

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**Draft: 11-17-11**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN: OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF OCTOBER 27, 2011**

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kreins at 4:07 p.m. on October 27, 2011 in the Cavallero Conference Room at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA.

#### Committee Members Present:

County of Marin Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of Novato	Joe Kreins
Twin Cities Police Authority	Todd Cusimano

#### Committee Members Absent:

City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Sausalito	Jennifer Tejada

#### Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
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#### Guests Present:

Indie Politics	Dan Mullen, Terry Price
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#### B. Approval of Minutes from July 21, 2011 Meeting

*M/S/P Doyle/Kreins to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2011 meeting as presented.*

AYES: Doyle, Kreins  
ABSTENTIONS: Cusimano  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

C. Indie Politics Reports Regarding Outreach (Mullen and Price)

Phase 3 – MERA Internal Communications  
MERA Strategic Plan Proposed Revisions (10-19-11)  
MERA Fact Sheet – Draft 1  
MERA FAQs – Draft 1

Mullen provided an overview of Indie Politics Phase 3 Internal Communications memo and attachments including proposed Strategic Plan outreach revisions, draft Fact Sheet, and draft FAQs. Regarding MERA next gen governance structure, they prefer a simplified structure to engender public trust and quick understanding. The more complex the structure, the harder the communications are to the public. They support future quarterly joint meetings of the Strategic Plan Committees. They also support combining public funding and outreach campaigns as noted in their proposed Strategic Plan revisions. Finally, they recommend a unified but phased outreach campaign beginning with internal stakeholders and elected officials and then on to external stakeholders and voters.

Price summarized the proposed Strategic Plan revisions as offering a better approach to outreach. They are keeping everything associated with outreach that wasn't conflicting. Rather than begin the proposed public relations effort budgeted at \$50,000 in Year Two, the revisions focus on getting our internal communications house in order by getting everyone on the same page. There must be agreement with the basic facts on the capital improvement project to be presented to member governing bodies and the approach to doing that. Phase II would include development of a public education and outreach campaign in preparation for a ballot measure. This information would be impartial with no advocacy.

Price said the decision-making process for MERA must be in place, the capital improvements must be decided and the funding mechanism must be determined before much can be done internally or externally. The Fact Sheet and FAQs must have the input of the other Committees and the Strategic Plan Committees must be communicating on a regular basis. He and Mullen are trying to help the other Committees with their charges in relationship to what makes sense to the voters, which is broadening the role of the Outreach Subcommittee. Everything including governance must be palatable to the electorate if they are needed to get funding. Once we have a unified message, the retained local consultants would put together internal materials to go out to the governing bodies. This would be the first step in having the replacement project talked about in a public forum that would be covered by the media, policy watchers and the community. The next stop would be the development of an information campaign plan. The bottom of Page 6 of the revisions sets forth what should be in the Plan including the messaging, media relations and more. None of these specifics were included in the original Strategic Plan, along with who will undertake this work and the related costs. They have added this detail.

Price noted the revised "Summary of Public Education and Outreach Campaign Strategy" that appears on Pages 7 and 8. He said the budget section for Public Education and Outreach on Page 12 states \$10,000 for consulting services expended in Year 1; however, estimated expenditures for other upcoming activities have been left blank awaiting Outreach Subcommittee input. He requested the Subcommittee's recommendation of the text changes

to the Strategic Plan to the Executive Committee and Board for adoption. Mullen said he and Price were considering putting together a 12- to 24-month plan of action along with estimated costs. Given what was left over in their contract for Phase 3, they waited to conclude it to see where they were. They will need to prepare a larger proposal based on the tasks ahead in the Strategic Plan. They may need a bridge proposal to take them through the Holidays to next year and the larger proposal.

Kreins said Price and Mullen, from his perspective, have met and exceeded his expectations with what has been done to date. In particular, he appreciated their initiative in making revisions to the Strategic Plan which was beyond the original scope of their work. The Fact Sheet and FAQ drafts were what he envisioned in terms of starting to get MERA's information out internally and getting agreement on it. This will be the kind of information he can give to his elected officials and city staff that will help them to better understand MERA's past, present and future. When this eventually goes to the public, it must be straightforward and understandable.

The original Plan budget for outreach was \$50,000 of which \$10,000 was been expended. He noted that the next phase of Price and Mullen's work must be based on where we go from here.

Kreins said he did not expect much more work would be needed between now and the end of the calendar year. Picking up again in January, work can start based on what is recommended as the next steps. Cusimano agreed with Kreins' summary. Doyle confirmed with Cassingham her contract authority limit is \$10,000 and Executive Committee approval and Board concurrence is required beyond that. She asked for budget numbers to be provided for Executive Committee and Board action along with the other outreach-related revisions to the Strategic Plan.

Price agreed that he and Mullen are in a holding pattern awaiting the work to be done by the other Committees. However, he felt they needed to continue working on the Fact Sheet and FAQs and suggested a review committee be appointed to give input. He also felt they should continue to be available to advise Governance and Finance at their meetings which will involve some hours, especially if capital improvements will involve additional tower sites and finance will depend on voters. Cassingham confirmed that she did not expect these Committees to meet again until early 2012. Reports on the Committees' activities and recommendations will go to the Executive Committee on November 9 and Board on December 14. She said the next joint meeting of the Strategic Plan Committees will most likely be in January.

Price inquired about another MERA contract with Indie Politics. Cassingham said the Outreach Subcommittee could recommend a successor contract for Executive Committee approval at their January 11, 2012 meeting. Price said this would make sense after the Board approves the recommended outreach-related changes to the Strategic Plan in December and it permits time for them to develop a successor agreement for services.

