

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**DRAFT: 6/9/16**

## Executive Board

### **Minutes of May 4, 2016 Meeting**

#### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on May 4, 2016 at 3:50 p.m. at the Marin Civic Center, CAO Conference Room 315, San Rafael, CA 94903.

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

County of Marin  
Marin County Sheriff  
City of San Rafael  
Fire Services  
Ross Valley Cities/Towns

Matthew Hymel  
Michael Ridgway  
Chris Gray  
Richard Pearce  
Debra Stutsman

#### **Board Members Absent:**

City of Novato  
Police Departments  
Special Districts  
Southern Marin Cities/Towns

Jim Berg  
Todd Cusimano  
Tom Roach  
Jim McCann

#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer  
MERA Next Gen System Administrative Assistant  
MERA Operations Officer  
DPW Communications Services Manager  
County Communications Engineer  
Recording Secretary

Maureen Cassingham  
Alex Anderson  
Pat Echols  
Shelly Nelson  
Richard Chuck  
Maureen Cassingham

#### A. Consent Calendar

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

- 1) Minutes from March 9, 2016 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Proposed Agreement for FY15-16 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy

- 3) Proposed Eighth Amendment to Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and Novato Fire Protection District
- 4) Report No 40 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 5) Update on Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) Request for MERA Radios
- 6) Confirmation of Bi-Monthly Regular Executive Board Meeting Dates: FY16-17

*M/S/P Gray/Pearce to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 through 6 as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Gray – Item 1

Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1) Nomination of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)

Cassingham stated this was the annual meeting for the Executive Board to consider nominations for the offices of President and Vice President of the Governing Board. She noted Pearce and Hymel have serviced in these capacities since 2013. After some discussion, Pearce volunteered to serve again as President. Hymel nominated Cusimano as Vice President if available to serve, given his transition. He agreed to serve should Cusimano decline. Cassingham said she would contact Cusimano.

*M/S/P Gray/Ridgway to nominate Pearce and Cusimano for President and Vice President respectively with Hymel willing to continue as Vice President should Cusimano be unavailable to serve.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

2) Update on MERA 2016 Special Parcel Tax Bond Financing – Next Gen Project

Cassingham presented her informational report noting the excellent bond ratings from Moody's and Fitch. She said the ratings conference call with S&P resulted in MERA withdrawing its rating request in favor of using Moody's. The bond sale will be conducted on May 5 and significant underwriter interest is expected since there are very few California tax-exempt issues available.

Cassingham reported on the competitive bid process for a guaranteed investment contract for the bond proceeds. There is flexibility for Project drawdowns and a GIC will provide

greater interest earnings for the Project. She mentioned that a reserve fund surety had also been competitively bid resulting in the selection of Builders Assured Mutual (BAM) which provided the surety for our current Bond Reserve for Project cash flow purposes. Bond closing is still scheduled for May 18 and 19. Hymel asked about the extension of the bond term to improve ratings. Cassingham said extending it to 2035 to coincide with the Parcel Tax was one of the adjustments to the financing plan which achieved better ratings.

Pearce asked about risks with a GIC. Cassingham responded it was a secure investment shielded by dissolution of the GIC if funders ratings declined. Hymel requested notification to the Boards of the outcome of the bond sale.

3) Report No 15 from the Next Gen Project Oversight Committee (NGPOC) – (Jeffries)

Cassingham presented Jeffries' report in his absence. She noted Governing Board approval of the vendor RFP. She confirmed with Echols that the RFP may be released as early as May 5 but no later than end of this week. Hymel asked if there had been interest from any vendors. Echols said Motorola and Harris representatives had attended recent MERA meetings but the pool of potential bidders is limited. Nelson added that in addition to the larger vendors, a number of smaller subcontractors, like microwave vendors and fire station alerting vendors, have been interested. Echols confirmed a pre-bid conference was scheduled on May 16.

Cassingham highlighted the media releases for the Low-Income Senior Exemption, the final of which will be released in May. She thanked Anderson for all his work in reaching out to senior organizations to get the word out along with mailing application forms and FAQs to MERA's member agencies for distribution. Anderson confirmed there were 4 media advisories in all.

Cassingham noted the next NGPOC meeting is scheduled for July 27, just prior to the Governing Board meeting on the same day. Key topics will be the vendor proposals submitted and vendor selection process.

4) Proposed FY16-17 Technical Services Annual Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham said the proposed Agreement is part of MERA's Annual Operating Budget. The Agreement 3 components are training, technical services and administrative costs. The admin component cost has been adjusted by 2.6% for CPI. Proposed annual cost is \$301,810.

*M/S/P Pearce/Gray to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY16-17 Technical Services Annual Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

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

5) Proposed FY16-17 Communication Engineering Services Annual Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham presented the proposed Agreement for Chuck's services for the coming fiscal year. It reflects a 2.6% CPI adjustment for a total cost of \$206,872. This amount has been included in the proposed FY16-17 Operating Budget.

*M/S/P Ridgeway/Gray to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY16-17 Communication Engineering Services Annual Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

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

6) Proposed FY16-17 MERA Operating Budget and Zero Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member Users

Cassingham said this Budget is the same as the one presented to the Executive Board on March 9. Total budget of \$1,888,142 represents a 4.2% increase over prior year. She noted that the previously requested RGS salary survey for her position, which includes a January 1, 2016, CPI adjustment in her hourly rate, determined her compensation is competitive with like positions.

Cassingham said the proposed continuation of the Zero Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member Users will permit completion of the Non-Member Subcommittee's review in time for the July 13 Executive Board meeting. Pearce inquired about the Executive Officer's hours. Cassingham said 29 hours is the maximum without triggering benefits which is her current maximum between her administrative hours and Next Gen Project support. Hymel said the point is that we don't want you to work beyond what you are compensated for.

*M/S/P Gray/Stutsman to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY16-17 MERA Operating Budget as presented and continuation of the Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member users until the Subcommittee presents its recommendations.*

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

7) Proposed FY16-17 MERA New Project Financing and Revenue Bonds Budgets

Cassingham presented the 2007 Citizen Bank Loan Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Budgets. The Project Note payment of \$225,000 was originally set by the Governing Board and has remained unchanged. The term of the Note is the same as the 2010 Bonds. The Bonds Budget reflects a slight increase in FY16-17 to \$2,124,625. There is no discretion in this payment amount.

*M/S/P Pearce/Gray to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY16-17 New Project Financing – 2007 Bank Note and MERA 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

8) Bi-Monthly Report on Reserve Funds Balances

Cassingham distributed and summarized the informational report noting the projected 6/30/16 fund balance of \$140,500 for Fund 70032. Source of revenue is the \$16,000 difference between the member payments collected and actual Project Note. Projects funded by Fund 70032 include DPW costs for the Tomales and Martha sites work, the Bay Hill Tower Replacement and legal costs. Fund 70036 revenue includes the annual post-audit allocation from the Operating Fund and three replenishments for Next Gen Project planning and implementation costs. Projected Fund balance as of 6/30/16 is \$1,108,760 after \$430,000 in expenditures for generator and fuel tank replacements.

Pearce asked if the surety cash flow for Next Gen will be a challenge for Maher to track with the audit and for the Citizens Oversight Committee to understand. Cassingham said this will be easy to follow from the two audits Maher will be conducting, namely the regular Annual Audit of MERA's financial statements and the Independent Compliance Audit. She noted there will be extra expense for the regular audit due to the creation of two new funds. She has been keeping Maher informed accordingly.

9) Status of FY15-16 Equipment Replacement Requests and Proposed FY16-17 Equipment Replacement Requests

Echols noted there are 4 generators left to be replaced by the end of the fiscal year. They include Mt. Tiburon, Dollar Hill, Forbes Hill and Sonoma Mountain. All fuel tanks have been replaced or repaired with the exception of Mt. Barnabe. Mt. Barnabe will be completed, hopefully by the end of the fiscal year due to scheduling delays with PG&E. Gray asked if the Board could be of assistance with this. Nelson said not at this point. Hymel confirmed with Echols that the generators will have useful life with the Next Gen System. Echols said useful life is 12 years.

Echols said the scrapped generators and tanks will be surplus per MERA Governing Board policy.

Echols noted that there are no foreseeable equipment replacement requests for FY16-17.

10) Status of FY15-16 System Analysis Capital Projects and Proposed FY16-17 System Analysis Capital Projects (NON-Next Gen System)

Echols reported that the Tomales site final documents, including the Grant Deed from the Parks Family and MALT easement modification, should be available for presentation to the Governing Board before the end of the fiscal year. There are no new developments with the Martha site.

Echols said the reinforcement of the Dollar Hill Tower, which is a joint project with the City of San Rafael, had its pre-bid walk today. No contractors responded. Chuck said the City would issue an RFP amendment deleting the requirement for a pre-bid walk and extend the invitation to bid. This will delay project completion to August or later.

No new capital projects are anticipated for FY16-17.

11) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports (Echols)

1) Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Hymel noted that monthly busies had been reduced to one second which are excellent statistics.

2) Other Information Items

Echols said a request will be coming from GGNRA regarding installation of 2 tsunami warning sirens near Muir Beach and Rodeo Beach at Fort Cronkite. They want the sirens tied into the MERA System for activation. These sirens will connect to the County siren at Stinson Beach which activates at Woodacre. Neighborhood concerns have arisen at Muir Beach due to the noise from weekly testing. Stutsman said San Anselmo's Town Hall siren complaints are nearly non-existent. Echols said before a proposal is presented to MERA, a number of details must be ironed out, including roles and responsibilities. GGNRA will pay for the capital costs. MERA's O&M and access issues also need to be addressed.

Echols announced Nelson's retirement at the end of the month. She will be greatly missed. Her contributions to the current MERA System and Next Gen have been invaluable. This announcement will be made to the Governing Board on May 11. A recruitment has been

opened today for the Communications Services Manager and an interim appointment is pending, given the time involved to complete the recruitment and appointment process.

Pearce inquired about how much time GGNRA uses on the MERA System. Chuck said he would check given they use the S.O.s talk groups. Cassingham said the Non-Member Users Subcommittee has been considering asking non-payers to provide or share other resources with MERA in lieu of payment. Hymel said he noted that per Consent Calendar Item A-5, MCOE had reduced its request for radios from 400 to 23. Gray said MCOE's system usage would primarily be for testing. Cassingham added that DPW is working on the technical steps and cost estimate for adding MCOE as a System user and she is working on a Use Agreement and development of a schedule for action on the request. Gray offered his input on the Agreement. Cassingham reported this matter will be presented to the Executive Board on July 13. Nelson said she is proceeding with the cost estimate but will need to know the mix of portables and desktops. MCOE will need to weigh in on the mix.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maureen Cassingham  
Executive Officer and Secretary

**NEXT:**

**MERA Executive Board Meeting**

**Wednesday - July 13, 2016 – 3:30 p.m. – NFPD**