



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



MEMORANDUM FOR ALMR Executive Council

July 19, 2018

FROM: SOA Co-Chair

SUBJECT: April 19 Meeting Minutes

TO: See Distribution

Executive Council Members Present:

Deputy Commissioner Bill Comer	State of Alaska – Department of Public Safety
Colonel Timothy Maxwell	Department of Defense (DOD) – Alaskan Command (ALCOM)/J6
ASAC Antony Jung	Alaska Federal Executive Association - Federal Bureau of Investigation (via teleconference)
Ms. Linda Murphy	Alaska Municipal League (via teleconference)
Captain Dave Koch	Municipality of Anchorage

ALMR Support Team Members and Guests Present:

Mr. John Rockwell	User Council Chair
Mr. Del Smith	Operations Manager
Mr. John Roberts	Department of Public Safety
Mr. Scott Stormo	SOA ALMR Manager
Mr. Randy Kilbourne	SOA SATS Manager
Mr. Tim Woodall	DOD ALMR Program Manager
Mr. Jim Nicholl	Motorola Solutions
Mr. Joe Piksa	Motorola Solutions
Ms. Jill Stedman	Motorola Solutions
Ms. Naomi Ulrich	Motorola Solutions
Ms. Sherry Shafer	Operations Management Office (via teleconference)

1. **Call to Order.** Deputy Commissioner Bill Comer, State of Alaska (SOA) Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m. Roll call was read.

2. **Opening Statements and Other Announcements.**

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked if there were any opening statements or special announcements, and there were no responses.

3. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes.** Deputy Commissioner Comer asked the if everyone had reviewed the January meeting minutes and requested a motion for their approval, if there were no changes.

Motion: Approve the January 18 Executive Council meeting minutes, as written.

The motion was made by Colonel Timothy Maxwell and seconded by ASAC Tony Jung. There were no objections. **The motion was carried and approved.**

4. **Old Business.**

a. Revenue Generation. This item was TABLED at the January meeting.

NOTE: At the end of the New Business discussion, Deputy Commissioner Comer requested this be **CLOSED** and there were no objections.

b. Telephone Interconnect for the Transportable Communications System. Mr. Woodall stated they could obtain 12 – 24 lines in an emergency and trunk those, and they planned to test those in the spring. A contract would have to be written with GCI for anything beyond those lines and there would be a charge for that. He advised a memorandum of agreement would have to be written and the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs would have to facilitate requesting any additional lines.

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked where it was all going at this point.

Mr. Woodall briefed the bottom line is they could put together the initial agreement, develop the process and test it. He stated they would continue to work it out and hopefully by June they would have completed the process and would report back on the findings.

Mr. Stormo suggested this could probably be closed as it was “down in the weeds”

NOTE: At the end of the New Business discussion, Deputy Commissioner Comer requested this be **CLOSED** and there were no objections. Mr. Smith stated an update could be provided once the testing was completed.

c. System Upgrade Assistance (SUA) and Equipment End of Life (EOL). Mr. Scott Stormo advised the State did get money appropriated for the year one and it was in the Capital Budget.

Mr. Del Smith provided an update for the Municipality of Anchorage on behalf of Mr. Trygve Erickson who is out of the country. He stated the voters approved a \$2.5M upgrade for the AWARN portion and the Municipal Finance Department should authorize the bonds in about three weeks after the election is certified, so probably sometime in May. Mr. Smith stated more likely the appropriation and purchase would be approved at the regular Assembly meeting on June 12, due to requirement that action items be available for public review for five days before any action is taken. He noted, assuming Trygve gets a firm proposal quickly, the best estimate is it could be signed by all parties before mid to late June.

Mr. Woodall advised US Army – Alaska (Ft Wainwright and Ft Greely) are projecting to have those dollars in the first quarter of FY19, but they were hoping to push for an unfunded requirement and be funded in the fourth quarter of FY18. He briefed the way it was going, Motorola was not going to start until September. Mr. Woodall stated both Eielson and JBER have unfunded requirements that look like they will be funded, as they are getting enough priority-level attention at the major command level. He advised Colonel Maxwell is also going to send out a memo to address this to senior leadership. Mr. Woodall noted NORTHCOM has already funded their piece and sent their portion to Motorola.

d. FirstNet. Mr. Rockwell stated the FirstNet NPSBN is ahead of schedule creating the core nationwide although we don't have it in Alaska yet. He reiterated FirstNet is not here to replace ALMR today, that it is here to supplement ALMR with non-mission critical push to talk.

Mr. Rockwell briefed, with the help of the Municipality of Anchorage, Mr. Scott Stormo and Mr. John Roberts, they are starting a test pilot to do some non-mission critical push to talk utilizing the WAVE platform, which gives the cell phone the ability to use an over-the-top application to put a talkgroup on the cell phone and communicate with other ALMR users. He reiterated FirstNet, the way it's built today, is not mission critical, it is not redundant and it is not backed up, so they are not looking at replacing ALMR, but can they take advantage of some new infrastructure and new technology to be able to supplement ALMR in areas where they don't have LMR coverage. Mr. Rockwell advised, for example, can they go to western Alaska and have talkgroups connected to the right dispatch center. He stated they are looking at up to 20 phones to test and by the next meeting they should have a better idea how FirstNet non-mission critical push to talk works.

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked if these were FirstNet devices or WAVE devices being tested and Mr. Rockwell explained WAVE is an application that runs on top of the cell phone. He stated they would be testing on both an AT&T environment and a GCI environment for western Alaska.

ASAC Tony Jung stated their agents in Juneau ended up with two test phones and does anyone know the mechanics on how FirstNet is engaging with all the entities. He stated his headquarters stated nationally they haven't rolled out anything, so he was looking to find out if FirstNet is just providing the phones to some users or is it something related to ALMR.

Mr. Rockwell stated FirstNet has two arms, the State arm and the Federal arm, which are two separate entities with two separate managers. He briefed, from a State perspective, we have marketing with people going out doing education and outreach, as well as trying to sign them up for service. Mr. Rockwell emphasized this has nothing to do with ALMR network, because we are controlling that tightly from the group here. He stated what could have happened is one of the AT&T sales people could have provided the phone to try out to see how you like it and the features. Mr. Rockwell noted at this point if he decided to do any push to talk, that would be coordinate with us if it touches ALMR, and if it did not that could be done solely through AT&T at FirstNet. He also briefed, he understood the Federal partnership had not been reached out to for FirstNet either.

NOTE: At the end of the New Business discussion, Deputy Commissioner Comer requested this be **CLOSED** and there were no objections.

e. Cost Share. Mr. Smith explained the current FY17 membership agreements had been extended through the whole of FY18, as a cost share had not been agreed upon by the State. He also noted that the FY19 agreements needed to start going out to agencies in May in order to take effect on July 1, but that can't occur until there is a cost share amount to put in the agreements, as has been done in the past. Mr. Smith strongly urged someone to make a decision, so the FY19 agreements can be sent out as opposed to entering another fiscal year without knowing what the cost is going to be. He noted Mr. Stormo had met earlier in the year with the Federal NIOs and come to an agreement on cost share but that had not been approved by the decision makers. Mr. Smith explained the previous year, a flat rate from FY14 had been rolled over and was not reflective of what should be the cost.

Mr. Stormo stated Mr. Chris White was having difficulty getting connected, but he had received an email earlier from Mr. White stating essentially the same fixed cost share amounts from FY14 were also approved for FY18 and FY19.

Mr. Smith requested a copy of the email be forwarded to him after the meeting.

NOTE: At the end of the New Business discussion, Deputy Commissioner Comer requested this item be kept on for one more meeting for an update.

f. SOA Quantar Replacement. Deputy Commissioner Comer advised the end of life was in 2021 and requested Mr. Rockwell provide further information. Mr. Rockwell agreed that was a good statement to make and there were a couple milestones here, one in 2020 where we have an EOL of 7.17, but to extend support as we do contracts, to 2021. He stated by next budget cycle they would have to make some decisions whether

they are going to fund the upgrade, in order for the upgrade to be implemented before end of life, which meant starting this fall talking about the budget for this. Mr. Rockwell stated this brings up the discussion points on what would happen if we don't upgrade the Quantars and go into a fix and repair mode, as that would lock us into 7.17. He explained that means by the end of 2022 we would be in a position of not being able to patch the environment, and the next item, regarding the Separation Study, is very appropriate to discuss looking at maybe a 2022 date, if for some reason we decide to not fund the upgrade of the Quantars.

Deputy Commissioner Comer stated he thought this was a good idea.

NOTE: At the end of the New Business discussion, Deputy Commissioner Comer requested this item be combined with the Separation Study and there were no objections.

g. Separation Study. Mr. Woodall agreed and stated they certainly needed to know the impact. He noted they would need to get back with Motorola and take the study and update the costs in it. Mr. Woodall stated the issues and conclusions/causes and effects are still relevant today, but the cost was not, so he would have to ask Motorola to get us a cost basis for it and then they could look at it from that perspective. He briefed in the past the cost of separation was substantially more than the cost of updating the System. Mr. Woodall pointed out that they would need to reband frequencies and there is not enough spectrum to do all of the State system by itself. He added ALMR would lose the waivers from the NTIA and FCC to share spectrum and therefore, DOD and the Federal agencies would have to revert back to the 380 – 400 band to operate in, which means they would have to buy all new infrastructure and radios. Mr. Woodall pointed out the State's portables operating in the VHF band should be fine.

Deputy Commissioner Comer advised they didn't want to be caught behind the curve on any decisions that would be made in the future, and thought it was a very appropriate time to update the Separation Study, so all the partners are 100 percent informed before we get to EOL. He stated, to the extent of the cost of updating the Separation Study, they'd want to make sure they knew what we are looking for, what deliverables they'd want.

Mr. Woodall stated he couldn't speak for Motorola, but suspected they might provide the costs figures at no cost, through a rough order of magnitude (ROM) that would be within 10 – 20 percent of the true impact. He stated they would basically review that. Mr. Woodall also suggested the User Council could read it and come to a conclusion from a technical, interoperability and operational perspective. He stated the end result operationally is the same with a loss of interoperability, degradation in operational capability and loss of coverage that would occur among all agencies involved.

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked Mr. Jim Nicholl to speak to the issue.

Mr. Nicholl stated he didn't believe the Separation Study would change virtually at all except for the price from 2008 to 2018. He stated they were on an Astro System then

and are on an upgraded Astro System now. Mr. Nicholl cautioned to only go to 2021 as a better date because this is when the security updates for 7.17 would stop, which is what they are planning on upgrading to this summer. He stated he had no issue with Motorola getting a copy of it and taking a look at it again and then updating the numbers with a ROM within 20 – 25 percent. Mr. Nicholl stated he felt the general consensus would be its way more expensive to separate than it is to stay together and upgrade, and that was also the consensus back in 2008.

Captain Koch asked if in 2008 consensus costs were only the DOD costs to separate or was it system wide and Mr. Woodall stated it looked at all infrastructure owners.

Deputy Commissioner Comer stated he wanted to ensure all the partners understand what we are looking at and would like to move forward and designate one meeting to talk about it, because there are a lot of new players who weren't here in 2008.

Mr. Nicholl pointed out the biggest issue would be the operational changes and areas would lose coverage, because the DOD would have to take their frequencies away and there won't be a simulcast and there won't be the roaming coverage you have, which are really big impacts, not just a fiscal impact but an impact to boots on the street. He stated they could get the copy and take a look at it, but advised against waiting until the regular July Executive Council meeting to do it.

Deputy Commissioner Comer stated he would like to have a specific meeting and get some designated players in the State and local governments involved so they understand, because everyone has a different perspective of what ALMR is.

Mr. Woodall also noted they had a cost reasonableness study done for their leadership but didn't see a need to update that study too because it's hard to find a comparable system to ALMR anywhere else in the United States. He stated you could probably use a site-to-site comparison for maintaining the lifecycle and then replicate that by 80, but other states don't have the size of system we have.

5. User Council Update.

a. Vacancies. Mr. Rockwell briefed both the primary and alternate Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) positions are now filled and also noted the primary Federal Non-DOD FBI position is currently vacant with the departure of Mr. Bill Kaizer on March 1.

ASAC Jung stated they are working to fill Mr. Kaizer's position, but the process takes about 90 – 120 days.

b. Talkgroup Development and Codeplug Sub-committee. Mr. Rockwell briefed the User Council had formed a sub-committee to address the recent problems with codeplugs and duplicate IDs issues and hoped Mr. Nate Skinner would have something to brief soon.

Mr. Stormo said it was good the User Council has started to go after these issues that occur year after year. He noted in the case of the last complaint, the agency called the Help Desk and said ALMR is not working, but, it turned out to be issues with the agency radios, there were duplicate IDs and one radio was a conventional radio, which would never work on ALMR. Mr. Stormo said these types of radio issues are common for agencies with no dedicated staff to maintain their equipment. He noted this was a problem in the State that many of these small volunteer agencies had no one to help them and he is glad the User Council is working to see what can or can't be done in these situations to resolve this. Mr. Stormo stated we need someone to run through the steps, such as, can DMVA manage some grants, can the State get funding to help locals, can locals lobby the legislature to get funding, whatever those possibilities are.

Mr. Joe Piksa stated it was Motorola's recommendation that everyone should touch each radio once a year or at least once every other year. He also pointed out this is not just an Alaska problem, it's a problem across the country and the world; the radios work and work until they don't.

Deputy Commissioner Comer said this is a User Council thing, because you can bring a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. He noted with the local fire and police chiefs, they have to have someone look at their radios once a year, and if not, then they are going to end up calling Scott.

Mr. Stormo stated the one agency he knows that comes the closest to doing the annual maintenance on their radios is the Division of Natural Resources (DNR), because they put their stuff in a warehouse over the winter and have someone refresh them during that time. He pointed out none of the other state agencies are coming to him until something isn't working right.

Capt Koch advised Anchorage Police Department (APD) uses a DiagnostiX box to identify subscribers out of sync, but he knows the locals don't have their own shop and radio technicians.

ASAC Jung stated the Bureau touches every one of their radios every year.

Mr. Stormo equated radio maintenance to buying a new car and not having to do transmission work on it, but when you have older vehicles you have to occasionally spend the money for maintenance.

Deputy Commissioner Comer said he didn't know what to do; he didn't want to make it a directive.

Mr. Rockwell advised the Executive Council would hear more from the User Council once they start looking into it and there will probably be some recommendations for some diagnostic tools that could help, but the first part of it is just identifying the problem. He stated there could be something we can do through standard operating procedures or something that can be monitored differently.

Deputy Commissioner Comer stated something could be put out in the quarterly newsletter if it hasn't already been done.

Mr. Smith stated it had just recently put out an Insider article with regard to the incident involving the volunteer department. He noted the Chief of the department had told him the radios were working really well since ALMR had been down there and tuned them, but they still had others that were not available to be checked at that time. However, Mr. Smith pointed out the SMO did not have the time, energy or money to go out and check every department. He stated the DiagnostiX that had been referred to could be placed around the state at different locations and tell agencies which radios need to be brought in, but it costs money. Mr. Smith briefed there are currently 21K radios out there and he's been here 11 years and most of those radios have been here that long, as well. He noted when they are new they work fine, but they get knocked around and get out of alignment. Mr. Smith also pointed out when agencies do call, no one ever says their radio doesn't work, it's always the System doesn't work and as Mr. Stormo had stated, the System is always checked every time and had been working properly because there is regular maintenance.

Deputy Commissioner Comer stated he was in favor of putting out a recommendation through the User Council and the newsletter and Mr. Smith stated, we try to put something out each time in the newsletter on what's important to do.

6. Operations Management Office.

a. FY19 Membership Agreements. Mr. Smith stated he had already covered this under the Old Business discussion of cost share.

b. Zone 1 UPS. Mr. Smith reminded the group that one of the UPS devices at the master site for the entire System not functioning and the servicing agency the State brought in was unable to fix it. He stated in his view they needed to be replaced since they had been in place for as long as the site itself, were getting old and replacement parts are hard to get. Mr. Smith also pointed out, because of the UPS issue, the State has been unable to start the generator every week because it takes some time for the generator to pick up the load and the master site, and all sites, would be off during this time.

Mr. Randy Kilbourne briefed that a solution had been engineered and approved, and they should have something in procurement in the next couple days. He stated the batteries were fine and they would only be replacing the UPS.

Mr. Smith also pointed out that one of the sites up north has no battery backup and if the generator fails, the site is going to go off. He stated it's the only site that he was aware of in the System that doesn't have battery backup and probably should, but this is a US Army – Alaska (USARAK) responsibility. Mr. Smith briefed the battery issue at the Birch Hill master site was taken care of last year and he'd feel better if there was a generator to pick up the load at this site. He stated although it wasn't a master site, it serves a lot of folks, so it needs to be done.

As a general statement, Mr. Smith noted that everyone probably knows that if we didn't have SATS as the infrastructure that provides the wide-area connectivity, we wouldn't have ALMR and therefore, it is critical SATS be maintained at a level that truly supports public safety radio. He stated just watching what goes on, he has noticed less and less of a capability for the Office of Information Technology (OIT) technicians to be out doing preventive maintenance and taking care of the SATS system. Mr. Smith added in the long run that won't be good, because when he first started the job the State had a number of deferred maintenance situations and he felt we were headed back in that direction. He emphasized SATS is not something that stands alone and doesn't have any impact if it's not around. Mr. Smith stated ALMR needs it or we do something different like satellites. Mr. Smith urged the group anytime they had the opportunity to talk to somebody about the importance of SATS that it cannot be bifurcated from the ALMR System and that's why it needs to be maintained.

c. Second quarter Master Site rollover. Mr. Smith briefed yesterday morning he and Mr. Travis Conant came in at four in the morning and it didn't happen. He noted Motorola had sent an email that was pretty vague the day before stating day one they were only able to do the McAfee upgrade. Mr. Smith advised after they were able to get in contact with them, they found out there were some issues with the software they were trying to test and no further updates until the next one in July.

d. Annual Inventory. Mr. Smith stated 78 forms had been returned and the end of the month is when we would like to have them all in. He added he would start contacting agencies on Monday morning who had not returned their forms.

e. WAVE/FirstNet. Mr. Smith briefed the OMO and SMO were working with Mr. Jason Beach, MOA AWARN, to test a WAVE radio-over-IP application which they had tested with Nome Police Department and with Delta Junction local fire through applications on their phones and test talkgroups; everything went fine. He stated the System Manager had cleared with Mr. Beach about setting up a test in Western Alaska with the Trooper talkgroups and if Nome is any indicator it should be fine if they have good cell coverage, as they tested on both AT&T and GCI in Nome and AT&T in Delta

Mr. Smith briefed he also recently found out UAF Fire Department had acquired a JPS network extender and the System Management Office (SMO) was assessing whether it is causing an impact. He stated there is an article in the most recent *Insider* cautioning agencies to not start hooking up those kind of things without coordinating with us so we can monitor what the impact is. Mr. Smith advised so far, we haven't had a problem, but if you are using push to talk on a cell phone that goes to a talkgroup, you are impacting a site. He stated we are keeping a close eye on the fire department and so far it's working well for them so, he doesn't want to say they can't do it.

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked how many units they put on the one in Delta.

Mr. Smith stated there were two different phone, a Samsung® and iPhone® and the WAVE is downloadable app from either store. He went on to explain the coordination of

talkgroups through the SMO and the limitation of the number of phones, either iPhone® or Androids, and the limitation on talkgroups, due to the licensing issue. Mr. Smith briefed there are lots of possibilities for good use of this as a compliment to ALMR, not a replacement. He also advised he had some concern the other day as the US Forest Service was being pressured by their US Department of Agriculture bosses, who are being approached by someone nationwide with FirstNet AT&T to switch over, and if you read the email involved it implied it was a potential replacement for ALMR. Mr. Smith stated he provided them with a bunch of information why that was not a good idea.

Mr. Rockwell added, the way FirstNet is marketed, there could be a VoIP system we don't know about, because there could be a small group that takes a donor radio and buys one of these units and puts it on the network and there is no indication at this point, because they don't have to request a talkgroup or use IDs. He just reminded everyone if they are going to do this, to work with us, so we can monitor it and look at the impacts.

Mr. Smith reminded everyone there were fairly substantial fees to set up talkgroups and get licenses for FirstNet, as well, and most agencies weren't paying anything to operate on ALMR at this time.

f. March System Metrics. Mr. Smith advised there 1,111,653 group calls which was up from February by approximately 25K. He also noted there were 2,046,283 push-to-talks, up by about 70K, and busies were up around 40.

7. New Business.

a. State Interoperability Governing Body (SIGB). Deputy Commissioner Comer asked Mr. Rockwell to provide the council a brief on the most recent movement on the SIGB.

Mr. Rockwell apologized for stepping out earlier and stated the phone call was from Deputy Chief of Staff John Hosey regarding the SIGB. He reminded them a couple years ago they had written and administrative order (AO) for the Governor to sign creating the SIGB which would be 11 positions made of a combination of State and non-State users, and under that body would be a "dotted line" to the ALMR group, as opposed to a direct line to areas like FirstNet, 9-1-1 and the SWIC position. Mr. Rockwell stated even though it's taken a while, it has moved into legal for review and they are hoping this is the year they get to start that body.

b. 9-1-1 Enhancement Proposal. Mr. Rockwell stated for the past several years he'd been working with rural Alaska telephone companies, to address a big problem they have with 9-1-1. He explained in many communities out in the villages, they don't have true access to 9-1-1. Mr. Rockwell stated the phones are programmed to dial 9-1-1 and then it translates to an 800 number, which is then call forwarded to a default public safety answering point (PSAP) in Fairbanks or Ketchikan. He added, even though they have the guise of 9-1-1 and they get help, it's truly not an emergency 9-1-1 system. Mr. Rockwell added the DPS Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have been working diligently with the Governor's office on the possibility of building another PSAP in

Anchorage that will lay the foundation to have true statewide 9-1-1. He noted they have been writing all this up and socializing the concept with all the people in the legislative body and it's been getting a lot of momentum.

Deputy Commissioner Comer asked Mr. Rockwell to give a brief on the operational concept.

Mr. Rockwell stated the plan is to take the old crime lab and use the middle portion to develop the PSAP, along with a system continuity between Anchorage, Fairbanks and Ketchikan and develop an actual operations center that they can grow. He stated they envisioned 20-year project building for today but also for tomorrow.

Deputy Commissioner Comer added there were other pieces, for example they'd also been talking to Federal law enforcement like the Federal Fish and Wildlife and air asset tracking, kind of going back to the days of a watch commander in a 24-hour operations center. He stated this has really challenged them to look forward at how DPS is going to take care of the State of Alaska 20 years in the future. Deputy Commissioner Comer briefed while the current concept works well in regional areas like Wasilla, it does not work well for DPS statewide.

c. Old Business Agenda Items to Close. Deputy Commissioner Comer requested to go through the Old Business items again at this point to see what could be scratched off the list. **NOTE:** All annotations are under the initial discussion item.

8. Next Meeting. Deputy Commissioner Comer advised the next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 1:30 p.m. at the OIT Conference Room, 5900 E Tudor Road.

Deputy Commissioner Comer requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Colonel Maxwell offered and seconded by Deputy Commissioner Comer. There were no objections. **The motion was carried and approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.



Bill Comer, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Public Safety, State of Alaska
ALMR Executive Council

Distribution:

SOA/DPS, Deputy Commissioner Bill Comer
USNORTHCOM ALCOM J6, Colonel Timothy Maxwell
FBI, ASAC Tony Jung
AML, Ms. Linda Murphy
MOA, Captain Dave Koch
SOA DOA, Mr. Chris White
SOA DOA, Mr. Scott Stormo
SOA DOA, Mr. Randy Kilbourne
SOA DPS, Mr. John Roberts
SOA DPS, Mr. John Rockwell
ALCOM/J64, Mr. Timothy Woodall
MOA, Mr. Trygve Erickson
OMO, Mr. Del Smith