Price said it is difficult to estimate outreach task costs for inclusion in the Strategic Plan revisions. Kreins said we are not closer than 24 months out from an election and maybe considerably more given replacement technology recommendations are not completed. Cassingham suggested development of budget estimates or ranges for inclusion in the

document. Price said they could project the costs of the internal communications efforts as referenced on Page 6. However, projecting timing would be a challenge at this point. Kreins said the internal informational work with the Fact Sheet and FAQs, along with PowerPoint presentations to member governing bodies, must begin to be done to help everyone understand where we are going with the system in the future. Cassingham said we only need estimates at this point for the Plan and as specific projects are proposed, final costs will be presented to the Executive Committee or Board for approval at that time.

Kreins confirmed with Cassingham that Strategic Plan related expenses are funded from the Replacement Fund versus the Operating Budget and there are more than sufficient funds available for the outreach tasks under discussion.

Price suggested a \$30,000 budget for the survey noted in the outreach tasks which he and Mullen would work to reduce and it may not be spent for some time given the unknown timeline for it and whether a measure is feasible. Mullen and Price suggested a website budget of \$5,000 in Year 2. Price said they are projecting no air time costs. He and Mullen said estimated Year 2 media production costs of \$10,000 be left as is. Price said our target audience, at this point, is internal so airtime can be deleted. Once we get to a campaign plan, it will be a different story. Price offered a \$30,000 cost estimate for consultant services in Year 2. Cusimano asked about the need for a survey in Year 2. Mullen suggested \$30,000 for a survey in Year 3. Price said the survey will precede a determination as to which ballot timing is best. Mullen added that the joint Strategic Plan Committees meeting provided such benefit that quarterly or more frequent gatherings could move this timeline along much faster. Resolution of governance and technology issues would also affect this timeline. Price will revise the Plan cost grid to match the outreach text changes.

Kreins said MERA needs public affairs consulting services in all these areas since MERA does not have the resources or the time to do this on its own. Cassingham agreed that the internal communication pieces were crucial to MERA and the funding of replacement technology.

*M/S/P Kreins/Doyle to recommend to the Executive Committee the proposed revisions to the Outreach sections of the MERA Strategic Plan and the budget estimates for outreach tasks as discussed.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

Price clarified that he will incorporate plan implementation expenses into the \$30,000 budget for consultant services.

Price presented the draft Fact Sheet and FAQs. He also distributed copies of the Twin Cities Police Station Fact Sheet and FAQs which are examples of what the end documents should look like. He also provided a list of potential additional questions for MERA's FAQs, which address possible weaknesses and will require up-front counter arguments. He asked for a review and sign-off process for the MERA Fact Sheet and FAQs.

Mullen said input from different members of different committees would be important. Kreins suggested a subcommittee of the Executive Committee. Price said drafts could be reviewed electronically. Cassingham said the input from four or less members would be in compliance with the Brown Act. The Executive Committee could give final approval. Doyle suggested that each member represent a discipline like Admin, Fire and Police. Cassingham said the recent Ad Hoc Non-member Fee Committee included these same disciplines and worked well. Price added that each member could also represent the Strategic Plan Committees. Cassingham suggested that Hymel could serve as the Admin Executive Committee and Governance Work Group representative, Kreins could represent Police from the Executive Committee and Outreach Subcommittee and Revere or Irving could represent Fire from the Executive Committee. She asked if Kreins could facilitate this appointment process at the Executive Committee meeting. She also suggested that Tackabery be included from a DPW technical perspective.

Mullen continued the discussion of the draft Fact Sheet and FAQs noting the importance of more simply stating the MERA mission upfront. Kreins asked for clarification of the 42 member agencies cited in the FAQs. Cassingham said this might include the 25 MERA members plus mutual aid agencies. She also noted that Skywalker Ranch may be included here. Kreins confirmed there are more System users than members. Cassingham will work with Mullen and Price on this. Kreins said it is important to communicate how the System was funded, status of the current Bonds and member agency costs. Cassingham said information will be needed for elected officials about current indebtedness and the need to fund a replacement before the original Bonds are retired. Kreins said it needs to be clarified that there were no separate or additional taxes required to fund and operate MERA. Costs of the System were absorbed by the member agencies. Mullen confirmed from Kreins that #4 of the FAOs leaves the impression of double-taxation. Kreins said we are not intending to wordsmith at this point but to raise issues that may need to be addressed, such as participation of the schools. The Executive Committee Subgroup should be able to help with this. Cassingham said most people can relate to replacement technology with their own computing needs. She noted that the new system would provide both voice and broadband data so it will offer so much more for public safety.

Kreins said with the appointment of the Executive Committee Ad Hoc Subcommittee on November 9, he hoped an initial meeting could be convened in December to begin their review of the draft Fact Sheet and FAQs. Cassingham said, thereafter, new iterations could be shared electronically. Mullen confirmed that he and Price should attend the meeting.

D. Next Steps and Timeline

- Update on Proposal from Indie Politics for Additional Work

This was discussed under Agenda Item C.

- Next Quarterly Joint Meeting of Governance Work Group, Finance Committee and Outreach Subcommittee.

Cassingham said it was likely the next joint meeting would be convened in January 2012 due to the Holidays and current meeting schedules.

E. Other Information Items

None.

F. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled on January 19, 2012 at 3 p.m. at NFPD.

G. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.