

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945  
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**DRAFT: 6/7/17**

## **GOVERNING BOARD** **Minutes of May 10, 2017 Regular Meeting**

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on May 10, 2017 at 3:31 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. Self-introductions followed.

### **Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:**

City of Belvedere	Tricia Seyler (Alternate)
Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano
City of Larkspur	Scott Shurtz
City of Mill Valley	Jacqueline Graf-Reis (Alternate)
City of Novato	Pam Drew
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of Anselmo	Doug Kelly
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	Bill Frass (Alternate)
Town of Tiburon	David Hutton
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marinwood Community Services District	Tom Roach
Novato Fire Protection District	Steve Metcho, L.J. Silverman (Alternate)
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Chris Tubbs (Alternate)
Stinson Beach Fire District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce

### **Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:**

Town of Fairfax  
City of San Rafael  
Bollinas Fire Protection District  
Marin Community College District  
Marin Transit  
Marin Municipal Water District  
Ross Valley Fire Department  
Central Marin Police Authority

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Deputy Executive Officer - Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Operations Officer	Pat Echols
Communications Engineering Services Manager	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Lauren Pallas

**Guests Present:**

Federal Engineering Project Manager	Denis Marin
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A. Election of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)

Pearce presented the Executive Board's nominations of Pearce and Cusimano as President and Vice President, respectively. Both volunteered to serve again in these capacities.

*M/S/P Kelly/Metcho to elect Pearce and Cusimano as President and Vice President, respectively.*

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

B. Consent Calendar

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

- 1) Minutes from February 22, 2017 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report No. 54 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Proposed Resolution Rescinding Resolution of Necessity – Tomales Site
- 4) Proposed MERA Local Debt Policy Resolution
- 5) Executive Officer Work Plan Committee (EOWP) Update

on Succession Plan and Staff Support

- 6) Update on Non-Member MERA System User Letters of Agreement (LOAs)
- 7) Confirmation of Monthly Regular Governing Board Meeting Dates: FY17-18

Cassingham requested removal of Consent Calendar Item 3. Gaffney requested removal of Consent Calendar Item 4.

*M/S/P Tubbs/Cusimano to approve the Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 as presented.*

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

Cassingham said Item 3, Proposed Resolution Rescinding Resolution of Necessity for the Tomales Site as part of the Next Gen System, was the last document needed preceding site development. She expressed appreciation for Echols' help with this and all of the County Real Estate Division Eric Lueder's efforts dating back to 2009 to bring this matter to fruition.

Gaffney requested revision of Section H.1 of the Local Debt Resolution Exhibit A to read "relationships with rating agencies as needed."

*M/S/P Hymel/Tubbs to approve Consent Calendar Item 3 as presented and Item 4 as revised.*

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

C. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

- 1) Report No. 27 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries summarized his report, noting the kick-off meeting with Motorola on March 24. He invited Echols to provide an overview on Project status since the second meeting with Motorola on April 19. Echols said weekly Project administration meetings have been initiated, both in-person and by phone, along with weekly technical conference calls. Site visits have been initiated with the Motorola team, which are now mid-way. Discussions are underway about coverage testing requirements and we are closer with microwave path surveys of

the backhaul. Cutover plan discussions began this week.

Echols added Jeffries has been developing Next Gen radio packages, which are being presented to the Operations Issues Work Group with respect to one-for-one replacement along with accessories. An equipment fair is planned for July. The Operations Group is working on streamlined talk group templates for further discussion. He noted he is working on an RFP for site CEQA review and document preparation once preliminary design documents are in hand from Motorola in the next few months.

Jeffries said the radio packages will be presented to this Board on June 28. A survey will be presented to the members next week confirming 11-4-14 radio equipment and accessories to clarify what will be replaced and added Motorola payments and timelines are also being confirmed. The third Media Advisory for the Parcel Tax Low-Income Senior Exemption will be issued shortly.

2) Report on Next Gen Portable Radio GPS Feature – (Jeffries)

Jeffries said his report on the GPS feature was based on meetings with the Chiefs' Associations, dispatch centers and Motorola. Both Chiefs' Associations expressed strong interest in the feature, but only 1 Chief supported including it in MERA radios. Kelly noted his appreciation to Jeffries for reviewing his report with him before the meeting.

3) Proposed FY17-18 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham presented the proposed categories of services under this Agreement noting the technical services component cost has been decreased by \$50,000 and Administrative Services costs have been increased by a 3.6% CPI. She said the cost of this Agreement is included in the proposed FY17-18 Operating Budget to be considered later in this agenda.

Cusimano asked if the reduction was due to where we are with the Next Gen Project. Echols said the need for outside technical services has waned given we are at the end of useful life of the current System. Similarly with training, the demand has declined.

*M/S/P Roach/Cusimano to approve the Proposed FY17-18 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin.*

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

4) Proposed FY17-18 Communication Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham noted the Executive Board recommended approval of this Agreement. The current Agreement for the services of 1.0 FTE Senior Communications Engineer at a cost of \$206,872 is, ending on June 30. The County is proposing to provide the same Scope of Services in FY17-18 using 10% time base of the Communications Engineering Services Manager and 90% time base of Senior Communications Technician.

Cassingham said the current year's contract was modified by the County without benefit of a written agreement with MERA. These changes have been in place over the last year without notification. All of MERA's agreements with the County require mutual written approval of any changes. Pearce said there was Executive Board discussion of Chuck's services going forward.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Kelly to approve the Proposed FY17-18 Communications Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin.*

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

5) Other Information Items

None.

D. Public Hearings

1) Proposed FY17-18 MERA Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users

Pearce opened the Public Hearing for Items D-1, D-2 and D-3.

Cassingham presented the proposed FY17-18 Operating Budget and recommended Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users. The Executive Board reviewed and recommended this Budget in the amount of \$1,923.710, which represents a \$1.9% increase over prior year. The Executive Board also supported continuance of the Non-Member Zero-Rate Fee Schedule. Letters of Agreement with Non-Member Users require 6 months' notice of any fee change.

Pearce noted completion of the Letters of Agreement was an important accomplishment for MERA. Non-Member System use has now been documented.

*M/S/P Kelly/Hymel to approve the Proposed FY17-18 MERA Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users.*

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

2) Proposed FY17-18 MERA New Project Financing Note and Revenue Bonds Budgets.

Cassingham presented the recommended FY17-18 Budgets for the 2007 Citizen Bank Loan Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds at \$225,000 and \$2,123,200, respectively. The Bank Note was for supplemental borrowing for the current MERA system. The payment amount was originally established by the Governing Board. The Bonds budget is established by the Trustee and there is no discretion with this amount.

Cassingham noted member agencies will be invoiced after June 1 for their Operating Budget contributions and Trustee US Bank will invoice for Debt Service after June 1 with payment due by August 1.

*M/S/P Tubbs/Cusimano to approve the Proposed FY17-18 MERA New Project Financing Note and Revenue Bonds Budgets.*

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

3) Proposed Resolution Adopting the FY17-18 Operating, New Project Financing Note and 2010 Revenue Bonds Budgets

Cassingham presented the Resolution which memorializes the previous Budget approvals.

*M/S/P Hymel/Tubbs to approve Resolution No. 2017-05 Adopting the Proposed FY17-18 Operating, New Project Financing Note and 2010 Revenue Bonds Budgets.*

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

Pearce closed the Public Hearing.

E. Operations Reports – (Echols)

1) Proposed Change Order Policy – Motorola Contract

Echols presented his report noting no contingency was established for the Motorola contract. Typically, the County uses between 10% to 20% of the contract amount to address change orders, which precludes the need for Board approval of individual changes, which could create delays.

Echols reviewed the proposed policy, which was discussed by the Executive Board on May 3. The three components include change order review by a Next Gen Project Oversight Subcommittee of 2-3 members and the Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer and Operations Officer. Second, any change order requests over \$100,000 or deemed to be significant to the Project by the Subcommittee from a functionality or schedule standpoint would be presented to the Governing Board. The third component is that any change orders not meeting these criteria would be approved by the County and reported thereafter at the next Executive and Governing Board meetings. Echols noted the contingency amount will be considered by the Finance Committee with a recommendation to the Governing Board.

Pearce said this policy will permit the checks and balances needed to manage the Project's finite budget. Cumulative change orders could pose a significant challenge. He thanked Echols for promulgating changes discussed by the Executive Board. Echols clarified for Gaffney that even if a change order is a low dollar value, it would still be forwarded to the Governing Board if it affected Project functionality or schedule. Echols clarified that all change orders will go the Subcommittee and be reported to the Boards.

Echols requested Board guidance on the selection of the Project Oversight Committee Subcommittee. Hymel suggested that the Oversight Committee be tasked with appointing the Subcommittee. Ortiz clarified that staff could also reach out to Committee members to form an ad hoc subcommittee to review change orders. She will review this process further with the Executive Officer.

*M/S/P Roach/Tubbs to adopt the Proposed Change Order Policy as presented.*

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

2) Proposed Radio Communications System Contract Change Order –  
Fire Station Alerting (FSA)

Echols provided background on where we are with this change order. The direction has been to pursue the G2 Phoenix System by US Digital as the preferred solution for FSA. Upon deeper review, costs began to escalate to a troubling level. The decision then was to revisit the Mach Alert system, which was originally included in Motorola's proposal. At that time, it was thought that Mach Alert would not provide the needed functionality for the dispatchers, for example, the tone-to-talk feature.

Echols said Motorola was asked to provide an apples-to-apples comparison of the two systems, which is still under review. The G2 system base cost is \$3.3M, which is double what we were expecting. It also did not include an extended warranty to match the base system years 4-15 warranty. This would add another \$1.2M to the Phoenix G2 system cost.

Echols said the Mach Alert base system is \$1.8M plus \$1M for the extended warranty for a grand total of \$2.89M. Based on a side-by-side cost and feature comparison, the G2 System may not be worth the added cost. However, more detailed questions remain. Warranty costs are pricy and raise issues about the extent of risk. Systems reliability needs further review as a result. MERA might want to establish a reserve as an alternative.

Gaffney said in comparison to the base system warranty cost, this warranty cost is a much higher percentage. Echols acknowledged this cost might be negotiable. Hymel said cost may be at a premium in that a warranty may not be typical. Echols said Motorola has a business partnership with Mach Alert and this warranty may reflect a markup on top of the US Digital quote. He added that these FSA providers do not have long-standing performance track records.

Jeffries said it is becoming time sensitive to system design to complete the FSA analysis and the change order. Jeffries confirmed the FSA original cost estimate was \$1.2M, with Echols noting that did not include a warranty. Jeffries said after several specification clarifications, these updated numbers were presented. Hymel asked about next steps with this. Jeffries said this would go to the Operations Group, the Oversight Committee and then the Governing Board. He confirmed that this change order was already acknowledged within the Motorola Contract and the Project budget.



3) Recommendations on Conventional Radio Channels and Related Costs

Echols said conventional channels are currently integrated into the MERA System. With the Next Gen Project, there will be new sites and some that will no longer be needed. Conventional Channels are co-located at the departing sites and will need to be reconfigured elsewhere to retain them. The County has historically owned and maintained the Conventional Channels prior to the creation of MERA.

Echols said recommendations were made to the Executive Board to facilitate the relocation of Conventional Radio System resources to maintain mutual aid communications consistent with MERA's VHF and Mutual Aid Plan policies. More value engineering was undertaken to reduce costs to \$75,300. Discussion surrounded whether the County should fund these costs or MERA, since the MERA members benefit from the conventional resources.

Echols said it was recommended that MERA fund the one-time relocation costs of \$75,300 triggered by the Next Gen Project and continue discussion of ownership and ongoing maintenance and replacement costs. Pearce expressed concern regarding increased mission creep costs for MERA with the Next Gen Project.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Kelly to approve the one-time conventional channel resources relocation costs and continued discussion of ownership, maintenance and replacement costs.*

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

4) Report on Next Generation System Implementation Agreement Budget

Echols said DPW was asked to revisit the Implementation Agreement Budget of \$2M, established in 2015, now that we are further into the Next Gen Project. Based on the Motorola contract and schedule, the DPW service levels are now estimated at \$1.23M through the end of the Project. He said with the additional costs of DPW oversight billed to date, the total is approximately \$1.5M.

Pearce said the \$2M cost estimate was presented in the absence of Federal Engineering costs. He would like to revisit the service provided by DPW and FE. Cassingham said this item would be on the Joint Meeting Agenda of the Finance and Next Gen Project Oversight Committees in June.

In response to Cusimano, Pearce noted the Agreement budget was estimated by the former Operations Officer as part of the Project Feasibility Study and in the absence of FE. Echols said the detailed services attached to his report reflect the

cutover and transition to Next Gen. The work FE is doing is overseeing the Motorola Contract and Project specifications.

Pearce said the original understanding was for County staff to implement the Project without FE. Hymel said FE has a distinct scope. Jeffries said in early 2015, DPW did not anticipate the use of FE, but to perform the work in-house. Echols said in early 2015 the RFP was developed by DPW for Wireless Communications Consultant Services resulting in FE's selection. The RFP spelled out their tasks. The County services are specified in the Implementation Agreement.

Hymel said there needs to be clarity about Project-related services so that there is no duplication. Gaffney confirmed DPW's Implementation Services Budget is "not to exceed".

5) Request from FBI for Big Rock Site Phone Line

Echols said normally the FBI would have their own telephone line at Big Rock. Since there is no phone service there, the site owner suggested they contact MERA for use of a single microwave circuit for their radio at Big Rock. He said MERA has unused capacity on its microwave link from Big Rock to the Civic Center. This would not affect MERA system performance. The FBI would provide its own cable.

Echols said, if approved, DPW would oversee the connection to the MERA site. DPW has requested a letter of formal request from the FBI followed by MERA preparing a Use Agreement with the FBI, including provisions for interference and return of the circuit if needed by MERA. Kelly asked about payment of a fee. Echols will inquire from the Real Estate Department about related comps. He confirmed the site owners will charge the FBI for a lease. Pearce said this falls into the need for documented use like the Letters of Agreement area with Non-Member Users. The Board supported an agreement with the FBI.

6) MERA System Operations Update – (Chuck)

Chuck reported on last month's System maintenance, noting the exceeded five-year battery life at Mt. Barnabe, continued replacement program of computer power supply fans for system controllers and temperature alarms for privately-owned sites. He reviewed April system usage of 734 hours with 17 seconds of busies. Year-to-date was 3,050 call hours with 7 minutes of busies. In response to Gaffney, Chuck said Public Works has a lower priority in the System.

F. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Naso suggested reaching out to Mansourian at SMART to use the MERA System. Jeffries, who does consulting with SMART for emergency planning, noted they have an existing radio system that has mutual aid access. Nonetheless, he will reach out to Chief Welch at SMART.

G. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary