

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District

95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945

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WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

E.B. Meeting 9/12/12 **Agenda Item C-1**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2012 REGULAR MEETING**

**Draft: 6/6/12**

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Hymel on May 9, 2012 at 3:34 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, California.

#### **Committee Members (or Alternates) Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
City of Novato	Jim Berg (Alternate)
Novato Fire Protection District	Eric Nickel (Alternate)
Fire Districts: At-Large	Jim Irving

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

County of Marin Sheriff	Robert Doyle
Ross Valley Agencies	Michael Rock
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann

#### **Nonvoting Members Present:**

Marin County Fire Chiefs' Association	Richard Pearce
Marin County Police Chiefs' Association	John Rohrbacher

#### **Nonvoting Members Absent:**

Marin County Public Works Association	Nader Mansourian
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#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
County Communications Service Manager	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Betty Box

**Guests Present:**

City of Belvedere  
Maher Accountancy

Tricia Seyler  
John Maher

A. Consent Calendar

All matters on the Consent Calendar are to be approved with one motion unless a Member of the Committee or the public requests that a separate action be taken on a specific item.

1. Minutes from March 14, 2012 Executive Committee Regular Meeting
2. Proposed Agreement for FY11-12 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy
3. Proposed Third Amendment to Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and Novato Fire Protection District
4. Confirmation of Bi-monthly Regular Executive Committee Meeting Dates: FY12-13
5. Proposed Transfer of MERA Electric Accounts to Marin Clean Energy (MCE)

Cassingham noted that a problem was experienced with the digital recorder in the preparation of the March 14 minutes and asked for any corrections or additions if needed. Hymel recognized John Maher and noted he was available to answer questions about Item A-2.

*M/S/P Gray/Irving to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-5 as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Proposed Technical Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham reported that the Committee initially reviewed the proposed agreement on March 14 as a 3-year contract. Type of services provided under the current agreement and related costs were presented along with the additional costs of capital projects administrative services. Based on Operations Officer Tackabery's suggestion and subsequent discussion with Hymel and General Counsel, a 1-year agreement is being proposed which would permit annual cost and service review and better address under/over cost recovery. Proposed services and costs remain the same. FY12-13 Training costs are \$30,000, Technical Services are \$100,000

and General Administrative Services are \$150,042 which is a significant increase over prior year. Gray and Hymel discussed the benefits of going to a 1-year agreement which allows for more timely review of services and costs. Cassingham noted that the costs in the Agreement have been incorporated in the proposed FY12-13 Operating Budget to be acted on with the next item.

*M/S/P Gray/Irving to recommend Board approval of the proposed 1-year Technical Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

2. Proposed FY12-13 MERA Operating Budget and Fee Schedule for Non- member Users

Cassingham introduced the proposed FY12-13 Operating Budget as virtually the same as the preliminary budget reviewed by the Committee on March 14. The preliminary budget was developed earlier this year to assist MERA's member agencies in preparing their respective annual budgets. The proposed budget has been reduced by about \$7,000 to \$1,591,930 which is a 6.2% increase over prior year. Noteworthy line item variances are County Technical Services, Site Rentals and Leases, Site Utilities and General Contingencies.

A companion action with the Proposed FY12-13 Operating Budget is the recommended continuation of the zero-rate fee schedule for current non-member agencies, which is consistent with the MERA Board's action on December 14, 2011. Hymel confirmed with Cassingham that the preliminary budget information was shared with member agencies on March 15.

Cassingham reported that the MMWD Board approved MERA's request for a waiver of Fair Market Rent for the Forbes Reservoir site for the next 5 years at \$1 per year. She expressed thanks to their Board, Board Member Hogan, Stanley Graham-Real Property Agent and Tanya Sandberg for all their assistance.

*M/S/P Gray/Irving to recommend Board approval of the Proposed MERA FY12-13 Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-member Users.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

3. Proposed FY12-13 MERA Other Budgets

Cassingham reported that these preliminary budgets were presented to the Committee on March 14. She said the proposed 2010 Bond Fund payment in FY12-13 of \$2,122,375 is slightly higher than prior year. The Bank Note payment is \$225,000 which is the same as prior year per Board direction. She said member payment schedules for these budgets and the Operating Budget will be attached to the staff reports presented to the Board on May 16.

*M/S/P Gray/Irving to recommend Board approval of the Proposed FY12-13 Budgets for MERA 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service and New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

4. Nomination of Officers for MERA Board (President and Vice President)

Cassingham said this is the meeting per MERA Bylaws when the Executive Committee nominates officers for the MERA Board (President and Vice President). Nominations will be acted on by the Board on May 16, 2012. She has confirmed that Chief Revere has agreed to serve another year as Board President and Hymel has expressed willingness to continue as Vice President.

*M/S/P Irving/Nickel to nominate NFPD Chief Revere as MERA Board President and County Administrator Hymel as Vice President.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

5. Report #8 on Strategic Plan Implementation

Cassingham summarized Report #8 which reflects Strategic Plan implementation activities since the March 14, 2012 Report #7. Operations Officer Tackabery has provided technical input to Outreach Consultants Price and Mullen to assist with their Fact Sheet and FAQs. Tackabery and Gaffney are working on replacement system cash flow to facilitate the development of financing options. JPA Amendment No. 5 and the companion Amended Bylaws, along with FAQs were distributed to MERA members on March 15 and again on April 16 with the required 30-day notice of Board action on May 16. Irving clarified that individual member board actions were not required to amend the JPA. Cassingham said 17 of MERA's 25 member agencies must vote in the affirmative on May 16 to amend the JPA.

General Counsel Karpiak is continuing his research on the JPA's taxing authority and on the most viable financing options for a replacement system. This is to insure that no time is expended on non-starter options. A Finance Committee meeting will be scheduled in June to review his research. DPW is continuing their work on the 700 MHz Feasibility Study. The next Outreach Subcommittee meeting is scheduled on June 7 to review the next steps for our internal communications plan. A Joint Meeting of Governance, Finance and Outreach will be scheduled in late June after Board action on the JPA Amendment and Bylaws. Cassingham said she will work with Gaffney to schedule a separate Finance Committee meeting before the Joint Meeting.

There being no questions, the Committee received and filed Report #8 as presented.

6. Other Information Items

Cassingham reported that 10 member agencies have linked meraonline.org to their websites. She said others are in progress and that she will assist the remaining agencies to complete this project.

C. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

Hymel noted Tackabery's absence due to medical reasons and introduced Nelson's presentation of these reports. Hymel said after discussion with Cassingham, there will need to be some strategic decisions regarding these projects. He has asked her to schedule a meeting with President Revere, Tackabery and staff, Cassingham and him to get more clarity on the next steps with these projects.

1. Report on Tomales Emergency Radio Project

- Review of Requests for Expenditures

Nelson provided a status of the work to date on this new facility noting that we are now in the permit phase. She said there is a past invoice for staff work from June to December in the amount of \$3,294 that is unpaid. Average DPW expense per month on this project is \$1,300. She is seeking authorization of \$8,000 for staff time for this project from January 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012. Nelson said they contracted with a consultant to do the permit processing applications and community outreach in the amount of \$23,100. She is projecting, based on averages to date, to expend \$16,000 next year in staff time. Cost of the permit was missing from this estimate. Full cost is \$8,326 but County Counsel has advised that we should not be charged for long-range planning which is \$756 of this amount. Total Tomales cost for this year and FY12-13 is \$58,750.

Hymel confirmed that there are funds available in our budgets to address this fiscal year's costs and the annual \$50,000 in the 3-year Systems Analysis

Agreement to address administrative services for capital projects going forward. Part of the discussion is where these projects are going, how far we take them and how do they fit with the next-generation system. There are also some questions around whether we should be paying the estimated \$3,000 per month site lease at Tomales for the next 2 years if we don't have \$2M to do the project. These are the issues we need to address in the meeting with Revere and provide recommendations to the Committee and Board as to where we are proceeding with these projects along with funding sources. He said we need input from the Sheriff and County Fire since Tomales is important to their operations like the Martha property is to Southern Marin.

Nelson confirmed with Hymel that DPW should capture where they are with billings on these projects through the end of the fiscal year. Cassingham clarified that the unpaid amount of \$3,294 in the DPW report has been partially paid on March 28 in the amount of \$2,160 and the balance will be paid on receipt of similar documentation.

*M/S/P Hymel/Gray to authorize continued DPW work on the Tomales Project through the end of FY11-12 as estimated and schedule a meeting with the President and Vice President to develop and present a work plan to the Executive Committee for next fiscal year's expenditures.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

## 2. Report on Martha Company Development Proposal in Tiburon

- Review of Requests for Expenditures

Nelson said this was similar to the Tomales Project. DPW has been trying to identify a site to address emergency radio coverage at this location. Considerable effort has been expended reviewing the EIR to make sure all is there to make the property an effective MERA site. DPW's report provides estimated implementation costs for the site, what has been expended to date and a monthly average for DPW costs going forward during the site development process. She noted an unpaid invoice of \$3,032 for DPW services from December 1, 2011. DPW is asking for up to \$5,000 for January 1, 2012, through June 30, 2012, and \$10,000 per year for the next 3 years.

Hymel said the site on the Martha property is caught up in the development process and asked if there is a scope of work that gets us to the next gen system. Nelson said the goal of DPW staff is to assure what MERA needs from the site is part of the development plan. She does not have a timeline at this point. Hymel confirmed with Nelson that MERA would be given a site on the property as a condition of development. Pearce said a MERA tower could be co-located

with the MMWD water tank. Nickel asked about neighbor reaction. Pearce said the closest neighbor is Ridge Road and the Town has endorsed the site. Hymel asked about the \$3M cost to construct the site noted in the staff report. Nelson said this estimate did not address who might pay for it as this is not her purview. Hymel said part of our discussion about this project is how much might be covered by the developer. Pearce confirmed he did not know how much, with Hymel adding the goal was not to pay a lease. Nickel asked if this application was going to the County. Hymel said the application is with the County and will be transferred to the Town at some point. Gray asked if build-out was conditioned upon approval. Pearce said the residential proposal was pretty solid and build-out could be included.

Hymel said there is a stipulated agreement with the County that a minimum of 43 sites could be developed but negotiations with the Town could occur for fewer sites at different locations.

*M/S/P Irving/Gray to approve related DPW expenses as projected through June 30, 2012 and develop a FY12-13 work plan for the Martha Company Development Proposal in Tiburon.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

### 3. Report on Next Generation System Feasibility Study

- Review of Requests for Expenditures

Nelson said this report is an update on activity to-date and forecast of expenditures during the next 3-year contract not to exceed \$50,000 for all expenses. She forecasted 5.2 hours for the Operations Officer and 13.6 hours for the Communications Services Manager per month through June 30, 2012. Hymel asked about the need for interim investments in the current system in anticipation of the replacement system in 2018 or will the expenses be the same between now and 2018. Nelson said the Tomales and Tiburon projects reflect long-standing coverage issues since MERA was built. Hymel said investment in the old system coverage, if only good for 6 years, may only make sense if we are securing the rights for the next gen system. If these projects are part of the transition to next gen, they may make sense as an interim investment in the current system. Nelson said the Tomales project would be different in that we would be taking the Bay Hill site equipment and moving it into current infrastructure at Tomales where there would be immediate use. Next gen would require Bay Hill or Tomales equipment replacement. She would recommend going forward with Tomales.

As for the Martha site, it could be several years before the site could be built, which means it could be built-out with the next gen system. Pearce said the primary issue with the Martha property is to secure the site.

Irving asked Nelson about MERA needing to be off T-Band in 9 years. Nelson said the legislation has been passed but the FCC has not made a ruling on it. As Marin's FCC Coordinator, she is drafting a letter to the FCC on this. This implementation is very close to the timing of MERA's next gen system.

*M/S/P Irving/Gray to approve related DPW expenses as projected through June 30, 2012 and identify Next Generation System Feasibility Study expenses as part of a FY12-13 capital work plan.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

4. Report on Marin County Emergency Operations Facility Project

Chuck reported on the status of the Sheriff's Department's EOF project console upgrade and its effect on the MERA system. The new EOF will be located at 1600 Los Gamos Road, San Rafael. There are 10 Motorola Gold Elite radio consoles in the present dispatch center, none of which can be relocated. The successor to the Gold Elite, the MCC-7500 consoles (which are digital, not analog) will result in substantial changes to the brain computer at the Civic Center. There will be planned outages during the installation. The cutover plan is not yet completed. Outages will be kept to a minimum but Motorola is saying 24 hours. There is no cost to MERA. Sources of funding are UASI and the County EOF budget.

Nelson said all of the dispatch positions hardware will accept the new software. Cost of the software is included in the cost of this project; therefore, there are no costs to the end-user dispatch centers.

Chuck said all fire station alerting control radios in the gray boxes will need reprogramming and testing. There will be outages at the individual fire stations for an hour or two and alerting would be received via portables or station radios. Chuck clarified that system downtime would not mean the whole system would be out of service. There will be cross side trunking so you will be able to communicate on your system but you won't be able to go across the system which will primarily affect the Sheriff, County Fire, and DPW.

Nickel asked when this work is planned. Nelson said we are currently in design for the project this year with construction planned for 2013 and on-air planned for late first quarter 2014. On the MERA side of this, the new brain is being funded by \$1.2M in grants. County DPW Communications will be facilitating this contract to ensure no other construction will delay it. She is hoping for Board of Supervisors



approval of this contract in June. This will be followed by system design, the hardest part of which will be the cut-over which will be exact with minimum disruption. The brain will go in this year but will sit static until late 2013 after interface. Nickel suggested avoiding fire and winter storm seasons. Nelson is projecting Winter of 2013.

Chuck said the good news is there will be no re-programming of mobiles and portables. Nelson said these enhancements put us on the way to P25 compliance and a platform for next gen. Hymel summarized that more updates on this are expected as we go.

5. Requests for Waiver of Radio Moratorium

- United States Coast Guard
- City of Sausalito Police Department

Nelson said the Coast Guard presently has 2 posts and would like 1 additional handheld radio for the second post for emergency communications and mutual aid coordination. This radio would not be used for day-to-day operations. Sausalito Police Department is requesting an addition of 1 portable radio for traffic control which will have minimal impact on the MERA system. Hymel confirmed staff's recommendation approving both requests.

*M/S/P Gray/Nickel to approve the radio requests by the U.S. Coast Guard and City of Sausalito for one additional radio, respectively.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

6. Status/Word Statistics Reports s(Chuck)

Chuck distributed his MERA System Operations Update for the month of April, dated May 9, 2012. Nelson summarized grant funding to date for projects that will take us to the next gen. IECGP fleet mapping is almost done, which is for the 700 MHz mutual aid overlay system in the County. They are in the 45-day operational testing phase. She is awaiting hard copy licenses from the State for mutual aid frequencies. UASI 2011 is providing funds for the new brain for the system. UASI 2012 positions Marin County for number one priority for \$1.4M in funding for interface equipment should other agencies be unable to meet expenditure deadlines.

Chuck summarized April maintenance activity noting replacement of the AC at Big Rock; purchase of six MTS-2000 radio upgrade kits from Motorola through the County for spares as needed, which will keep us in good shape for 5-6 years; annual, quarterly, and monthly preventive maintenance at Bay Hill, Stewart Point

and Sonoma Mountain; tracking of CRC alarms with the system controller which could be signs of aging; revised system aliases as required; and, completed functional testing for 700 MHz console interfaces.

Chuck said system activity for April was down a bit. MERA, with today's approvals, is adding 6 new radios per month. Nelson said this is a +15-16% growth factor that could affect large events.

7. Other Information Items

None

D. Open Time for Items NOT on Agenda (*limited to two minutes per speaker*)

None

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

**NEXT: Regular Meeting of MERA Executive Committee**  
**Wednesday – July 11, 2012 – 3:30 p.m.**

**AGENDA AND STAFF REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT**  
**WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG**

cc: Diane Patterson (for posting)  
MERA Staff  
General Counsel  
Novato City Clerk (w/minutes)