

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

DRAFT: 1/14/16

Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee

Minutes of December 16, 2015 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Greenberg at 3:40 p.m. at the Marin Civic Center CAO Conference Room 315, San Rafael, CA 94903.

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

District #4	Larry Luckham
-------------	---------------

Staff Present:

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

A. Minutes from September 16, 2015 Citizens Oversight Committee Regular Meeting

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

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried.

B. Update on Status of Next Gen System Project (Jeffries)

Jeffries summarized his report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Project since the September 16 meeting. Federal Engineering (FE) has developed a High Level System Requirements document to insure FE knows exactly what MERA wants from the Project. A kick-off meeting was convened to finalize the document. MERA's Finance Committee is seeking a more detailed Project schedule from FE to time Project financing drawdowns. Greenberg confirmed that the Finance Committee is trying to be responsive to the cash flow needs of the Project. Once the System vendor is identified, Project milestones will be revisited. Land use issues associated with additional sites may pose other challenges to the timeline. Jeffries said October 2018 is still deemed by FE as a viable completion date.

Jeffries referenced the upcoming Coverage Analysis Workshop wherein the four new sites included in the \$40M Project budget at \$2M per site will be reviewed, along with MERA's current sites. Levinson asked if specific sites have been identified. Jeffries said the Operations Working Group developed a list of new sites to fill certain coverage holes. Dispatch centers provided calls for service data and call locations which were mapped to prioritize new sites. General areas are two in Southern Marin and two in West Marin. In response to Levinson, Jeffries said the vendor will be charged with identifying specific sites that will work best with their equipment.

Cassingham said the \$2M budgets per site also include environmental, legal, and public hearing costs. Jeffries said some sites may have already been vetted as existing privately owned sites. Southern Marin coverage could also be addressed by a San Francisco site. Reite noted that the cost of each site may require some decision-making. Jeffries added that more sites could be included if costs are lower than expected.

Jeffries said FE has developed an internal Project Communications Plan for all the stakeholders. The Plan includes a monthly report that will be the basis of the Next Gen Project Newsletter, which will be distributed through email. COC members will be added to the distribution list. The first Newsletter will go out in early January. Greenberg said the Newsletter should provide general versus detailed information recognizing that projects are fluid.

Jeffries reported on FE's FCC Frequency Review as part of the evaluation of new tower sites and opportunities to add more frequencies if available or take advantage of other existing mutual aid channels. This Review will be incorporated into the vendor RFP, the first draft of which will be available in early March. Herrerias asked if securing other channels is scope creep. Jeffries said the goal is to keep the channels and functionality we have and add regional use 700MHz channels.

Herrerias noted he is asking about what these features cost in relationship to value added. Jeffries said there is a significant public safety value to the additional channels. Likewise, GPS tracking of vehicles and mobiles will be priced out as an option from the vendor if MERA agrees this is a value added. GPS is invaluable to incident commanders, officer safety and deployment. In response to Herrerias, Jeffries clarified that officers have been used to car and shirt cameras in the

course of their duties, so GPS tracking would be a consistent additional monitoring device that all ties into officer safety and deployment.

Jeffries said the next steps are the development of System Lifecycle recommendations and whether they will be project or maintenance costs. Vendor bi-annual hardware and software updates that could extend System life will be analyzed as cost-benefit option. He noted January 26 as the new date for the Coverage Analysis Workshop. FE will present what coverage options existing and new sites will provide the Next Gen System. As we change technology, new coverage holes may develop and old ones may be addressed.

The Coverage Workshop will be the last big milestone before we see the draft vendor RFP in March. After comments are received, the final RFP will be released in April. Vendor bids will be due in September and reviewed thereafter by FE, staff, the Operations Group and Next Gen Project Oversight Committee.

Herrerias asked about the number of vendors. Jeffries said there are at least 3 major vendors and other companies that may partner in submitting a proposal. He said although there was only one bid for the current System, a MERA team did site visits to assist with their contract negotiations. After spending time with other users, the importance of vendor training and support was critically critical to effective System use. From these visits, MERA determined it needed its trainers in front of its end users.

Greenberg asked if there was a post-mortem on why there was only one vendor for the current System. Jeffries did not recall if this was done but assured that FE is aware of all the vendors and will reach out without bias to assure multiple bids. Reite asked whether site visits would be conducted before or after vendor selection. Jeffries said reference checks with end users and site visits of the top 2 or 3 vendors' systems would occur before selection. Reite asked if site visits were funded by the MERA budget or paid by the members sending representatives. Jeffries said for Gen 1, representatives' time was paid by their agency and MERA paid for the travel.

Regarding the Workshop, Herrerias asked about the submission of written input if representatives could not attend. Jeffries said contact will be made with agencies after the RSVP deadline to assure their input is received. Ideally, in-person attendance results in the greatest interaction and better input.

C. Update on Next Gen System Project Financing

Cassingham recapped her staff report noting Sperry Capital, Inc., was selected as MERA's Financial Advisor and they are reviewing various financing options and the timing of same, including a construction line of credit and phased bond issuance. The Governing Board on December 9 authorized the engagement of Bond and Disclosure Counsels. She has since solicited fee proposals for presentation to the Executive Board on January 13.

Cassingham said NBS has been engaged to provide Annual Levy Reports which are the basis of the Annual Reports to the Board of Supervisors. She has also solicited a proposal from Maher

Accountancy, MERA's Auditors, to conduct the Measure A Independent Compliance Audit. The first audit is due December 31, 2016. She noted her December 9 staff report to the Governing Board on year one of the administration of the Measure A tax. There were 200+ inquiries, both informational and requests for other types of exemptions. The only exemption authorized by the Tax Ordinance is for Low-Income Seniors. The Governing Board accepted the staff report as presented, noting that all parcels are provided police and fire services without exception and without regard for their unique characteristics. Reite agreed that applying Measure A on an ad hoc basis would be subject to challenge and criticism. In response to Herrerias, Cassingham explained the court action validating Measure A, which eliminates the possibility of a successful legal challenge to the parcel tax.

D. Other Information Items

Cassingham distributed updated Committee and Staff contact lists along with a revised organization chart reflecting Pat Echols as MERA Operations Officer. The revised Next Gen Project timeline from FE will be represented in larger font. Herrerias requested deletion of his home phone on the Committee list.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham
Executive Officer and Secretary

NEXT: Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, March 16, 2016 – 3:30 p.m.
Marin Civic Center**