


MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 5, 2007
TO: MERA Board of Directors
FROM: Farhad Mansourian 
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM H-2: REQUEST FOR BUDGET AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE FOR REPLACEMENT OF LOGGING RECORDER SYSTEM

Recommended Action: Approval of amendment to the 2007-08 budget to allow for the replacement of the Logging Recorder System; funds to be transferred from the Fund Balance

SUMMARY: Each dispatch center has one or more logging recorders to provide an archived record of radio transmissions and telephone conversations. These recorded messages are then used to fulfill training and legal requirements. The MERA prime site has five logging recorders and two servers to archive radio transmissions.

Eleven logging recorders were purchased in 1998 as part of the MERA bond and two additional recorders were purchased outside of the bond by individual agencies. These logging recorders no longer meet the needs of the dispatch centers and are in need of replacement. The dispatch logging recorders are: 1) outdated, 2) prone to computer failures, 3) system administration requires a computer expert and, 4) the Dictaphone company has been sold and no longer supports any of the equipment. MERA owns five of the thirteen logging recorders and two archive server computers. The five MERA recorders are located at the prime site and are used exclusively for recording of radio traffic common to all dispatch centers.

In August 2005 the Marin County Sheriff reported to the MERA Board that their logging recorder system was having multiple failures, was not reliable, and needed to be replaced. In October 2005 the MERA Executive Committee recommended approval for MERA to spend \$15,000 to hire CIT-COM to prepare an RFP and oversee bid evaluation and installation. In January 2006 the MERA Board approved \$15,000 to hire CIT-COM to:

1. Prepare specifications for a replacement system.
2. Prepare an RFP to potential vendors.
3. Recommend competent vendors to receive the RFP.
4. Assist and receive responses.
5. Assist in negotiating a contract with selected vendor.
6. Supervise new system(s) installation.
7. Resolve any installation problems or warranty issues.

The contract was executed but the process stalled. Earlier this year, the Sheriff asked the County DPW, as MERA staff, to complete the replacement process. We agreed and worked with the consultant to finish this 2-year-old project.

CIT-COM has now completed a lengthy study and has concluded that the existing logging systems used in Marin County are outdated and the newer recording technology is far superior to that purchased almost 10 years ago.

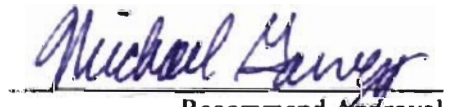
The existing systems are functioning due only to the heroic efforts of the system administrators and computer technicians. There are at least two possible alternatives that will be explored as part of the RFP process. The first alternative is a decentralized recording network in which MERA would no longer own any recording equipment and the individual dispatch centers would be responsible for their own radio and telephone recordings. MERA would still be responsible for a small amount of distribution equipment (\$40,000 estimated) required providing radio system audio to the various dispatch centers.

The second alternative would be similar to what exists today in that MERA would own the "common radio recording" equipment used to record radio system audio along with the common archive computers. The individual dispatch centers would continue to own and maintain their individual recorders. The approximate cost to MERA for this second alternative is \$150,000.

CIT-COM has prepared an RFP that will present alternative logging technologies in an effort to consolidate and standardize the individual agencies purchases of logging recorder systems. Each agency then will be able to make an informed decision knowing all available options. A pre-proposal conference was held on October 29, 2007 with RFP responses due the end of November 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT: Depending on the selected alternatives, there will be an estimated \$40,000 to \$150,000 impact to MERA, plus minor related expenses.

Adequate funds exist in the Fund Balance.



Recommend Approval
Michael Garvey, Interim Executive Director

cc: Mike Garvey
Shelly Grant
Richard Chuck