

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**(Note: revised 9/9/15 of draft minutes distributed 10/13/15)**

**Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee**

**Minutes of September 16, 2015 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herrerias at 3:43 p.m. at the Marin County Sheriff's Office, Los Gamos Drive, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Office of Emergency Services Community Center Conference Room, San Rafael, CA 94903.

**Committee Members Present:**

District #1	Elizabeth Greenberg
District #2	Bill Levinson
District #3	Chuck Reite
District #4	Larry Luckham
District #5	Paul Herrerias

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries

**Tour of Marin County Sheriff's Office Communications Center**

Communications Manager Magoski, assisted by Deputy Executive Officer Jeffries, provided a tour of the Comm Center for the Committee prior to the business meeting.

**A. Minutes from June 8, 2015 Citizens Oversight Committee Special Meeting**

*M/S/P Reite/Levinson to approve the minutes as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None

B. Update on Status of Next Gen System Project - Jeffries

Jeffries summarized his staff report noting release of the RFP for the Wireless Consultant and receipt of proposals on April 28. Six proposals were reviewed by the Project Oversight Subcommittee. Chief Pearce, Sheriff Doyle and Chief Cusimano narrowed the field to three for presentation. Finalists recommended by the Subcommittee in ranked order to the full Committee were Federal Engineering (FE) Scientel and AECOM. Marin DPW staff, with Executive Board approval, negotiated a contract with FE with him participating in the conference calls. The MERA Governing Board approved the FE contract on August 26. The Marin County Board of Supervisors will consider contract approval on September 22 instead of September 15. The County will issue the contract with MERA's approval per MERA's Next Gen Implementation Agreement with the County. MERA will reimburse the County for contract costs. Next step is to issue a Notice to Proceed to FE. Once the vendor is engaged, more detailed timelines for Project-related decisions will be determined.

The key tasks for FE are to develop the vendor RFP and facilitate and advise on vendor selection. Once the Notice to Proceed is issued, these tasks should be completed within 10 months thereafter. Greenberg confirmed this consultant will perform this work and act as Project Manager for Phase I which gets us through the selection process. Phase II will get us through vendor implementation oversight through 2018, which may or may not be FE, based on Phase I performance. Jeffries said magnitude and required expertise for the Project cannot be handled in-house and firms with these qualifications are required to help us implement. FE's depth of knowledge is vital to a well-crafted RFP which may lead to vendor contract savings. Jeffries confirmed for Greenberg that FE was chosen based on overall scope and price. He added, assigned staff was another key decision point, along with their experience with a multitude of vendors, past projects and innovative ideas that could be applied to MERA's Project.

Levinson asked about reference checks and recent projects. Jeffries said County Public Works was provided with documentation about prior projects and DPW staff is familiar with FE's local projects like County of San Francisco and that respective staffs had been contacted. Herrerias asked about AECOM. Jeffries said AECOM made the final three and the panel was comfortable with each consultant, noting similarities between FE and AECOM and the smaller company size of Scientel out of Hawaii. The latter's ideas were interesting but there were size and scope issues. With FE, there is depth and experience to draw on and they have a local division as a point of contact. The creation of monthly consultant reports created by FE and DPW will be a key communication to MERA Boards and Committees on milestones met, in progress and which ones are upcoming.

Luckham asked if Federal was able to point to their similar projects which would be representative of what we expect of them. Jeffries noted MERA's Next Gen Project is unique and not comparable to the City/County of San Francisco Project. Federal is dealing with one agency there while MERA is 25 agencies with Boards and Committees governance and oversight. Effective monthly reports can greatly help with communications within MERA which should reduce the number of face-to-face meetings and related costs. Jeffries confirmed for Levinson MERA has agreed to pay for travel costs for the agreed scope of work which is fixed price. Conference and Skype will be used for regular communications but local, possibly joint same-day presentations

will be required prior to major decisions. Jeffries noted the contingency within the contract to deal with additional unexpected services as needed. Reite asked, due to a Page 9 reference, if FE had been involved with MERA before. Jeffries said no, not directly; however, FE was involved in a UASI research project with the Marin County about what a Next Gen Project might look like. Jeffries said both FE and AECOM have done prior studies for the County.

Jeffries, in response to Herrerias, discussed the addition to scope with FE during negotiations and further discussions to clarify what MERA wants. FE costs were still in line with the range of costs of the other consultants. He said FE costs were above their original proposal but reflected additional scope. He added that the Citizens Oversight Committee (COC) will be included in MERA's distribution of the Project Newsletter for 125+ member agency elected officials and other stakeholders, which will also keep them in the loop between meetings. In response to Herrerias, Jeffries said the timeline for vendor selection is tentatively in Spring 2016 but dependent on Notice to Proceed and other factors. Project completion is still scheduled for 2018.

Reite inquired about system use by the National Guard during disasters. Jeffries said the Guard may not want to operate on MERA channels but work-arounds are available to address these situations. A County ACU 1000 can connect a variety of radios by bridging.

C. Update on Next Gen System Project Financing

Cassingham presented her staff report summarizing the County and consultant NBS efforts to collect and administer Measure A parcel taxes for non-utility and utility-owned parcels. She noted tax collection dates, amounts to be levied and the County collection fee breakdown. Also, she reported on NBS, MERA's contractor for post-election tax administration.

Cassingham said the County has completed the creation of a special fund to receive Measure A parcel taxes, which is required by the Tax Ordinance. MERA will bill the fund for Next Gen Project expenses. Funding sources for FY15-16 Project cash flow and replenishment of Next Gen Project costs before Measure A, will be the freed-up current Bond Reserve by a surety substitution and parcel tax proceeds. Estimated Project expenses in this fiscal year will be less due to FE starting its work later than planned. The initial pay-as-we-go financing strategy will be replaced by phased bond sales based on Project cash flow needs. MERA will also review vendor financing as a possible option.

Cassingham reported that Sperry Capital, Inc. of Sausalito has been engaged to provide financial advisory (F.A.) and bond sale services. They will also provide a third-party review of our financing assumptions to date. MERA had worked with Sperry on the surety substitution which provided a special cash-flow opportunity until the parcel tax is received. Sperry and three other pre-qualified firms were issued an RFP. Two firms responded and Sperry was selected based on their proposal and fees. With the exception of a planning budget, F.A. issuance fees will be included in the bonds. In response to Herrerias, Cassingham confirmed Sperry will be engaged for three years until Project financing is completed. She confirmed for Reite that their fees are based on the amounts of bonds issued and covered by same and their hourly rates against the planning budget of \$10,000.

Greenberg inquired about the number of parcels to be assessed. Cassingham said certain parcels are exempt like government-owned parcels. Jeffries said the NBS Parcel Tax Study is available on MERA's website wherein the number and classifications are broken down along with the fee structure for each classification. Cassingham, in response to Reite, said the parcel tax will fund all of the Next Gen Project with the exception of non-police/fire radios which MERA will fund with its Reserves. Jeffries added MERA will continue to fund system Operations and Maintenance (O&M). He noted there is ongoing discussion by the MERA members to fund a Gen III Reserve and the Authority recognizes the value and responsibility for so doing. Continuing current debt service payments after the bonds are retired is a possible Gen III Reserve funding source given the agencies are used to paying for this. Cassingham said between now and retirement of the Bonds in August 2020, there will be sufficient time to plan for and approve this reserve.

Reite asked about whether any funding will be left from Gen I for use for this purpose. Cassingham said the \$2M debt service reserve will be available. However, this may be used to purchase Next Gen System non-police/fire radios which are estimated at \$2M. Jeffries said Next Gen includes four additional sites but there are at least three more sites on our list that MERA would look to fund if the Project came in under budget and funds were available to do so.

D. Other Information Items

The Chair confirmed that all Committee Members request paper copies of agenda packets going forward. He also thanked staff for the organization chart. The Chair and Greenberg asked for additions to the Committee Member contact list. Greenberg clarified agenda packet distribution dates, availability of agendas on the website and provided confirmation of her email address.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maureen Cassingham  
Executive Officer and Secretary

**NEXT:** Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting

**Wednesday – December 16, 2015 – 3:30pm**