

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945  
PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660  
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

**DRAFT: 6/12/19**

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Minutes of May 1, 2019 Regular Meeting**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on May 1, 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
City of Novato	Matt McCaffrey
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Mike Norton
Special Districts	Don Wick

#### **Board Member Absent:**

Marin County Sheriff  
City of San Rafael  
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 Operations Officer	Ernest Klock
DPW Communications Services 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 March 13, 2019 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Proposed Agreement for FY18-19 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy
- 3) Update on NFPD/Town of Corte Madera Transition of  
MERA Office and Staff Services
- 4) Report No. 81 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 5) Confirmation of Bi-Monthly Regular Executive Board Meeting Dates: FY19-20

*M/S/P Pearce/McCaffrey to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-5 as presented.*

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

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

Cassingham presented the report on the nomination of MERA Officers by the Executive Board. There was brief discussion about the willingness of Pearce and Cusimano to continue as President and Vice President, respectively. Pearce confirmed that both are agreeable to continue serving.

*M/S/P Norton/Wick to nominate Pearce as President and Cusimano as Vice President for Governing Board approval.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

- 2) Report No. 55 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

- Media Contacts Update
- Low-Income Senior Homeowner Parcel Tax Exemption Packet

Jeffries said since the Executive Board's last meeting, there have been a number of Project calls and meetings between the MERA and Motorola teams. The Low-Income Senior Exemption from the Measure A Parcel Tax has been advertised twice with a third media release scheduled for May. Applications are due by June 1. Application packets are attached to his report for MERA Member Agency use.

Jeffries reported Griffin has begun working with MERA agencies to gather Field Survey data including identification of mobile units with MERA radios, verification of portable radio counts and agency Wi-Fi capabilities for radio reprogramming. The Field Survey will take several months to complete. He also referenced the media contact information in his report and noted there have been no recent contacts. He serves as the Next Gen Project Public Information Officer (PIO) and is available for media referrals to him along with emails alerting him they are coming.

Jeffries noted MERA was mentioned in the April Grand Jury report relating to emergency evacuations. No media inquiries have been received on this. Another Project Newsletter is in the works to update members and the public on Project status, to be followed by another Newsletter when the SEIR is planned for release.

3) Proposed FY19-20 Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham noted this is one of three Annual Agreements between MERA and the County for support services for the current MERA System. Services covered are the same as prior year's at a cost of \$493,322, which includes a 2.5% CPI. The Agreement cost has been included in MERA's proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY19-20.

*M/S/P Pearce/Wick to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY19-20 Emergency Communication System Maintenance Agreement between MERA and the County as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

4) Proposed FY19-20 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham summarized the second of three current System support services agreements for training, technical and administrative services in FY19-20. Types of services are the same as prior years. Administrative costs reflect a 2.5% CPI. Total costs are \$250,190. In response to Pearce, Cassingham confirmed the recently assigned County staff member working on invoicing was working out well.

*M/S/P Wick/Norton to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY19-20 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin*

*as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

5) Proposed FY19-20 Communications System Services Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham said this Agreement is for services provided by the County Communications Services Manager and Senior Communications Technicians for the current System. Annual cost for FY19-20 is \$225,609, which includes a 2.5% CPI. These costs are reflected in the Proposed FY19-20 Operating Budget. Pearce asked if these positions were the same as prior year agreements. Klock said in the past Chuck provided 10% of his time base as a licensed Communications Engineer in overseeing the Radio Shop with 90% time base of a Senior Communications Technician. Federal Engineering staff are now providing engineering services as needed. The County considered hiring a full-time Communications Engineer, but there is not enough work to support that position. Pearce asked if this model of services will cause problems on the billing side. Cassingham confirmed it would not.

*M/S/P Pearce/Wick to recommend Governing Board Approval of the Proposed FY19-20 Communication System Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

6) Proposed FY19-20 MERA Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-member System Users

Cassingham presented the Proposed Operating Budget which the Executive Board had reviewed on March 13. There have been no changes since that date to any line items. The total Budget of \$1,991,510 represents a 3.1% increase over prior year. She cited Finance Committee Vice Chair Gaffney's statement that since FY08-09, MERA has averaged a 2% annual Budget increase. Cassingham said she is also recommending continuation of the Zero-Rate Non-Member User Fee Schedule.

*M/S/P Norton/Wick to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY19-20 Operating Budget as presented and Continuation of the Non-member User Zero-Rate Fee Schedule.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

Pearce inquired about the status of Non-Member Letters of Agreement. Cassingham said she will report on the LOAs to the Governing Board on May 8, noting 4 more are in the works with Marin Transit transportation services contractors. MERA is otherwise up to date on the LOAs.

7) Proposed FY19-20 MERA New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets

Cassingham presented the first Budget for the 2007 Citizen Bank Note for FY19-20 in the amount of \$225,000. The second Budget for the FY19-20 2010 Revenue Bonds debt service is \$2,120,000.

Both budgets were previously reviewed by the Executive Board in March. These Budgets, when presented to the Governing Board, will be accompanied by breakdowns of each Member service payments. After approval on May 8, billings will be issued on May 10.

*M/S/P Pearce/Norton to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY19-20 MERA New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: None  
Motion Carried

8) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserves Funds Balances

Cassingham summarized the Fund Balance changes from the previous report, all of which reflect increases in interest earnings over Budget. Interest for Fund 70032 had been budgeted at \$4,000 and now projected at \$6,000 as of 6/30/19. Fund 70036 interest earnings are now projected at \$60,000 as of 6/30/19. Fund 70037 interest will exceed budget by \$3,000 for a projected \$7,000 on 6/30/19. The report was received as informational.

9) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports – (Klock)

1) CEQA Process and Schedule Update – Next Gen Project

Klock said staff and consultants are pushing fast to finish drafting of the SEIR. The consultant has not completed all the chapters and some chapters received have required more internal staff review and rewrites before presenting them to Legal Counsel. He still expects completion of the draft SEIR followed by public review in mid-2019 with June being the target date.

2) Status of Proposed Motorola Contract Change Order #8:  
Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for the Microwave Network

Klock provided a verbal update on C.O. #8, which he had planned to take to the Project Oversight Committee in April. Motorola's Change Order documents did not accurately reflect the credits MERA was supposed to receive. Motorola has been asked to update them and clearly show where credits are being applied. Accordingly, once the revised documents are received, they will be presented to the Committee in June.

Regarding C-1, Pearce asked about review coordination of the SEIR chapters between staff, consultants and Counsel. He wants to make sure the process is expedited to give adequate time for legal review. Klock said part of the drafting issues is the catching of high-level easy errors internally before forwarding to Counsel.

3) Report on Motorola Legacy System Support

Klock said Motorola has agreed to provide support despite some Legacy System components not being manufactured anymore. They have provided a letter of existing system support for another year. He was concerned this did not extend support through Next Gen Project completion. Motorola has agreed to revisit the annual support letter before expiration in April in terms of what support they can still provide.

Pearce asked about support of the T-band becoming an issue. Klock said the Federal auction of T-band frequencies is 2024. If an agency hasn't migrated by that time, he doubts the Federal government will cut off those systems. Simpson said a number of agencies are pushing back on T-band takeover but takeback is still a possibility. Hymel said New York City may be one of those agencies. Jeffries said 2022 was in the legislation, but the actual sale date is unknown.

Simpson added the T-band public safety was to migrate to may not have enough frequencies. Removal would create coordination problems. Jeffries said there was some discussion of new legislation. Simpson said removing or extending the

deadline has been part of those discussions. Hymel said an extension is a more likely outcome. Jeffries noted the FCC takeaway requirement was part of the case for the Next Gen Project. He added that the 2010 AECOM Report had recommended migration from T-band to 700 MHz without the legislation as impetus. Hymel noted the benefits of 700 MHz, like more interoperability. Jeffries added impending current System obsolescence as another factor.

4) MERA System Operations Update – March 2019 – (Simpson)

Simpson reported on March activity and some in April. An issue occurred in March with one of the channel banks, which required a maintenance window. It caused a slight impact on service and the issue was corrected. MOSCAD has to be reset due to alarming issues not the FSA side. The Mill Valley controller board required replacement due to intermittent audio issues. Dollar Hill air conditioning issues have been repaired.

Simpson noted ongoing efforts to get central site controller spare boards into place with Motorola technical assistance. This includes identifying which spares are valid and which are not. He is pursuing getting additional replacements from Orange County and other sources. Testing is going well. They have more than doubled the number for the 6809 Controller, which is the highest risk component not supported and for which there are no new parts. Next, they will look for Quantar base station radio spare parts. In response to Pearce, Simpson clarified Quantars are for the mountaintops base stations which Motorola will not repair or support.

Pearce asked if the Sheriff's Mobile Command vehicle will be a suitable backup in a catastrophic event. Simpson said ACU-1000's could be used as temporary infrastructure. With site controllers addressed, the rest of the System only affects smaller areas. With 6809 controllers handled with spares, we are in a better position. Quantars are at a higher level of failure due to usage, so they are the next emphasis.

In response to Jeffries, Simpson said you would have to lose a number of Quantars before you would see more busies under normal conditions. Parts from IR sites could be used for simulcast operations. Hymel asked if Motorola was assisting in locating spares. Simpson said Motorola experts are assisting with spare board compatibility with our System and testing. Motorola will also be contacted to confirm spare Quantar compatibility. They also identify their customers with surplus equipment for the County to reach out to. The challenge is we are on a T-Band version that may not be the same as other users. Sunny Communications has Quantars in T-band frequencies we might use.

Klock noted Simpson had made headway with conflicting System usage reporting. Simpson said reporting issues arose with Comm Center changes in

nighttime operations with talk group patching. This can skew reporting. The System picks the first talk group to report and gives statistics to that group. Hymel asked, given distortions in tracking agency-specific usage, for future usage reports to focus on categories of use versus specific agency usage. Simpson said an estimated \$75,000+ in optional reporting software would be needed to track usage by agency if requested. Simpson said future reports would be by category and Next Gen could be looked at for reporting solutions. Pearce asked if non-member usage could be identified. Jeffries said since their traffic is included in other channels, this could be a challenge. He said talk time and busies were more important information for members.

5) Other Information Items

None.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary