

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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E.B. 3/12/14 Agenda Item B-3

## Executive Board

### Minutes of January 8, 2014 Meeting

Draft: 1/29/14

#### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on January 8, 2014 at 3:35 p.m. in the Heritage Conference Room, Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. Pearce thanked staff for pagination of the agenda packet for easier reference.

#### **Board Members Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Todd Cusimano
Ross Valley Cities/Towns	Debra Stutsman
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann
Special Districts	Bill Hogan

#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery
MERA Special Project Manager	Dave Jeffries
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

#### **Guests Present:**

Indie Politics	Dan Mullen
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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) Resolution of Commendation – Governing Board Member Bruce Anderson  
Marinwood Community Services District
- 2) Minutes from November 13, 2013 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 3) Report on Special Project Staff Salary Adjustments
- 4) Bi-monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances
- 5) Update on Bay Hill Site Subleases
- 6) Report #17 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 7) Update on Bond Reserve Investment

*M/S/P Doyle/Gray to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-7 as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1. Bond Counsel Opinion on Next Gen System Police and Fire Services Project Costs

Cassingham presented her staff report noting the December 11 Governing Board approval of a parcel tax under G.C. 53978 for Next Gen Project costs for police/fire services. Bond Counsel has confirmed that all the major project components are covered but non-police/fire radios and their incremental costs, if any, of the backbone components must be covered by other revenues. These costs are estimated at \$2.1M of the \$40M total project budget. Other MERA revenue sources might include the Replacement Fund, Reimbursement Resolution, Bond Reserve or Capital Appreciation Bonds. A post-election validation would go into detail on parcel tax covered costs. Hymel confirmed this was an informational item.

2. Report on Round Two Presentations – (Jeffries)

Jeffries summarized his staff report noting Round One presentations were completed including make-up presentations for four newly elected officials or those who were unable to attend earlier Round Ones. Round Two presentations would include a request for member resolutions of support. He presented the draft PowerPoint slides as outlined in the staff report, including the need for the project, Capital and O&M budgets and proposed parcel tax. Hymel asked about the \$6.3M below the line project costs which Jeffries clarified as financing costs. Gaffney has included costs of issuance and other related expenses in the proposed \$29/S.F.U. parcel tax.

Jeffries reviewed the O & M cost estimates for Gen II going out 10 years, which addresses a frequent Round One member question. Additionally, the System Upgrade Agreement (SUA) is presented as an option. Hymel asked about explaining the 74% O & M increase over 10 years, which includes a 30% CPI, four additional sites and parallel operations. He suggested noting when the parallel increase occurs and why.

Jeffries noted the slide that shows other funding options including sales tax, G.O. bonds, grants and Plan B member support, should the parcel tax not be approved. The presentation will also reference the senior low-income exemption and Citizens Oversight Committee. More information will be provided on the parcel tax breakdown for other land uses. Finally, the resolution will distinguish member support for Plan A and the parcel tax or Plan B which is the member-funded project. Berg said the O & M increase will have less impact on members due to the payoff of Gen I bonds if the parcel tax passes. Jeffries concluded noting a draft staff report and resolution will be provided to the member agencies to use in their agenda packets. Total presentation time is estimated at 10-15 minutes.

Jeffries said Round Two will be preceded by the Chiefs' and City Managers' presentations. Hymel said members will need information on their individual agency costs and projected annual changes reflecting increases and drop-off as the Gen I bonds are paid off. Jeffries will speak to individual member costs during the presentations.

3. Proposed Delegation of Responsibilities to Project Oversight Committee – (Jeffries)
  - Second Poll
  - Public Information Outreach and Timeline

Jeffries noted the Executive and Governing Boards' previous approvals of changes to the Outreach Plan. What is now requested is Executive Board delegation of authority to the POC to implement the changes. That authority includes approval of expenditures within the revised FY13-14 Outreach Budget and Oversight and approval of the second public opinion poll which is on a very tight timeline. He recommended President Pearce and he be added to the members of the first poll Subcommittee as noted in his staff report. He also proposed that the POC be delegated the coordination and oversight authority for public information outreach and timelines including community presentations, use of social media and upgrade of the website.

