

**DRAFT: 7/17/19**

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Town of Corte Madera  
300 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925  
PHONE: (415) 927-5050  
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

**GOVERNING BOARD**

**Minutes of June 26, 2019 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on June 26, 2019 at 3:36 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:**

Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano
City of Larkspur	Scott Schurtz (Alternate)
City of Novato	Pam Drew
County of Marin	Dan Eilerman (Alternate)
City of Sausalito	Bill Frass (Alternate)
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrell-Brown
Inverness Fire Protection District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick
Novato Fire Protection District	Steve Metcho, L. J. Silverman (Alternate)
Ross Valley Fire Department	Richard Shortall
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Catheryn Hilliard
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
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  
Town of Ross  
Town of San Anselmo  
City of San Rafael  
Town of Tiburon  
Marin Community College District  
Marinwood Community Services District

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
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	Lorena Barrera

**Guests Present:**

Bolinas Fire Protection District	George Krakauer
County Department of Public Works	Raul Rojas
Federal Engineering	David Mortimer
Novato Fire Protection District	Jeanne Villa

**Special Acknowledgement for Professional Contributions to MERA –  
Jeanne Villa, Lauren Pallas, Denise Wade, Gretchen Felciano and  
Colleen Walraven - Novato Fire Protection District.**

Pearce extended his appreciation and thanks on behalf of MERA for the District Teams' great support over the last 10 years. He likewise thanked Chiefs Revere, Heine and Tyler for their commitments to MERA.

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) Resolution of Commendation: Retiring Chief Anita Tyrrell-Brown,  
Bolinas Fire Protection District - MERA Governing Board Member
- 2) Minutes from April 24, 2019 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 3) Minutes from May 8, 2019 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 4) Report No. 83 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 5) Proposed Revisions to MERA Purchasing Policy and Procedures

Pearce requested removal of Consent Calendar Item 1 for special presentation to Retiring Chief Brown.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Eilerman to approve Consent Calendar Items 2, 3, 4, and 5 as presented.*

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

Pearce acknowledged presentation of Item 1 was bittersweet for him. The Resolution of Commendation was a token of thanks for everything Tyrell-Brown has brought to MERA. He noted support in West Marin for the passage of Measure A and her willingness to ask the hard questions. She will be greatly missed. All in attendance applauded. Tyrell-Brown said it was an honor to work with so many who are dedicated to the well-being of their communities.

*M/S/P Shurtz/Van Doren to approve Consent Calendar Item 1 as presented.*

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Proposed First Amendment to Next Generation Radio System Implementation Agreement Between the Marin Emergency Radio Authority and the County of Marin

Cassingham noted the current Implementation Agreement sunsets at the end of June. This timing permitted additional review of all Sections of the Agreement to the benefit of the Next Gen Project and MERA's relationship with the County. She said the First Amendment recommended changes which include the ability for MERA to charge DPW for MERA staff services if materially significant to Project implementation, such as Deputy Executive Officer's extensive work on various Project tasks that might warrant chargeback. Revision to Section 9 would require invoice accuracy and adequate documentation confirmed by the DPW Director along with the ability for MERA to request an independent audit of DPW Next Gen staff services and costs.

Cassingham noted Section 10 would be revised to provide for successive one-year Agreement renewals prior to July 1 of each year versus extension through the life of the Project. Section 11 would revise MERA's approval threshold for Project agreements from \$1M to \$25,000. It also requires timely provision, within 7 days of request, of Project information reasonably requested by the Executive Officer or Deputy Executive Officer for Next Gen.

Cassingham reported on the revision to Section 14 on Notices to reflect MERA's new address effective July 1, 2019. Proposed revision to Exhibit A Section G

ensures DPW attendance at all MERA meetings where the Next Gen Project is to be discussed, formally reported on, or when requested by the Executive Officer. Section I of Exhibit A would be revised to ensure monthly written Project status reports are provided to the Next Gen Project Oversight Committee, including contract expenditures to date per contract. Section J of Exhibit A is revised to conform with Agreement Section 5.

Cassingham noted these revisions are intended to enhance Project performance and the relationship and communications between MERA and the County as contractor. Cusimano added the President and he, along with the Executive Officer, have been working with the County for some time and they believe these are important Amendments which may cause some operational discussion points with the County. He said we are not prepared to act on these revisions as presented until they are reviewed with the County and our team. He recommended continuation of the existing Agreement to permit these discussions, hopefully in the next month, recognizing we are going into summer schedules.

Cusimano supported a 3-month extension to conclude these items and communicate to the County where MERA is coming from. This timing would permit the County to provide feedback on the proposed revisions. The extension would permit the MERA Governing Board and Board of Supervisors to schedule their actions.

Cusimano recommended to extend the current Next Gen Implementation Agreement up to 3 months while MERA continues to work with the County on revisions. Van Doren asked if this would include sufficient Project funding to continue it during the extension. Cusimano said it would and the intent is not for the Amendment process to take 3 months but to meet as soon as possible to bring this back to the Governing Board at its next or next available meeting.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Norton to approve a 3-month extension of the current Next Gen Radio System Implementation Agreement.*

Pearce encouraged Board members to review and provide comments to him or Cassingham on the proposed Agreement revisions. Drew asked if monthly progress reports on the Amendments could be provided to the Governing Board. Pearce agreed, adding that the President, Vice President and MERA staff are all comfortable with the proposed revisions and wanted Governing Board member assurance of their comfort levels.

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

2) Report No. 57 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries distributed a one-page Project update for members to give to their elected and appointed officials. His report included recent Project meetings and calls, adding there has been a hiatus of Motorola meetings due to vacation schedules and waiting for the CEQA process. Motorola meetings will be restarted at the end of July.

Jeffries reported on Griffin's outreach to member agencies to complete the field survey of mobile radio installations, radio counts and Wi-Fi capability data. She is encountering some difficulty in getting member responses. If by mid-July this is continuing, he will assist in reaching out to the Chiefs to complete the survey by end of summer.

Jeffries reported the outreach process for the Measure A Low-Income Senior Exemption is over. There were 3 Media Advisories to inform about the application. Cassingham said 135 exemptions were approved for FY18-19, which is consistent with prior year numbers. In response to a newer Board member's request, a list of acronyms used in reference to the Next Gen Project was developed and is attached to his report. He welcomed any additional suggestions.

Jeffries provided an updated Project Budget and Expenditure Summary, which will be revised every 3 months. A column has been added showing the line item amounts expended to date. Another column to be added after a solid schedule is provided will represent where we should be expenditure-wise with each line item. He noted interest income has been added as a Funding Source.

3) Proposed Office and Staff Services Agreement Between MERA and the Town of Corte Madera

Cassingham presented the proposed Staff Services Agreement, which reflects the removal of references to leased office space for FY19-20. The Agreement also reflects an extended termination notice period from 3 months to 6 months. Annual Operating costs for FY19-20 are \$47,998, which is under the \$55,000 budget for these services. Measure A staff support services are slightly above current year. Support service costs will be revisited annually.

Cassingham noted as previously reported that the Town will be reimbursed for transition costs incurred prior to FY19-20. These costs, which include training, IT set-up, printing and software licensing, will be covered by the Operating Budget Contingency line item. A report on these expenses will be provided at the July 24 Governing Board meeting.

Cassingham added her appreciation for the terrific support and generosity provided by the District over the last 10 years. She acknowledged the hard work Town Staff

has put in since February to assure a successful transition and looks forward to working with a great new team.

*M/S/P Drew/Metcho to approve the Proposed Staff Services Agreement between MERA and the Town of Corte Madera.*

Van Doren asked for further explanation about office space rental. Cassingham said the Town currently has no office space for MERA. At such time as the expansion of their facilities permits rental of office space, consideration for same will be included in the Agreement. She added the District office space is used by MERA staff only a few hours per month and is primarily used for MERA file cabinets. Cassingham thanked the District for providing meeting space for MERA through FY19-20.

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

4) Other Information Items

None.

C. Public Hearings

Pearce noted this item was tabled to the July 24 meeting.

D. Operations Reports – (Klock)

1) Update on Motorola Change Order #8 – Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for Microwave Network

Klock noted earlier discussion of C.O. #8 by the Next Gen Project Oversight Committee. As a refresher, he said the current Motorola Contract includes Layer 2, which does not provide the same service as MERA's current System. MPLS is a good option for providing the same service with Next Gen. There are a number of MPLS options to consider. There remains more work to be done in response to Committee input to refine these options.

Pearce noted MPLS was an action item before the Governing Board last September. The recommendation had considerable cost attached to it and the Board asked for more research, which Klock and his team have done. Current options have moving target costs, which require more work for a decision to be reached.

Van Doren asked about the zero cost with Option O. She said there are costs associated if we forego technicians' ability to remotely troubleshoot and use of security cameras. A range of these service costs should be estimated even if they are not comparable to other option costs. Klock said there is extended time involved in visiting sites to correct malfunctions with Layer 2. Getting from the Shop to a site to diagnose a problem and repairing it could involve up to 8 hours of staff time. This does not account for system downtime.

Klock described what MPLS provides, which includes troubleshooting by video phone. MERA currently provides the FBI and CHP voice circuits, which would be disabled with Layer 2. Van Doren said both of these agencies could pay for these circuits, which would not be a cost to MERA. Klock said he did not know how to quantify the loss of functionality associated with Option O. Pearce said the issue is the cost-benefit of MPLS. He added Motorola said the system will perform with Layer 2 and the benefit of MPLS needs to be further evaluated. He noted there probably is benefit.

Klock said C.O. #8 will be presented again to the Governing Board. He said it would be most cost effective to have a decision before customer design acceptance, which is on the heels of completion of the CEQA process in October/November 2019. The Governing Board will need to take action on system final design before Motorola can construct the system. In response to Van Doren, Klock said there is still time for this decision to be made. However, if we add MPLS later, Motorola will charge for redesign.

Silverman asked if adding MPLS before the design is cheaper. Klock confirmed it is and added there will be an additional cost of \$400,000 if it is added later. The best time to add this equipment is now. SUA II services can be added later. This would avoid locking up SUA II costs now for hardware refresh later.

2) CEQA Process and Schedule Update – Next Gen Project

Klock said there were a few SEIR Chapters awaiting MERA General Counsel Comments. We are getting close to the release of the draft document.

3) MERA Mutual Aid and Communications and VHF Overlay Plans Update

Klock reported that the Operations Group reviewed both Plans and it has no updates at this point. Approaching the time when Next Gen goes online, these plans should be revisited.

*M/S/P Pomi/Norton to approve the Mutual Aid and Communications and VHF Overlay Plans in their current form.*

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

4) Proposed Federal Engineering Phase Two Contract Amendment

Klock said Federal Engineering has been under contract for 2-1/2 years and their contract expires the end of July. Phase Two was a fixed fee Contract tied to certain services and a specific timeline associated with the Motorola Contract Schedule. The time is up for Federal even though services have not been delivered within the Contract period. The proposal is to extend Federal for 6 months due to CEQA and other delays, along with a Motorola pull-back.

Klock said given Federal's fixed monthly rate, he has been using them to support implementation activities while Next Gen services were on hold. Payment for the proposed extension will come from the Implementation Agreement budget for DPW services. Their services will be used in part for County implementation services and management of Motorola design review. The extension should get us through CEQA and Customer Design Review (CDR), which includes a total of 60 tasks. To date, 11 of the 60 have been approved.

Klock noted that tight oversight of Motorola is needed to benefit this Project. An example is the importance of cutover planning and implementation. Federal has been instrumental in holding Motorola accountable. Since the Federal Contract is with the County, he is requesting MERA support of this Amendment.

*M/S/P Van Doren/Eilerman to recommend County Board of Supervisors approval of Federal Engineering Phase Two Contract Amendment 1.*

Pearce commented that there have been some sticking points with these services and thanked Jeffries for his assistance with related tasks.

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

5) Proposed FY19-20 Capital Project: Acquisition of Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) and Preventative Maintenance Agreement for Prime Site

Simpson said this request is for a contractor to provide preventative maintenance on the Prime Site UPS. This also includes battery replacement. Given possible PG&E power shutdowns, MERA's Systems need to be well maintained. The

manufacturer is recommending battery replacement; however, the batteries are still testing well. Replacement now would assure a good return on investment. These batteries would not be used on the Next Gen system but would get us through cutover. The total cost is \$30,281, which is slightly under last year's quote.

*M/S/P Norton/Stevens to approve replacement of Prime Site UPS Batteries and One-Year Preventative Maintenance.*

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

6) MERA System Operations Update – May – (Simpson)

Simpson noted the new System reporting format due to inaccuracies from patching talkgroups. He included the old format in his report for comparison. The new format reports on discipline usage for greater accuracy versus individual aging usage. System maintenance is as usual. He noted issues with quantars, rectifiers and audio recording. He reported on participation in Bay RICS System Key Exchange. We now have the ability to program radios that are capable for other systems.

Simpson said with Next Gen there will be future discussion about sharing MERA's keys with other systems providing mutual aid to Marin County. This will open up new interoperability possibilities. More on this will be reported going forward. Pearce asked about straining our System with other systems usage. Simpson said system loading is an issue in emergencies and MOUs would be needed. In response to Van Doren, Simpson said Sonoma County does not operate in our current T-Band System radios. Currently, conventional channels permit system interoperability. He confirmed this would be addressed in planning for Next Gen.

7) Other Information Items

Cassingham reported that all four of Marin Transit's service contractors have executed Letters of Agreement for Non-Member MERA System usage. She asked for a status on contractor radio programming. Simpson confirmed they are all programmed. Van Doren clarified these are MERA radios owned by Marin Transit to be located with contractor dispatchers for communication with Marin Transit.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Cassingham said that electronic meeting notices and agenda packets would be distributed by the Town of Corte Madera team effective July 1.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary