

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 8, 2010

**TO:** MERA Executive Committee

**FROM:** Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** **AGENDA ITEM A-1:** AD HOC STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DRAFT - MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND PROPOSED SECOND AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING FACILITATION SERVICES BETWEEN MERA AND CBG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

**Recommended Action:** Recommend Board adoption of the Recommended Draft - Marin Emergency Radio Authority Strategic Plan with recommendations from the Finance and Executive Committees, approval of Second Amendment to Agreement for Strategic Planning Facilitation Services between MERA and CBG Communications for an additional \$10,000 for required extra work and authorization for Executive Officer to execute same.

**Background:** Attached is the Recommended Draft of the MERA Strategic Plan for your review and comment. MERA's strategic planning process has proceeded effectively since the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee (Doyle, Pearce and Rodericks) was appointed by the Executive Committee and commenced meeting in December 2009. MERA's EOF Subcommittee (Gray, Irving and Kreins) participated in Meeting No. 3 to give input on that project's priority and cost options. Meeting No. 4 was scheduled for June 16. Prior to that meeting, the draft strategic plan was distributed for Committee review and discussion. The June 16 meeting was convened without an Ad Hoc Committee quorum which necessitated Meeting No. 5 on July 15, 2010, wherein the draft plan was unanimously recommended. The Finance Committee was asked to comment on the fiscal implications of the recommended plan before this Executive Committee meeting and a summary of their comments and questions received to date is as follows:

- The draft plan is comprehensive and appears to have captured all the issues facing MERA.
- The costs and timelines for making the seven strategic directions reality, including convening five new MERA work groups needed to do so, seem somewhat daunting.

- To clarify, the Plan calls for future equipment replacement costs to be funded from a variety of sources.
- The System Technology Replacement Plan capital requirement costs are estimated at \$62,300,000+. This total includes \$30,000 - \$50,000 for outside consulting (Year 1), new EOF interface at \$500,000+ to \$5M (Year 1) capacity and coverage projects at \$7M+ (Year 1), \$250,000 for new frequencies (Year 1) and \$50M+ for system replacement (Year 7).
- The FTE equivalent cited as needed to implement the strategic plan for two to three years after its adoption could be one full-time staff member or two part-time staff members. This position(s) would be above and beyond the current functions performed by the Executive Officer on a 15-hour-per-week basis. The amount of additional staff time would depend on the extent and timing of plan implementation as determined by the Board.
- Marin Transit requests that the reference to the District on Pages 41 and 42 of the plan be removed in light of its recent switch to Mobile Data Terminals on paratransit vehicles, which has reduced District use of the MERA system by 50%.

Should more Finance Committee comments be forthcoming, I will present them on September 8.

Tom Robinson of CBG Communications will remotely facilitate the Executive Committee's review of the recommended draft plan, via conference call and WebEx software, on a page-by-page basis or as otherwise requested by Committee members at the meeting.

On September 9, 2009, the Executive Committee approved a proposal from CBG Communications, Inc., to provide professional strategic planning facilitation services to MERA (\$24,000). On September 30, 2009, the Committee approved a proposal from County DPW to provide technical services for the strategic planning process (\$35,400) for 236 hours of technical assistance. On May 12, 2010, the Committee approved an amendment to CBG's agreement for an additional \$7,500 for extra work. A second amendment of the CBG contract for additional work in the amount of \$10,000 has now been requested. Given the extra meeting and significant work and time involved in developing information for the plan and resulting rewrites, I concur that this request is

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warranted. There are funds available in the Replacement Reserve for the cost of the second amendment.

ATTACHMENTS: Recommended Draft Strategic Plan - Marin Emergency Radio Authority  
Plan Status Funding Memo – CBG Communications, Inc.