



# communications, inc.

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer  
Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA)

From: Tom Robinson, President  
CBG Communications, Inc.

Date: July 22, 2010

**RE: Recommended Strategic Plan Development and Request for Additional Funding**

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Per our discussion, the facilitation of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee (Committee) as part of the Scope of Services of the contract between CBG Communications, Inc. (CBG) and MERA has proceeded well through the completion of Phases 1, 2 and 3 and the first part of Phase 4 (drafting, reviewing, editing and approval of the Strategic Plan recommended by the Committee).

As indicated in our memorandum of April 14, 2010, during Phase 3, it was evident that the draft Strategic Plan needed to be more wide-ranging than initially anticipated in order to consider all the elements determined to be necessary and beneficial by the Committee. Based on the number and nature of the elements, a significant amount of anticipated task hours needed to be expended in exploring the facets of each element and then reviewing and discussing them with the Committee. This was especially true concerning technical priorities, including not only long term strategic technical directions, but also reviewing critical current issues. These initial unanticipated task hours were covered in the additional funding provided for the project as a result of our April 14, 2010 request.

What we did not anticipate at the time was the cascading effect of both the more wide-ranging Plan and the greater depth and level of technical and technology review and involvement. Essentially, this expanded not only the Plan but the review cycle, including two trips to Marin to

review the document with the Committee, as well as a lengthy draft revision process, with many of the revisions concerning technical issues, some of which required additional research before revisions could be made (DPW staff, for example, submitted 2 ½ pages of issues that resulted in multiple revisions to the draft document).

The resulting Recommended Strategic Plan has again benefited by the extensive work of all involved. It is thorough, detailed and well supported and covers multiple strategic directions and the initiatives and actions needed to successfully pursue each direction. The task load has, though, created the need to again add in more task hours and associated costs into the overall Strategic Plan development budget. This still has not impacted the project timeframe, since we have been able to keep the project on track by working more hours within each month. Essentially, the current project budget for CBG is 160 task hours for all four phases combined. At the hourly rate of \$175 per hour, this equates to \$28,000 plus a modest amount for expenses (approximately 11% above professional services fees or \$3,500) for a total of 31,500. As we discussed, the task requirement to-date has already exceeded the current budget. Based on task hour projections though completion of the project (presentation to, and document accepted by, the Board in late September), approximately 50 task hours plus expenses are needed to resolve the deficit and handle the final project tasks. Per our discussion, in order to help ensure that final costs stay within projections, CBG will waive its travel time for both the recent July trip and the upcoming September trip. Fifty additional task hours times our hourly rate equals \$8,750 plus an additional modest amount of reimbursable expenses (\$1,250-covers the recent additional [July] trip and the planned September trip) for a total of \$10,000. This would bring our total cost for full facilitation, research and drafting services and the development of the Strategic Plan to \$41,500 for the entire project.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the above. We appreciate working with MERA on this very important project and know that the recommended Strategic Plan, soon to be reviewed by the Finance and Executive Committees and then the full MERA Board, is one that MERA can follow for years to come.

cc:

Dick Nielsen, Sr. Engineer