Hymel asked if Round Two would come after the second poll. Jeffries said this was not planned. Mullen said Round Two was a proactive response to feedback from Round One. The second poll will help us determine if we are still on course for passage and where we may need to target additional effort. Jeffries clarified that the first poll results are not included in Round Two. Given the schedule for obtaining second poll results, the Governing Board would receive them in May and Round Two would be done by May. Mullen said we could speak to second poll results in Round Two and he expects the results to be even more favorable than the first poll. Jeffries and Mullen clarified that the

second poll has been accelerated to earlier in the year versus closer to the election to allow for time to deal with the results and factor findings into community outreach. Berg said his Council will want to know about the outreach being done during their Round Two presentation and the extent of support for the parcel tax before acting on the resolution. He suggested pushing the Round Two presentations out time-wise to get poll results. Jeffries said getting this packaged up by mid-July for presentation to the BOS must be factored in.

Hymel said accelerating the poll may trigger some agencies to want the results in Round Two. Hogan asked if the second poll would be used to determine the success of our outreach efforts. Mullen said our thrust now is to check on the lower parcel tax rate from the first poll and factor in more project details into our outreach. Hymel said given these changes, we are benefitted by earlier polling and using the results in adapting our outreach. Mullen said overall, elected officials' reactions in Round One were very positive and expected poll results should be likewise favorable. He said the poll will also determine the degree of tax fatigue which came up at the Governing Board meeting.

Berg said elected officials are being asked to support the project before knowing where voters may stand. Jeffries said the first poll results provided much of the information. For example, voter support increased for a lower parcel tax and with Citizen Oversight. Hymel said the presentation could show more voter support for the lower amount. Mullen said this could be updated verbally based on second poll top-line numbers. Berg confirmed that this information could be available when Round Two presentations begin in mid-February. Hymel said Jeffries could provide poll information during the verbal and PowerPoint presentations if it is not available for staff report distribution. Cusimano confirmed with Mullen the approach for scheduling the order of the presentations and building support for the project. Consensus was to include top-line poll information in the Round Two presentations.

Mullen reiterated the responsibilities of the Subcommittee in timely turnaround on the poll questions. Cassingham recommended inclusion of NBS Seufert and Legal Counsels for input. She added that actions of the POC would be reported to the Executive Board at their future meetings.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve the delegation of authorities to the Project Oversight Committee including approval of expenditures in the FY13-14 Outreach Budget, development and implementation of the second public poll as discussed with the assistance of the Poll Subcommittee members cited in the staff report and coordination and oversight of public information outreach and timeline as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

4. Report from Executive Board Subcommittee – NFPD Request for Executive Board Seat

Pearce stated a meeting is pending with the Fire Chiefs to get input from the MERA Member Chiefs on their request. He requested that this matter be deferred to the March meeting. The Executive Board concurred.

5. Appointment of Finance Committee Member

Cassingham requested this appointment due to the resignation of Rzepinski. Marin Transit Governing Board Alternate Van Doren does not automatically serve on the Finance Committee. Hymel confirmed that the current Committee membership of five has varied over time. Cassingham noted Police and Fire representatives have been added. Doyle volunteered to serve.

*M/S/P Hymel/Cusimano to approve the appointment of Sheriff Doyle to the MERA Finance Committee.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

6. Report on MERA and Subleasees Utilities Undergrounding –  
Forbes Reservoir Tower Site

Cassingham presented her staff report and added an update on the January 7, 2014 Site visit. She said MERA is obligated to pay for the undergrounding of PG&E and AT&T lines per the Site Lease with MMWD. MERA's subleasees, the Ross Valley and Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary Districts, will be required to pay 50% of these costs. This work needs to be completed by June 1 to make way for the Reservoir Improvement Project. This Reservoir is a critical part of the District's infrastructure and this project must be undertaken in the winter when there is less demand for water.

