

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Minutes of March 13, 2019 Regular Meeting**

**DRAFT: 4/10/19**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on March 13, 2019 at 3:31 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

**Board Members Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin County Sheriff	Bob Doyle
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
City of Novato	Matt McCaffrey
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Mike Norton
Special Districts	Don Wick

**Board Member Absent:**

Ross Valley Cities/Towns  
Southern Marin Cities/Towns

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Deputy Executive Officer - Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Administrative Assistant – Next Gen Project	Maura Griffin
MERA Operations Officer	Ernest Klock
County DPW Communications Manager	Ethan Simpson
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Villa

**Guests:**

Federal Engineering	David Mortimer
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A. Consent Calendar

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

- 1) Minutes from September 12, 2018 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report No. 78 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Update on Reinvestment of 2016 Bonds Proceeds and  
New Guaranteed Investment Contract (GIC)
- 4) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Fund Balances

*M/S/P Pearce/Gray to approve the Consent Calendar Items 1-4 as presented.*

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

- 1) Proposed PRELIMINARY FY19-20 MERA Operating, New Project Financing  
2007 Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Budgets

Cassingham presented the FY19-20 Proposed Preliminary Budgets as recommended by the Finance Committee. The proposed Operating Budget represents a 3.1% increase over prior year. The New Project 2007 Note and 2010 Bond Budgets are basically flat. She added that Finance Committee Vice Chair Gaffney had noted the MERA Operating Budget from FY2008-09 to-date had increased about 2% per year over the last 12 years, which is remarkable.

Cassingham said the Proposed Operating Budget is \$1,991,510, Project Note is \$225,000 and 2010 Bonds is \$2,120,000. She cited Operating Budget variances, most significantly for Site Rentals and Leases due to the previously reported overdue CPI adjustment for Martinelli Ranch not billed for prior years, which catches up the Site rent accordingly. A recommendation of the Budgets will send them on to the Executive and Governing Boards in May for final adoption. She will provide the Member Agencies their Proposed FY19-20 contributions for their budgeting purposes no later than March 15.

Norton confirmed there were no changes in the Budgets since the Finance Committee recommended them on February 20. Pearce asked about any changes in our expenses for the move from NFPD. Cassingham said an account will be created to capture transition expenses. The Contingency line item will be used for this purpose and costs will be spread over FY18-19 and FY19-20. Hom's RGS

contract with NERA for transition Financial and Accounting Services commencing April 1, 2019, will be presented to the Governing Board on March 27. The contract will cover year-ending through completion of the Audit in November.

*M/S/P Pearce/Doyle to approve the NERA Proposed Preliminary FY19-20 Budgets as presented for immediate distribution to the Member Agencies.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

2) Report No. 52 on Next Gen System Project and Budget – (Jeffries)

Jeffries said his report catches the Executive Board up on Next Gen activities since their last meeting in September 2018. Project meetings slowed down from December to February. They will be bi-weekly going forward. He highlighted two meetings with MCOE regarding the Coyote Peak site. He, along with Klock and Chiefs Tyrell-Brown and Stevens, met with Muir Beach to provide information and address community concerns about the Project. He also made a presentation to the Sonoma County Public Safety Consortium on how NERA operates and the Next Gen Project. They have a system of systems and are considering a joint system like NERA.

Jeffries said staff work over the last few months has been focused on Contract Change Orders. All but one has been approved. Klock and DPW are working on C.O. #8 Microwave/MPLS, for presentation to the Project Oversight Committee in late-April. He introduced Maura Griffin, the new Next Gen Project Administrative Assistant who is an RGS employee. She will be meeting with all the Members to do inventories of vehicle equipment, WiFi access and radio counts.

Jeffries reviewed the Project Budget, which has been updated to reflect approved Change Orders and expenditures through 12/7/18. This Budget will be updated quarterly. Lastly, he reported on the release of three Media Advisories on the annual application process for the Low-Income Senior Homeowner Parcel Tax Exemption. The first advisory was released on March 11 and applications are due June 1.

3) Update on Termination of NERA/NFPD Office and Staff Services Agreement

Cassingham added to what she had reported on this matter under Item B-1. She expressed her appreciation for the 10 years of support from the District and recapped the next steps in the transition to the Town of Corte Madera. The more

complex piece of transitioning, the Finance/Accounting portion of staff services is being addressed first with the MERA/RGS Agreement for Hom's services. Hom will provide services for the last quarter of the fiscal year at the District's offices. He will also begin training the Corte Madera Finance team on QuickBooks and commence working on-site with Town staff beginning July 1, 2019.

Norton asked about the Board meeting location. Cassingham said MERA's meetings will continue to be held at the District through June 30. Given the adoption of fiscal year's meeting dates in May, the change in venue will coincide with the FY19-20 Schedule. She said the Corte Madera meetings may be in Town Council Chambers or the Community Center. Hymel expressed thanks for Cusimano stepping up to host and for Cassingham's work on the transition. Regarding meeting location, the Corte Madera Chambers may serve well for the smaller Committees and Executive Board. The space may be more difficult for the larger Governing Board meetings.

Cassingham noted a Town Conference Room has been mentioned as a possible meeting space, but she has not physically visited these venues. Klock said Corte Madera has a room at Town Center which may be what they are referencing. Norton offered the Community Room at his Station as a backup.

Cassingham said many other details associated with the move are being addressed, including ordering new check stock, USPS change of address, movers for the file cabinets, website changes and more.

4) Other Information Items

Cassingham reminded the members of the April 2 deadline for submission of FPPC Form 700s.

C. Operations Reports – (Klock)

1) CEQA Process and Schedule Update – Next Gen Project

Klock reported on completion of community outreach and aggressive efforts on completing the drafting of the SEIR sections. CEQA is behind six months, possibly a year. We are awaiting Chapter 5 for internal review, which addresses the impacts at each site, including a side-by-side analysis. A draft SEIR is expected in April or May. This is followed by a 45-day public comment period. Comments will be addressed and incorporated in the final EIR for presentation to the Governing Board.

Pearce confirmed the delay of 6 months to 1 year. Klock said the schedule depends on what is received in the public comment period. The schedule he previously presented showed CEQA being finished by the end of 2018. Pearce

asked about opportunities to shorten this timeline since this presents a huge delay. Klock said time needs to be taken with the draft sections to assure document thoroughness and defensibility. The intention is to address in advance any potential questions or comments.

Pearce asked if we were getting adequate support and timely turnaround from the consultants. Klock said the consultants may not have fully realized the technical aspects of the Project. The draft sections have not addressed key technical aspects that are critical to get right in developing the document and having it be technically digestible for the public. Pearce asked if there was any recourse with the consultants for not fully understanding SEIR technical requirements. Klock said he regularly communicates to the consultants the importance of getting this out. More sections have been coming through, but this Chapter 5 of side-by-side site analyses which looks at the added biological, cultural, hazards, aesthetics and RF analyses has taken considerable time.

Pearce asked if the piecemeal approach to the document was problematic. Klock said this can be a problem, but given the size of the document, you need to look at it in sections. Jeffries said it would have been difficult to digest all the sections at once. He added that Chapters reviewed by staff to date have gone to the attorneys. He said, as comments come in, it may be to our advantage to begin addressing them in draft, instead of waiting until the end of the comment period to start reviewing them.

2) Update on DPW Next Gen Project Staffing – (Verbal)

Klock announced the selection of Simpson as DPW Communications Manager. Gray offered congratulations, noting his appointment was good for MERA. Klock noted positive feedback from member agencies on the responsiveness of the Radio Shop over the last months due to Simpson's efforts. Regarding Federal Engineering's (FE) services, he is working on a Contract amendment and a reduction model for their services. 50% of their time will be under the existing Contract and 50% of their time will be spent on supporting him during the CEQA period. The proposed amendment will get us through CEQA approval followed by another Contract amendment to get us through Project completion. Gray commented on successful current operations, noting MERA has a great story to tell as we move forward with Next Gen.

Pearce asked for an update on the Motorola current System support letter. Klock said he has requested this in writing from them. Jeffries added that during the last Motorola meeting, it was mentioned they had a draft response and a status was expected next week. Cassingham said the current letter of support expires mid-April. Klock said Motorola was making good progress on the Legacy boards and their schedule to flash them as spares. In response to Gray, he said Motorola will pull existing boards to verify if the updated boards will work. These boards will

become the new spares.

3) Request for Additional Radios –  
Sausalito Police Department and Tiburon Fire Protection District

Klock presented the request, totaling 9 additional radios. The Sausalito request for 5 radios was vetted through Ops last year and Tiburon's request was verbally vetted by Ops last week. He said Tiburon's intent is to buy single band radios with acknowledgment that they will buy duals for Next Gen.

*M/S/P Gray/Norton to approve Sausalito Police Department's request for 5 additional radios and Tiburon Fire Protection District's request for 4 additional single band radios to be replaced by dual bands for the Next Gen System.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

4) MERA System Operations Update – September, October, November, and  
December, 2018 and January and February 2019 – (Simpson)

Simpson summarized recurring maintenance themes over the last few months including standard failures, microwave issues and transmitter issues. None of this is out of the ordinary. There was storm damage at Mill Valley and the microwave link at Mt. Tam. The mount has been reinforced and the link is stabilized. Sonoma Mountain experienced water in the connector affecting the LMR antenna, resulting in degraded service, which has been resolved.

Simpson reported more FSA calls, which occur in the winter due to sensitivity with power surges. More spare parts have been secured from Motorola. The Motorola technician identified more available parts, which the Radio Shop has taken advantage of. Care of the controllers has been more challenging and efforts have been made to assure spare board compatibility with the System, which is key to its operation.

Simpson noted the monthly reports which confirm on par performance. The trend is shorter and fewer calls, which results in fewer busies. Norton asked about the shorter calls. Simpson said this may reflect user call time discipline. Pearce said user training has been effective with this. Simpson added that County DPW use of phone calls during weather events reduces radio traffic. Gray noted the drop in day-to-day actual voice communication as due to better discipline and tablets.

5) Other Information Items

Klock reported on improved Ops Group turnout at the last meeting. A Knobology and Aliases Subcommittee was appointed and will meet next Monday. New radios have more characters available. Gray said consistency and clarity is the goal. Pearce said Ops attendance included 30 representatives and some new faces. He encouraged a push to keep these members engaged.

Klock said a First Gen Radio Return Policy was reviewed by Ops as well as the possibility of creating a cache of donated radios for spares.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary