

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945  
PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660  
[WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG)

**E.B. 1/16/13 AGENDA ITEM A-1**

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Minutes of November 14, 2012 Meeting**

**Draft: 12/18/12**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on November 14, 2012 at 3:37 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA.

#### **Board Members Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Todd Cusimano
Ross Valley Cities/Towns	Debra Stutsman
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann
Special Districts	Bill Hogan

#### **Board Member Absent:**

Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
----------------------	--------------

#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
County DPW/MERA Operations	Craig Tackabery
County Communications Services Manager	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

#### **Guests Present:**

Maher Accountancy	John Maher
NFPD Finance Director	Dan Hom
Indie Politics/Price Campaign Solutions	Dan Mullen, Terry Price
County Probation Department	Jeff Frazee

A. Closed Session

Public Employee Performance – Executive Officer Evaluation Pursuant to  
Government Code - Section 54947

Chair Hymel asked if any Board Member wanted a Closed Session on this matter. Hearing none, there was no Closed Session.

B. 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 separate action be taken on a specific item.

- 1) Report from Executive Officer Work Plan Committee:
  - a) 2012 Executive Officer Work Plan Update
  - b) Proposed Amendment No. 7 to Agreement for Professional Services with Regional Government Services Authority (RGS)
  - c) Proposed 2013 Executive Officer Work Plan
- 2) 2012 Annual Progress Report on Authority Operations and Activities
- 3) Minutes from September 12, 2012 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 4) FY 11-12 Draft Audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report – Maher Accountancy

Hymel noted the presence of Auditor Maher and removed Item B-4 for comments and questions.

*M/S/P Gray/Cusimano to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-3.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

Cassingham introduced Item B-4 and commended NFPD Finance Director Hom and his staff for all their hard work on MERA's accounting and audit. She said she asked Finance Committee Members to individually comment to her on the Draft Audit. Only one comment was received from Vice Chair Gaffney who supported its presentation. Maher commented that the Funds were within budget. He complimented Hom and Cassingham for their diligence. MERA is a well-run organization and very responsive to auditor questions.

*M/S/P Pearce/Gray to recommend acceptance of the FY 11-12 Draft Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Reports and thank Hom and Maher for their work.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

C. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1) Preview of Draft MERA Outreach Executive Summary and Plan

Cassingham presented her staff report on the Plan developed by the Outreach Subcommittee and summarized its contents. The Plan will be presented at the January 16 Governing and Executive Boards' Workshop on MERA's Next Generation System. She introduced Outreach Consultants Price and Mullen. Price reviewed the Executive Summary noting the focus on internal communications, beginning with the Workshop, to achieve unanimous member support for Next Gen System funding. This would be followed by a public education campaign to generate support for a November 2014 ballot measure. The Consultants are developing Fact Sheets and FAQs that will be followed by extensive polling early next year and prior to the election. They are also recommending a Project Oversight Committee.

Hymel asked how the Consultants plan to involve the elected officials on member boards and councils since MERA Board Members are predominantly appointed officials. Mullen noted Kinsey's involvement in the Workshop and the call for elected support at that event. Also, the Special Project Manager will communicate with elected officials via their agency staff to build support. Price said electeds could participate later in the process as members of a Citizens' Committee to advocate for the ballot measure. Cusimano recommended that each Board member should bring at least one of their elected officials to the Workshop. Hymel said we will need elected support when each member agency considers their ballot resolutions. Berg encouraged identification of supporters who will be present over the next two years. Stutsman asked if presentations will be made to each governing body. Mullen said this is part of the Plan, including presentations to local professional associations and others.

McCann asked about taping the Workshop. Price said the special Workshop video can be used with individual governing bodies along with handouts. Hymel asked Cassingham and the Consultants to brief Kinsey before the Workshop. In response to McCann's question about whom else should attend the Workshop, Cusimano suggested both police and fire chiefs from each agency should be invited. With no further questions, Hymel noted acceptance of this informational report.

2) Outreach Subcommittee Recommended Appointments to Project Oversight Subcommittee

Cassingham presented the list of recommended appointments to provide leadership for Outreach Plan implementation. This Subcommittee would not commence work until the Governing Board's adoption of the Plan at the Workshop. She noted vacancies at this time in the MMA and Ex Officio slots.

*M/S/P Pearce/Gray to concur with the recommended appointments to the Project Oversight Subcommittee which will commence on Outreach Plan adoption.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

3) Preview and Discussion of January 16, 2013, Governing and Executive Boards' Workshop on the MERA Next Generation System

Cassingham presented her staff report on the Workshop agenda. The education process needs to begin now given the aging of our current system and construction lead time to replace it over the next 3-5 years. The Board agreed to accept this informational report.

4) Other Information Items

Cassingham reminded about the November 29 Member Orientation. She also noted that the regular Executive Board meeting on January 9 has been rescheduled to January 16, just prior to the Workshop. She will be sending another reminder to member agencies who have not yet linked meraonline.org to their websites. Target date for completion of this project is the end of 2012.

D. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1) Report on MERA Coverage Review

Tackabery updated the Board on the work being done by their Coverage Subcommittee. The first meeting of Chiefs Pearce and Gray, DPW Staff and Cassingham was held on October 3. DPW will be developing better coverage graphics for both the current and replacement Systems for presentation at the next meeting. He has checked on the satellite phone issued by County Fire to Stinson Fire and it is working well. Pearce noted that the outreach made to Board Member Naso on what the Subcommittee is doing was well received.

2) System Activity Overview

Chuck handed out and reviewed his MERA System Activity Report for October 2012. Level of activity is close to prior year. There have been 450,000 transmissions per month

and 750 hours of airtime. The fewer the busy seconds, the better, which tells how the system is functioning. The System is not designed to give 100% access, 100% of the time to every user. Training, which has reduced conversation time, has cut busy seconds nearly in half along with operational changes made 18 months ago. Chuck reviewed annual system usage, transmission hours and busy seconds charts.

Chuck also summarized individual system simulcast cell usage charts proposed for 2018. Cells include the East and West Systems and Sonoma Mountain. Bolinas and Bay Hill were not included as charts due to low usage. In 2018, without System replacement, there will be operational impacts in the West unless there is expansion and no equipment is available for this. Chuck noted that the bottom axis of the charts represents months of the year. Hymel clarified that higher use in winter or summer months reflects the level of flooding or fire activity. Peak system usage is in summer.

Gray requested electronic distribution of the charts since this information can be used to demonstrate need. He also asked that keys or legends be added to clarify what is being presented. Tackabery added that this information needs to be simplified to help paint the capacity picture.

3) Requests for Waiver of Radio Moratorium

- Marin County Probation Department
- Sausalito Police Department

Tackabery reviewed the requests from Probation for 15 additional radios and Sausalito Police Department for 2. The Operations Work Group recommends approval. He noted Jeff Frazee, County Probation, was present to answer questions.

*M/S/P Gray/Pearce to approve the requests from County Probation and Sausalito Police Department for additional 15 and 2 radios, respectively.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

Hymel said while additional radios are not a problem most of the time, they could pose a problem during events. He asked if non-emergency users could be cut-off for first responder use. Nelson said, during busy situations, DPW has protocols for rolling some users off. For example, the Jail would be moved to a “no talk” mode and she would make the necessary calls. Fire would move to VHF Overlay. Hymel suggested a pre-existing agreement with certain users that if the System became overloaded, DPW would roll them off. Nelson said this is communicated during training and she has the authority to move them to “no talk” mode or move to mutual aid during critical times.

Chuck added the System already has a priority of users built in for law and fire. Hymel asked if we should be considering additional radios on a conditional-approval basis, conveying that DPW retains the authority to shut them off during events. Gray suggested when requests are made, the applicable section of the Communications Plan on System user priority be a part of the approval.

4) Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

This information was covered under C-2.

5) Other Information Items

Tackabery noted that T-Band Give Back Federal legislation is being aggressively monitored by the County Lobbyist. Gray asked if cities could participate in this effort. Tackabery said cities with Federal lobbyists could be of great assistance. Gray said member agencies contacting their State and Federal representatives could also help. Tackabery said T-Band users will be migrated off in 9 years and auctions of frequencies would follow with some of the proceeds made available as grants. He would like to see grants available now to assist with migration.

Pearce inquired about the Easton Point Project in Tiburon. Tackabery said they want more funds for more studies, so it is moving slowly. They have asked DPW technical questions about the site and DPW contends they should pay for the information.

E. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

**NEXT:** MERA Executive Board Special Meeting  
**Wednesday – January 16, 2013 – 2:00 p.m.**  
**San Rafael Corporate Center**

**AGENDA AND STAFF REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT**  
**[WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG)**

cc: BOS (for posting)  
MERA Staff  
General Counsel