

DRAFT #3
MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING: MAY 20, 2009

Vice Chair Nordhoff called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. at the Marin Nonprofit Center - Downstairs Conference Room, 555 Northgate Drive, San Rafael, CA.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Town of Corte Madera	Roger Sprehn (Alternate)
City of Larkspur	Jean Bonander
City of Mill Valley	Anne Montgomery
City of Novato	Joe Kreins
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Barbara Thornton (Alternate)
City of San Rafael	Ken Nordhoff
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel (<i>out at 3:08 pm</i>)
Town of Tiburon	Michael Cronin
City of Sausalito	Don MacQuarrie (Alternate)
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Inverness Public Utility District	James Fox
Marin Community College District	Charles Lacy
Marin County Transit District	David Rzepinski
Marinwood C.S.D.	Bruce Anderson
Ross Valley Fire Department	Roger Meagor
Novato Fire Protection District	Marc Revere
Southern Marin Fire Protection	Joel Hames
Stinson Beach Fire District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Twin Cities Police	Mike McDuffee (Alternate)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

City of Belvedere
Town of Fairfax
Kentfield Fire Protection District
Marin Municipal Water District

STAFF PRESENT:

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer
Jim Karpiak, General Counsel
Richard Chuck, Communications Engineer
Farhad Mansourian, County DPW
Elizabeth Lopez, Recording Secretary

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mark Brown, Battalion Chief, County Fire

A. Agenda Item A: Closed Session: Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9: One Potential Case

No reportable action.

Agenda Item B: Consent Calendar

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

- 1) Minutes from the March 11, 2009 Board of Directors Special Meeting
- 2) Approval of Agreement for FY2008-09 Annual Audit – Maher Accountancy
- 3) Approval of MERA's Organization Structure and Roles and Responsibilities

M/S/P Kreins / Pearce to accept Consent Calendar items #1-3

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

Agenda Item C: Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

- 1) Report on Award of Contract - Forbes Reservoir County Facilities Demolition with Asbestos Abatement and Site Cleanup Project

With Board authorization, the MERA Executive Committee awarded a contract with Ryan Engineering in the amount of \$23,474.86 for this project. The Ross Valley and Las Gallinas Sanitary Districts must underground their phone line to the new MERA tower before Ryan Engineering starts. Ryan Engineering's work is projected to be completed in three to five days.

M/S/P Bonander / MacQuarrie to receive the report on Award of Contract by the Executive Committee in the amount of \$23,474.86 to Ryan Engineering, Inc., South San Francisco, CA for the Forbes Reservoir County Facilities Demolition with Asbestos Abatement and Site Cleanup Project.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

- 2) Approval of Proposed Technical Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin

M/S/P Kreins / Rzepinski to approve the Proposed Technical Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin for a period of three (3) years commencing July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012 as presented.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

- 3) Approval of Proposed Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and the Novato Fire Protection District

Cassingham noted the cost savings and focused services that will come with the proposed agreement with the Novato Fire Protection District and said she was looking forward to working with their staff. She thanked Chief Revere for all his assistance.

M/S/P Pearce / Kreins - to approve of Proposed Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and the Novato Fire Protection District for FY09-10 at a cost of \$57,000.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

4) Appointment of MERA Finance Committee

Cassingham reported that MERA has not had an active Finance Committee due to recent departures from the MERA Board. This Committee provides important advisory services and the Executive Committee has recommended to the Board to appoint a new Finance Committee. Tom Gaffney, Ken Nordhoff, Joe Kreins and David Rzepinski volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee.

M/S/P Pearce / Kreins to approve the appointments of Tom Gaffney, Ken Nordhoff, Joe Kreins and David Rzepinski to serve on the MERA Finance Committee

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

5) Other Information Items

Cassingham asked for the Board's consideration of cancelling the June 17 meeting. Given the work accomplished at today's meeting; the Board concurred.

Agenda Item D: PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of FY09-10 Budgets

1) Operating Budget

The Executive Committee has reviewed the proposed FY09-10 operating budget at their 4/22 and 5/13 meetings and recommended Board approval as presented. The proposed total budget of \$1,642,000 is 5,000 less than last year proposed budget which will result in a slight decrease in member contributions.

2) Other Budgets

At the March 11 meeting, the Board approved payment of new capital expenses from the 1999 Bond fund balance. The Executive Committee recommended Board adoption of the proposed FY09-10 budgets for the MERA 1999 Bond Debt Service and the New Financing 2006 Bank Loan.

M/S/P Montgomery / Kreins to approve a resolution adopting the proposed FY09-10 MERA Operating and MERA Other Budgets.

AYES: ALL

NAYS: NONE
Motion carried.

Agenda Item E: Report from General Counsel (Karpiak) – MERA Training Manual and MERA Policies: Discussion and Direction

Karpiak recommended that the manual not be approved by the Board. He said it is not a policy of this whole group and that its adoption could create a liability that MERA does not have now. He recommended that a disclaimer be added. He added that there may be other administrative policies that could come to the Executive Committee and Board.

Bonander suggested as a middle to low priority project that staff review documents and procedures for presentation as official policies.

Agenda Item F: Operations Reports (Mansourian)

1) Presentation on VHF Overlay: Discussion and Direction

Mark Brown, County Battalion Chief, MERA Operations Issue Work Group, gave a PowerPoint presentation of the VHF Overlay Plan.

He summarized the purpose of the VHF overlay as providing another tool in the tool box to be used in connection with MERA primarily to divert tactical traffic off to VHF as necessary. The movement of traffic would occur after consulting with Dispatch as directed by Duty Chiefs and Incident Commanders. He noted VHF procedure is an option using existing equipment. Nordhoff asked for copies of the presentation to be sent to all MERA members.

2) Report on Tomales Site Coverage Project: Discussion and Direction

Mansourian reported that Verizon is not willing to wait for MERA to co-locate. They will allow MERA to use their utilities and access road at a cost. The property owner has agreed to lease MERA the land needed to site a 60 to 80 foot antenna.

County Real Estate will be assisting with negotiations. The environmental process would follow which will take many months. This new site would move some configuration and traffic around and improve West Marin coverage. Chuck said the Bay Hill site would not be needed once this site was up and running.

Mansourian said he is continuing to explore options for improving Southern Marin coverage. He has been meeting with the Chiefs and County Supervisor for the area to generate support for a site there. The County land use process has been initiated for a subdivision there which may permit a tower. Nordhoff confirmed that MERA does not incur obligations until a site is delivered.

3) Report on Additional Frequencies: Discussion and Direction

Mansourian reported on the process of getting FCC approval of the five new frequencies for public safety use, which will occur in late June or early July. Implementation is the next phase.

4) Response to Letter from Stinson Beach Fire Protection District: Discussion and Direction

Mansourian distributed a draft technical response to the Stinson letter. Chuck reported that there has always been spotty coverage along Highway 1 in the area of concern. A site in San Francisco would solve some of the Southern Marin's and Stinson Beach's problems. To solve the coverage problems, MERA would need five additional San Francisco frequencies for a Twin Peaks site. MERA might want to look at local solutions instead of what DeltaWrx suggested for Twin Peaks.

Stevens reported that a high-band repeater might solve the coverage issue.

Bracken asked if a mobile repeater would work in this situation. Chuck answered it probably would not and that a fixed repeater would be better.

Anderson asked if the National Park Service had problems with their antenna in the area. Stevens answered not since they got a new system. The National Park Service uses an 800 MHz trump system that is not compatible with MERA. To be compatible, their antenna would require additional frequencies.

Meagor asked what Stinson Beach used before. Stevens answered that low band was used before MERA and worked better.

Lacy suggested there maybe Homeland Security funds MERA can use to address this coverage problem.

Bonander suggested if a solution comes up for Stinson Beach and/or Southern Marin as Mansourian is evaluating options, the Board can convene when necessary to consider his recommendations.

Thornton said possible newer technology could provide an integrated solution. Chuck said several smaller technologies would be considered. It was agreed minor fixes be explored to address the needs of member agencies with ongoing coverage issues in this area. Nordhoff inquired about how many projects MERA can handle with DPW resources and limited funding. Mansourian said the frequencies and Tomales coverage will require intensive commitment over the next 12 months and MERA must install the frequencies within the FCC's required timeline or risk being in violation. As for Homeland Security funding, MERA's system is not 700 MHz so we are not eligible for this project. Nordhoff said it was important to assure Southern Marin that MERA is working on solutions for their coverage issues. Chuck advised before the other projects hit, he could explore smaller fixes in the next three to six months.

It was agreed that Mansourian, Karpiak and Cassingham would work together to formally respond to the Stinson letter. It should reflect the work necessary to address Board commitment to the frequencies and Tomales projects and assure continued work on Southern Marin solutions and presentation of options to the Board as they are identified. Stevens said Motorola promised 97% coverage. Kreins stated that Motorola has provided 97% coverage of what they committed to covering. Mansourian said he could not find any contractual issues with Motorola's performance. Revere asked that the Stinson letter convey that Southern Marin coverage is important to MERA and if Stinson has more data to support their problems, they should provide that information to MERA.

Mansourian said we do not have a Stinson or Southern Marin project because there are no solutions yet. If solutions come up he will bring them to the Executive Committee.

5) Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Chuck reported that the reprogramming will be completed by end of June and hospital training has been completed. There were 301,000 calls in March and 289,000 calls in April. Motorola technicians helped identify station alerting problem solutions. Busy counts are down and there were no system outages.

6) Other Information Items

Mansourian reported that Maher cannot complete the Board authorized audit because the Motorola contract has not been accepted.

Agenda Item E: Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

No comments were received.

Agenda Item F: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:39 pm by consensus.

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer