

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District

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DRAFT: 1/17/18

GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of December 13, 2017 Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on December 13, 2017, at 3:35 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Station 61, Berthinier Training Area, 7025 Redwood Boulevard, Novato, CA 94945.

Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano
City of Larkspur	Scott Shurtz
City of Novato	Pam Drew
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of Anselmo	Doug Kelly
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	John Rohrbacher
Town of Tiburon	David Hutton (Alternate)
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Community College District	Martin Langenveld (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)
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Michael Norton

Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:

City of Belvedere
Town of Fairfax
City of Mill Valley
City of San Rafael
Bollinas Fire Protection District
Marin Transit
Marin Municipal Water District
Ross Valley Fire Department
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Operations Officer	Ernest Klock
Marin County DPW Communications Engineering Services Manager	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Lauren Pallas

Guests Present:

Federal Engineering Project Manager	Denis Marin
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Pearce welcomed Klock as MERA's new Operations Officer, stating his appreciation for acceptance of this important role. Pearce recognized the challenge of dealing with the competing interests of the County, Motorola, and others, noting Klock was up to the task of managing the Next Gen Project.

Self-introductions followed.

A. 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 November 29, 2017 Governing Board Special Meeting
- 2) Proposed CY2018 Agreement for Management and Administrative Services with Regional Government Services (RGS) for MERA Executive Officer and Proposed 2018 Executive Officer Work Plan
- 3) 2017 Annual Progress Report on Authority Operations and Activities
- 4) MERA 2017 Auditor Communication with Governing Board and FY16-17 Audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report.
- 5) Report No. 62 on Strategic Plan Implementation.

M/S/P Tubbs/Metcho to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-5 as presented.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Report No. 35 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries/Klock)

In Jeffries' absence, Klock reported on the second upcoming RPC meeting where MERA's application will be reviewed. The November 9 RPC meeting did not have a quorum and there was insufficient time to review our application. He said over the last month, staff has been actively working with the RPC members about possible channel interference and addressing their questions. He feels the application is strong and they have had good feedback from the Committee Chair. While we are hoping for approval tomorrow, if not, we will get formal input on how to adjust our signals or make tower site changes. He expressed his hope for approval and felt positive about it.

Klock said the RPC meeting is at 1:00 p.m. tomorrow at CHP Headquarters in Sacramento. He said he, Cassingham, and others would be in attendance. Gaffney asked what action we are seeking. Klock said this is to approve the frequency licenses for the Next Gen System. The RPC takes into account adjacent channel interference. Gaffney said he thought the feedback was that we couldn't run our channels at 100% power. Klock said we have a defensible design which shows the interference contours, which are in El Dorado and Monterey Counties. Adjacent channel interference with San Francisco and Contra Costa are at issue; however, Next Gen is not on those same channels. He added that the feedback we are getting is that their concerns are not valid.

Klock said tomorrow's meeting will permit the Committee Chair to further discuss and address any interference concerns. The power levels and contours presented in our application, along with the number of sites and channels shown, constitute a defensible and approvable application. In response to Kelly's question about the System being at 100% power, Klock said Spectrum experts would be present to address this. Cusimano confirmed with Klock we have a defensible application and asked if we have addressed known concerns. Klock said any concerns beyond interference should not be vetted in this forum and that Next Gen has an approved frequency allocation that operates within regular ranges and does not impact or interfere with other systems.

Klock added that it is the job of the Committee Chair to get application approval and staff has been working with him, stressing we are within our allocation and this is an approvable application. It is a matter of him being able to manage the other competing inputs to achieve this outcome. Cusimano asked if this process could turn into month-to-month considerations. Klock said he feels positive about approval tomorrow, with worst case requiring some adjustments that could include deletion of a site, antenna angle, and power output adjustments. The whole Motorola and Spectrum team will be present to address questions as they come up to get approval.

Pearce asked about the question as to why we need so many pairs. Klock said this matter has not been resolved. He said Contra Costa is seeking to take some of these channels, which have been formally allocated for Next Gen. They asked for a presentation of growth curves for the lifespan of the system to confirm utilization and justify the number of channels. He does not expect this matter to come up because we are within our allocation. Cassingham asked, if there were tweaks tomorrow, the application would have to go to the January meeting. Klock confirmed that this would be the case.

Kelly asked that a copy of the application, if approved tomorrow, be distributed to the Board as a public record. Gaffney asked about San Francisco's interference concern. Klock said this is not an adjacent channel concern. There was a conference call with them, which seemed to allay their concerns. Pearce reiterated the Board's concerns over delays to the Project schedule, which also affects costs. Klock said staff will also emphasize delay impacts on the useful life of the current System.

2) Other Information Items

Cassingham reported on the status of the completion of the Non-Member User Letter of Agreement with the CHP. She said she is cautiously optimistic that the LOA will be finalized very soon. She thanked Tubbs and Pearce for their efforts in getting us to this point. CHP requested restatement of language that provides for "6 months" advance notice of any fee changes for the Next Gen System. In response to Kelly, Chuck confirmed the CHP has 8 portable MERA radios. Pearce emphasized the importance of formalizing all non-member usage of any portion of the MERA System, especially as we identify those users in preparation for Next Gen.

C. Operations Reports – (Echols)

1) MERA System Operations Update (Chuck)

Chuck reported on completion of the weekly and quarterly preventive maintenance tasks, participation in Next Gen discussions, and provision of support for Federal Engineering. He said the transmit antenna had been replaced at Bolinas due to water intrusion, which caused intermittent problems. A GPS oscillator was replaced at Pt. Reyes and a microwave alarm reporting issue was repaired.

Chuck reported replacement of a receiver multi-coupler at Mt. Burdell, Multiplex A1 Board at Big Rock and rectifier at Sonoma Mountain. And, the Communications Division coordinated with the Sheriff's Office to implement an FSA backup link from the EOF.

Chuck noted November System Usage was down to 676 call time hours and no busies. Year-to-date reported 8,526 air time hours with 8+ minutes of busies. The System is performing well within design specs.

2) Other Information Items

Gaffney inquired about a Motorola Contract cost update. He remembered Motorola stating they would not charge for the equipment necessitated by the two additional sites. Klock clarified that Motorola would be doing the site civil design but MERA would be entering into a separate contract to build the sites. He added that there are several outstanding items with Motorola and we are currently negotiating those costs. He said in addition to additional site equipment costs, Motorola has agreed to maintain the current Motorola Legacy System; however, current third-party equipment is still under discussion and we are having trouble tracking down spares. A change order will be developed once all the Next Gen contract costs are known. Pearce urged that all such commitments and costs be memorialized as soon as possible to effectively control the budget. Klock said we are still waiting for letters from Motorola documenting what they would provide for free. Pearce requested this be expedited.

Klock noted the radio programming transcoder offer to avoid the cost of 2 programmings for the current System and the new. The fact that 2 were needed should have been disclosed by Motorola when they proposed the Project. Negotiations of this and other matters is taking time. We are targeting early Spring to have all issues identified. Until the frequency licenses are approved, customer design review cannot commence and therefore development of these costs is pending.

Pearce said the role of Federal Engineering was to create a comprehensive Project RFP and assist with contract development so that these issues would be minimized. It is critical that these matters be effectively and expeditiously resolved for MERA.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maureen Cassingham
MERA Executive Officer
and Secretary