

C.O.C. 12/20/17 Agenda Item A

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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DRAFT: 10/23/17

Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee

Minutes of September 20, 2017 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herrerias at 4:00 p.m. on September 20, 2017 at the Marin Civic Center CAO Conference Room 315, San Rafael, California 94903.

Committee Members Present:

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

Committee Members Absent:

District #2	Bill Levinson
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Staff Present:

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

A. **Minutes of June 21, 2017 Citizens Oversight Committee Regular Meeting**

M/S/P Luckham/Greenberg 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 beginning with where MERA and Motorola are in Customer Design Review of the contracted 700 MHz frequency system. Motorola had advised there are four frequency options that must be reviewed and determined to be the most responsive to the Contract. They include the original 700 MHz design parameters, the 700 MHz per Region 6 requirements, which may include waivers, a 700 MHz and 800 MHz hybrid system or 800 MHz system. He said Mach Alert Fire Station Alerting (FSA) technology is under design review, which will be undertaken in parallel to the Next Gen Project.

Jeffries said the radio packages and accessories are being fine-tuned with Motorola. Initial agency radio inventories are complete for any equipment specified by MERA as “in use” on the election date of November 4, 2014. Price differentials for agency upgrades will be paid by the agencies. Bandwidth requirements for dispatch and fire stations need one data element for completion. Greenberg noted this is more efficient over the Ethernet versus T1. Jeffries said there will be 2 paths to all stations, including Ethernet and RF.

Jeffries noted talkgroup templates for Law and Fire are nearly done, followed by other government System users like MMWD, which is a unique user with Law and Fire. The cutover plan will benefit from a pending transcoder loan from Motorola, which would otherwise cost \$1M for a one-time use with no future value. Regarding the microwave backhaul, some of the paths have challenges, like tree groves affecting line of sight that we will need to work on with Motorola since they have considerable bearing on system design.

Jeffries reported that the Project schedule has been impacted by frequency plan challenges and replacement of the Motorola System Engineer, which will push it out. More will be known soon on this. The CEQA consultant has been hired and some of this work can commence, even with site uncertainties. Motorola is open to extending two cost incentive deadlines offered for multiband radios if ordered this month, and the overall \$500,000 equipment order discount if placed by December 31, 2017.

Jeffries addressed Levinson’s email question to staff about Next Gen System interaction with social media as utilized in Houston with Hurricane Harvey. He explained MERA’s system uses voice radio that does not interact with social media. Dispatch and Emergency Operations and Member Agency PIOs pick up on social media messaging, which are filtered and double-checked at Emergency Operations Centers, then shared by radio with first responders. This is another avenue for responding. Radio communications ultimately translate into data communications. He added that First Net is a nationwide effort, that is under development, which will affect data communications to first responders.

Reite inquired about a radio tower on Angel Island. Jeffries said this site was reviewed in the past, but is challenged by State Parks jurisdictionally, along with their goal to

preserve the natural setting and habitat. Also, it would be a difficult site to maintain and repair. He reminded the Committee that Motorola was asked to assess any other suggested new sites in their preliminary design that would achieve MERA's coverage goals.

Jeffries said that Ernest Klock, a senior County DPW engineer, had just been selected to replace Pat Echols, DPW Assistant Public Works Director and MERA Operations Officer, who is retiring. Klock will shadow Echols and assume this post on December 1, 2017.

At 4:18 p.m., the Committee temporarily recessed the meeting due to a Civic Center fire alarm requiring facility evacuation. The meeting was reconvened outside the building at 4:25 p.m.

C. Update on NBS Measure A Parcel Tax Administration Services and Contract Fee

Cassingham presented the staff report, noting it was in response to prior meeting inquiries from the Committee about NBS' tax administration services. She said their scope of work included the establishment of an 800 number for public communications, review and calculation of the levy, accuracy of levy application, parcel database maintenance, management of the low-income senior exemption process, preparation of required County submittals and levy reports, development of annual 2016 Bond Tables for EMMA reporting and billing of Utility Owned Parcels.

Cassingham said original NBS annual fees were increased from \$13,250 to \$20,000 effective July 1, 2017, primarily due to the labor intensity of the toll-free line and call time, which had increased over time due to the length and number of senior exemption calls. Luckham said MERA was receiving considerable value at \$20,000 per year for the extent, number and quality of services rendered. The Committee concurred and received this informational report.

D. Update on Measure A Parcel Tax Delinquent Utility Parcel Payments

Cassingham updated the Committee on the results of the Demand Letters sent by MERA's law firm to recover outstanding balances from delinquent utility-owned parcels. \$1,692 has been recovered to date, with the potential collection of another \$1,353 from Northeastern/Northwestern Pacific Railroad for 6 parcels. These extra collection efforts have the potential to collect \$60,000 from utilities over the 20-year-life of Measure A. Legal costs to date are estimated at around \$5,500, which represents appropriate due diligence on behalf of taxpayers at effective expense. The Committee received this report as informational.

E. Review of Funds 70038 and 70039 – Next Gen Project Revenues and Expenses

Herrerias thanked Cassingham for the Fund Balance sheets and requests same for June 30, 2016.

Cassingham presented the Balance Sheets and P&L detail for Funds 70038 and 70039 for June 9 through June 30 in FY16-17, since the Committee last met on June 21. She noted 70038 received the original parcel tax payments before the 2016 Bonds were issued and it receives any surplus Measure A funds not used for principal and interest 2016 Bond payments. She highlighted Fund 70038 utility parcel payments and bad debt, the transfer of \$1,359,930.40 from the 2016 Bonds Surplus Fund after Bond principal and interest, and noted the grouping by MERA's contract Finance Director of professional and contract services by vendor for easier review. She clarified payments in advance to RGS for Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer and Administrative Assistant services. She added that some account codes have had no other expenses since June 9. The P&Ls are under Auditor review and are subject to adjustments. In response to Luckham, Cassingham confirmed that all revenues and expenditures for these and other MERA funds will be reviewed and confirmed by the Auditor, along with an Independent Compliance Audit of Funds 70038 and 70039.

Herrerias asked for background on the Richards, Watson, Gershon debit and credit for \$4,350 in FY15-16. Cassingham will provide background at the next meeting. He also requested the beginning date covered by the July 31, 2016, Nataxis interest payment to Fund 70039 for FY16-17. Cassingham confirmed the GIC interest rate with Nataxis is 1.12%. He also inquired about the General Journal February 1, 2017, entry from US Bank for interest expense of \$554,330 for Debt Service without reference to a transaction.

Cassingham presented the Balance Sheet and P&L detail for Funds 70038 and 70039 for FY17-18 to date. She referenced the 70038 RGS advances. Herrerias inquired about the handwritten entry for the July 2017 RGS advance for Executive Officer services in the amount of \$6,226. Cassingham responded that it was from prior year and was an adjustment. A reversing entry will be made when the audit is complete. Cassingham said the 8020 Capital Outlay account citing proposed payments to DPW had been included, awaiting final invoicing from the County. Regarding Fund 70039 expenses in FY17-18, there were no expenditures to date. All hard copy invoices for Funds 70038 and 70039 for FY16-17 from June 9 to June 30, 2017, along with hard copies for both Funds for FY17-18 were made available for Committee review.

Reite asked about any remaining Fund balances associated with the implementation of the current System. Cassingham said Fund 70032, which provided supplemental funding for current System completion, has a balance of about \$200,000, and is reserved for current System improvements.

Herrerias inquired about funds advanced for the Next Gen Project. Cassingham said MERA used its Replacement Fund 70036 to pay for Project planning and initial implementation costs, which were replenished by Measure A parcel taxes after A passed. Luckham cited the Reimbursement Requisitions reviewed by the Committee in 2015. In response to Herrerias, Cassingham said the 2010 Bonds Fund is 70035.

Herrerias asked for clarification regarding the Fund 70038 RGS line items, some of which have contract staff names associated with them and sometimes not. Cassingham said the contract Accounting Specialist seeks to be consistent with these information fields and efforts are being made to standardize them. In response to Herrerias, the monthly RGS billings of \$6,226 are for the Executive Officer. Cassingham noted the Willdan expense for arbitrage calculations under Account Code 6020 was overpaid resulting in a \$250 credit. She noted the fee of \$1,750 is for annual reporting.

Cassingham reviewed Account Code 8020 Capital Outlay for FY16-17 since June 9. All the invoices for the DPW Operations Officer's time are either Implementation Agreement expenses or listed as accounts payable. Luckham, in response to Herrerias, said it appears some operating expenses had been reclassified as capital, which is represented as carried through in the Balance Sheet for Fund 70039 for FY16-17.

Herrerias inquired about the transfers between Fund 70038 and 70039 in FY16-17 for County of Marin tax collections. Cassingham confirmed the transfer of \$1,359,930.40 out of 70039, received from US Bank Bond Trustee, went to 70038 after Trustee payment of 2016 Bonds principal and interest. Herrerias asked about Account Code 7040 Interest Expense dated February 1, 2017, in Fund 70039 for FY16-17. Cassingham confirmed the \$554,330 was debt service interest expense with payment due on February 1, 2017. Herrerias confirmed that Cassingham, Jeffries and Anderson had written contracts with RGS (Regional Government Services) for their services, which are entered into on a CY basis.

Cassingham, in response to Herrerias, confirmed that the capital outlay expense of \$1,997,304 for Next Gen in FY16-17 is accurate and consistent with the level of Project activity during this period. Motorola's first milestone payment of \$1.7M, or 10% of basic Contract, occurred in late FY16-17, noting other progress payments to them have been affected by schedule. Cassingham, in response to Herrerias, confirmed the County pays Motorola and, within 30 days of receipt of the County's invoice to MERA, MERA pays the County. The County has the contract with Motorola.

Herrerias inquired about the voids in Fund 70038 Account Code 6010 for FY17-18 and the handwritten RGS expense of July for the \$6,226 Executive Officer advance. Cassingham said the Richard Watson checks were voided as incorrect payees and the July advance was paid in June. These adjustments will be made with the Committee's next P&Ls. He also asked about the overpayment to Willdan, which happened in FY16-17 and appears as a credit/debit in FY17-18.

The Committee accepted the financials as presented. Herrerias agreed to review the hard invoice copies.

F. Discussion of Current and Future Schedule of Citizens Oversight Committee Meetings

Cassingham recommended that the Committee continue with its regular meeting schedule established by Resolution on the third Wednesdays of each month at 4:00 p.m. until further notice. Meetings will be cancelled if there is insufficient business to be transacted. It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled for December 20, 2017 at 4:00 p.m., based on anticipated agenda items for Committee action.

G. Other Information Items

None.

H. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

I. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maureen Cassingham
MERA Executive Officer
and Secretary