troopers radios on D Dispatch and D NCIC were using TDMA, but other entities that have FDMA radios were on that talkgroup, so every radio transmission immediately went back down to FDMA. Paul noted that it was the same thing that happened when testing down in Soldotna, so it just further shows that ALMR needs to work on the goal of having all radios TDMA by December 31st, 2026. He commented that he realizes that with budget and monetary constraints that is	



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	<p>not going to happen. This goes to show that as long as one FDMA radio is on that talkgroup, every transmission is going to be FDMA. Paul concluded that the ALMR team is moving forward on, testing TDMA with more agencies.</p> <p>Paul briefed that Anchorage Wide Area Radio Network (AWARN), which is Zone 4, is working on installing dynamic transcoders in their simulcast system, so ALMR would like to thank their team for working on that and helping ALMR out on the TDMA transition.</p> <p>Paul noted that, during the last week in February, he and Nik will be working on the Quarterly Zone Control Rollovers, and they will be reaching out to all the dispatch centers and the AWARN team to inform them before ALMR starts doing that.</p> <p>Paul added that currently the Haines and Skagway towers are being worked on by the APSCS team and there is also a team on the Cooper Mountain working on the antennas and the microwave system. Paul just wanted everybody to know that the teams are still out working and actively doing repairs on this system even though it is cold out and the areas have a lot of snow on the mountains..</p> <p>Paul inquired if there were any questions before he moved on to the January document reviews.</p>	
January Document Reviews	<p>4. Hearing no questions, Paul briefed that the January document reviews were: New User policy and procedure; Catastrophic Natural Events (CNE) Contingency Plan; and Grant Guide. He noted the 2024 User Council Annual Assessment on System Operations and Management Performance was completed and sent out to the User Council members. He thanked everyone who looked through them and gave approval, and it has now been passed on as required to the Executive Council. Paul stated the 2024 Annual Information Assurance Audit report and the Business case were also sent to the User Council members and have been passed on through the User Council to the Executive Council per the policies, procedures, and contract.</p>	
January System Metrics	<p>5. Paul briefed that starting out with a new year the calls in January were 1,644,500, with the push-to-talks at 2,583,866. He noted there were 533 busies, and the monthly sites below three 9s were 17.</p> <p>Paul stated that before he moved on to the next slide, he just wanted to let everybody know that subscriber counts, which are the number of radios on the system, were 32,685 and to give everybody a better understanding he started to break down the number of radios for each agency:</p>	



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<p>Other Items</p>	<p>Alaska Municipal League (AML) there are 12,292 radios; Department of Defense (DoD) has 9884 radios; Federal Non-DoD has 1836 radios; the State of Alaska (SOA) has 8661 radios; and then there are 12 radios between the SMO,OMO, and APSCS so that makes up the total of 32,685 radios on this system.</p> <p>Paul continued to brief that the sites below three 9s were 17 and consisted of: Preventative Maintenance Inspections (PMIs) were done at Atwood, R1 North, and Valdez; Cooper Mountain, which has teams up there right now working on the issue, but because of Cooper Mountain, Moose pass and Seward were impacted; Divide the GTR lost connection for about 30 minutes, which is being worked on; winter weather impacted Heney Range, Kasilof, Paxson, Tsina, and Wolcott; the Hurricane site had electrical maintenance that has been repaired; microwave path alignment, which a crew was out there other day, so Pillar Mountain, which is back up, and Women's Bay, which they are still working on for the microwave backhaul; and then there were a little bit of issues over by Denali, which caused Reindeer Hills and Yanert. The crews are out working on Cooper Mountain and Haines and Skagway. He asked if there are any questions on this month's metrics.</p> <p>6. Paul noted as a friendly reminder that the legislative session has begun, and he is going through the daily calendar and schedule looking to see if there are any meetings that may pertain to ALMR. Last week, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) had two meetings, one was just a general overview of their staff, and then there was a budgetary review. The calendar is pretty full right now and the Legislature is meeting multiple times a day for different boards and different reviews.</p> <p>Paul stated that was all he had for his report, pending any questions.</p> <p>Scott N. stated that hearing no questions he thanked Paul and stated that the meeting would move on to the systems management and asked Nik if he had anything for the council.</p>	
<p>System Management Office</p>	<p>Mr. Nik Fahnestock, System Manager</p>	<p>Action Items Assigned</p>



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	<p>Mr. Nik Fahnestock briefed that , Cooper Mountain's receive antenna definitely had an issue; by looking at some of the pictures there is about 1/2 a foot of ice and snow on the antenna and it is sitting at a really bad angle, pointing pretty much down at the mountain itself. He also stated that the Ernestine site, which is near Thompson Pass has an issue but he does not know if the antenna is in a similar situation as what is going on at Cooper Mountain and is also in the works to be worked on.</p> <p>Nik noted that Paul had mentioned there was 32,685 radios in the system and just to kind of give everyone an idea of how quick radios are added and removed, that was the numbers from late yesterday afternoon and as of just a little bit ago, it is 32,690, so five more radios have been added. This brings him to note that the system's current limit due to licenses is 33,000, so that leaves 310 radios right now open and available Nik commented that he does not know exactly what happens when ALMR hits that number, the system could just yell at us and say, "hey, you are over your license limit, you need more," or it might deny ALMR from adding anymore. With that being said, if members have radios that they know are not going to be used, whether they have been turned in, lost, or whatever, please submit a subscriber request to get those radios removed from the system so ALMR can free up some IDs until ALMR can get some more licenses.</p> <p>Nik stated that was all he had.</p> <p>Scott N. thanked Nik and commented he has a few he can take off the system for sure. He then asked if anybody had any questions or comments about the next update. Hearing none, Scott N. continued on to the next item, which is the state and DoD updates.</p>	
State of Alaska	Mr. Scott Stormo	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Scott S. briefed that most of those sites that had trouble during the winter weather was during those high windstorms. He noted that Kodiak has had a lot of damage to it and that the state has had contractors out there twice. It is still not completely fixed, so they are continuing efforts to try to get the microwave repaired and get the Woman's Bay site back up. Scott S. stated that they are hoping the Pillar Mountain part will stay up with the work that is being done now. He commented that Cooper Mountain is missing most of the microwave dish and that is what is hopefully getting replaced</p>	



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	<p>today since the state has contractors up there to do that, and Scott has two of his guys up there to hopefully chip the ice off and replace the ALMR antenna that is blown over and in the wrong direction. Scott S. thinks that the Ernestine site has a similar problem, but nobody has been able to go there to see it, and they cannot see it with the camera, so they are not sure what exactly happened. He noted that a couple other paths of microwaves that go into the Kenai Peninsula have been on the edge of not working well anymore, which causes real quick bounces to an alternate path, and most of the people using the radios would not this was happening. Because the only way they might know is if they are in the middle of a conversation the exact second the bounce happened because it happens in like a second as it switches over to the other path. Scott S. stated that the team is not entirely sure what all the damage is yet, but they were making repairs on it and there is likely other damage that has not been seen and discovered. All of this stuff is really hard to work on in the wintertime with limited daylight hours, and it is hard to work on the towers when it is cold and the towers are covered in ice and snow. He commented that there is one more item the power line to Hope is not delivering power to the top of the mountain, so right now the state is running a generator that is not holding radiator fluid and oil very well, and there is a risk that the site is going to go down. Scott S. noted that they do have a generator that could be put in to replace it, but what they are lacking is experienced people to sling generators and get them hooked up, so the state will probably be either trying to get some partners to help with that or some contractual support. He stated that the state is still working through their electrical contract to get them to come out and look at the power line with some high voltage test equipment to see if the power line is broken, or if it is anything that could potentially be fixed right now. If not, then that will become a much bigger and expensive project to try to figure out how to remedy when the snow melts.</p> <p>Scott S. noted that he was moving over to some good news, stating that the \$24 million upgrade project is, at least from the state's perspective, getting pretty close to being done and he would say if everything goes according to plans, probably in the next 6 to 8 weeks, the Juniper routers will be done at the state and local dispatch centers, which is really the last major piece. There are also just a few minor things that would need to occur to kind of close out the project officially in calling it done, whether paperwork, coverage maps, or small things like that, but not any detailed site or project work.</p>	
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	<p>Scott S. briefed that another piece of potentially good news is that ALMR is hearing that Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) authorization is almost imminent, but they cannot say exactly when because they do not know as it is coming from a government office. He stated that presumably ALMR is going to have FedRAMP approval and will make it so ALMR can re-enable Smart Connect location on push-to-talk. Scott S. noted that as Paul mentioned, there is an action items sitting out there to get a presentation on those capabilities once that happens because ALMR had them turned on a couple years ago, used them, just ran through the test plan, and saw they worked, but then ALMR had them disconnected again. He stated that nobody really got any good experience with how it works or capabilities that it brings in real world experience, and ALMR hopes to be able to start using and trying that stuff out pretty soon.</p> <p>Scott S. stated that covers everything he has, unless the members have any questions.</p> <p>Scott N. thanked Scott S. for his update and asked if anybody had any questions for Scott S. and hearing none he moved on.</p>	
Department of Defense	Mr. Timothy Woodall	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Paul Fussey briefed that he was going to be reading, for the record, an email that Mr. Tim Woodall, the DoD representative, sent:</p> <p>“Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend due to conflicting high priority schedule conflict. Request the following be read into record for the meeting:</p> <p>DoD update: Continued effort with implementation of an Intergovernmental Support Agreement (IGSA) as a supporting agreement to the ALMR Communications System Cooperative and Mutual Aid Agreement is moving along and is under review and coordination at the Air Staff and Army G9 levels. We are responding to questions and providing clarification as they are sent to us. We expect to begin the next phase of forming the terms and conditions of the agreement in the early March timeframe.</p> <p>I want to thank the DoD member agencies for their compliance with on time up front funding the State of Alaska</p>	



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	<p>administered ALMR contracts from with the DoD receives services IAW the provisions set forth by the State. The IGSA will normalize this process and will address other areas that have been problematic such as State administered contract personnel onto installations via Defense Biometric Identification System (DBIDS), DD 254 Contractor Security Requirements, security clearance and CAC issuance. The IGSA will additionally provide funding appropriation compliance, tracking and reporting process and address other requirements, processes and procedures related to providing and receiving ALMR services for operations management and infrastructure & operations maintenance services.”</p> <p>Scott N. thanked Paul and asked if anybody had any comment or questions regarding that before continuing on, hearing none he stated he would be moving on to the Council Representatives.</p>	
User Council Representative Reports	Represented Areas	Action Items Assigned
<p>SOA DPS</p> <p>SOA DOT</p> <p>SOA All Others</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. John Rockwell and Lt. Ben Endres had no updates to report. 2. Mr. Henry Cole stated that he has said several times, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, that DOT is trying to pursue funding from the legislature to cover the DOT's TDMA radio upgrade schedule, and as the session is going on, he has yet to hear any kind of negative or problematic comments about it, but obviously it will be some time before they know if it is going to go through or not. 3. Scott. N briefed that for his area he has for all others the Homeland Security grant closed at the end of January and he was pleased to report there are a few cities and boroughs who applied for grant funding to purchase radios. He noted that not all of them are on the ALMR network, but they did apply for grant funding to purchase those radios, and it has made it through the first steps of legal approval, and then into the next phase, which will be funding approval. <p>Scott N. stated he had nothing else to add and asked Mr. Karl Edwards if he had anything, and Karl stated he had nothing to add.</p>	



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<p>DoD JBER</p> <p>DoD Eielson</p> <p>DoD US Army Installations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SSgt. Dante Ray, who was covering for MSgt. Kayla Draves briefed that they did not have any updates to report. 2. Mr. Nathan Adams, who was filling in for MSgt. Joe Rodriguez, stated that MSgt Rodriguez asked him to inform the council that they have BK Technologies coming in on March 4th to do some demonstrations on some new radios they are going to make available. 3. No representatives in attendance. 	
<p>Federal Non-DoD DOJ</p> <p>Federal Non-DoD DOI</p> <p>Federal Non-DoD All Others</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No updates noted. 2. Mr. Eli Barry-Garland, from the Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, briefed that he is representing Mr. Ross Atkinson, and that the only update is that they are moving forward with their radio replacement, so they have 500 new BK KR5000 radios that are TDMA compatible. He noted they have them all set up with IDs on ALMR now and they are working on a funding request to update all of their Motorolas, so hopefully by the end of this year the only radios left that are not TDMA compatible will be a pretty small number of mobile BK radios that they are also working on updating. 3. Officer James Nelson, with the Forest Service, briefed that they just started talks with the Washington, D.C. office about replacing their radios nationally, so they are probably looking for some information on that, but that is all he has to report. <p>Mr. Bob Carter, with TSA, briefed that they are actually in the process of replacing their older Motorola XT5000 portables with a newer version. He noted that Motorola Radio and one of their coordination center officers have been working diligently to get those on the ALMR network, and they are in the process of, he believes, bringing on 25 new pieces of equipment, so some good news for them and that will bring them into compliance with the new system.</p>	



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Munis-North Munis-Southeast Munis-Central	<p>Scott N. moved onto the municipal components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No updates noted. 2. No updates noted. 3. Paul stated he had a message from Ms. Tammy Goggia-Cockrell, who had to leave abruptly, stating she did not have anything or any update for the council for the good of the order. 	
New Business	Discussion	Action Items Assigned
	<p>Scott N. stated that hearing no comments or questions he was moving on to New Business.</p> <p>Scott N. started to state when the next scheduled meetings are and was going to ask for a motion to adjourn and noted that after the adjournment that the recording for the User Council meeting would be ended and then re-started for the training session, but at this point Ms. Mary Burnham noted there was a question from Eli in the chat.</p> <p>Mary went on to read the inquiry: "BLM Alaska is interested in testing out Smart Connect for LEO vehicles as soon as it is available on ALMR. We heard that Smart Connect had received FedRamp approval, so we are wondering if there is a timeline for this to be available on ALMR. I would also appreciate any information on the process to get a radio set up with SmartConnect on ALMR."</p> <p>Scott S. responded to the question from Eli and stated that as soon as ALMR is formally notified that FedRAMP approval has occurred, ALMR will be able to reconnect. He noted that the Smart Connect service has not been connected in a year and a half or two, but ALMR assumes it still works. Scott S. commented that it is running through the state's network, through firewalls, and gets to the Internet, so until ALMR plugs it back in, they cannot be sure something has not changed that may have caused issues. He stated ALMR would have to figure it out, assuming there are no issues, but it should be available pretty quick, and once ALMR does that Motorola is going to set up a call to talk to the team again about how to enable radios and make sure ALMR is able to set that process up correctly. Scott S. commented Nik may remember how to do it, but the guy that worked for Scott's team, that was doing it, is retired and living elsewhere, so</p>	



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	<p>ALMR has to refigure out how to get those radios working. He noted that the state has six of them that they will start to play with and it seems a fairly promising capability, for example, with Kodiak having been out for much of the last 2-3 weeks, if they have these radios and there is AT&T First Net coverage down there, they would probably notice very little that ALMR was offline. Scott S. concluded that there is definitely some good that can come from having these radios, and if you want to reach out to him his email is scott.stormo@alaska.gov and he can help by talking to you a little bit more about those radios.</p>	
Next Meeting	Discussion	
	<p>Scott N. briefed the next meetings are currently scheduled for March 5 and April 2</p>	
Adjournment	Discussion	
	<p>Scott N. asked if he could get a motion to adjourn the meeting and move on to the training session.</p> <p>Motion: Adjourn the February 5 User Council meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Mr. John Rockwell</p> <p>Second: Mr. Bobby Carter</p> <p>Scott N. noted at this time, the meeting is adjourned, however there will be a brief pause and then Mr. Dan Nelson will present the UC training session.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.</p>	