Cassingham said she will take the lead on this as Project Manager and needs authorization for her signature authority increased from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Estimated project costs from the Site visit are \$50,000 including \$30,000 for trenching and conduit and \$20,000 for utility cable pulling. In response to Hymel, Cassingham confirmed that this is a new, unbudgeted project. The Replacement Reserve would be the funding source and funds are available. Hymel confirmed the estimated net cost impact to MERA is \$25,000.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve the Forbes Reservoir Utilities Undergrounding Project and authorize the Executive Officer to undertake same up to \$50,000 with 50% Subleases Reimbursement and in accordance with MERA's Purchasing Policies and Procedures.*

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

7. Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports – (Tackabery)

1. Request for Disposition of Certain Surplus MERA Equipment

Tackabery summarized his report requesting authorization to dispose of the old master switch and emergency generator at Bay Hill per MERA's Surplus Property Policy. He said Governing Board-authorized replacement of the Bay Hill generator is underway and the master switch at the County Emergency Operations Center has been replaced with a grant.

*M/S/P McCann/Berg to authorize disposition of certain MERA Assets including the EOF Master Switch and Bay Hill Emergency Generator as recommended.*

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

2. Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Tackabery presented the System Usage Reports for August, September and October 2013, noting nothing was unusual in them.

3. Other Information Items

Tackabery said work was continuing on updating training materials. He provided an update on MCOE meetings on what MERA might do for them. An update was provided to the Finance Committee on two options including fixing their existing 800 MHz system or using MERA. The Committee asked for MCOE's scope of use. It is proposed that the use be for the District Offices or the Office and all the Districts which would be one radio or 20. MCOE confirmed use would be in catastrophic events when regular communications failed. MCOE can wait for the Gen II System in 2018. Tackabery

needs to confirm whether they would pay for capital or O & M costs. He said in 2003, the MERA Board of Directors adopted a policy about Schools use of MERA only in an emergency and they would need to buy their equipment and not pay for related operating costs. In 2011, the MERA Board of Directors adopted an Additional Radios Policy that allowed other agencies use of the System without fees upon formal request of the Operations Officer. Each year, the MERA Governing Board adopts a no-fee policy for mutual-aid and automatic-aid system users. He said Schools use only in an emergency, and with zero fees, seems to fit the category of mutual-aid and automatic-aid users.

Hymel clarified that Schools would pay for radios but not ongoing operations and confirmed Gen II radio cost at \$4,500-\$5,000 each. Tackabery wants to confirm with the Schools that if the Gen II ballot measure is not successful, they would have to pay their share of the capital, they would not pay for O & M and would pay for their radios. Doyle said in his experience, Schools did not want to pay any MERA costs. Tackabery confirmed the Schools have not budgeted for these costs. He will present them with two cost options, one for MERA and one to upgrade their current system. Pearce asked if this was a MERA issue or the Schools trying to upgrade their system. Tackabery said this becomes a MERA issue if Schools make a request of us which the Operations Officer can approve per the described policies. He confirmed each District is handling its own communications. Jeffries said his understanding of mutual-aid users was CHP or Coast Guard. He said he didn't see Schools as mutual-aid users. Tackabery said he was relying on the 2003 policy for this interpretation.

Jeffries said Schools O & M costs would be minimal if use was limited to catastrophic events. McCann clarified that the Gen II SUA costs for System replacement would be an O & M cost to be shared. He felt Schools should share capital and replacement costs on a pro-rated basis as part of readiness to serve. Hymel asked if this needs to be decided now given the Schools' limited funds and their possible participation in MERA Gen II in 2018. He said the Schools' lowest costs would be to buy radios and, based on their decision, this could be presented to the Governing Board. Berg said this should be agendized if the parcel tax passes.

In response to Hogan, Hymel said it is important to note we are working with Schools on this and the Superintendent has expressed support for our measure. She can pursue a path with MERA by purchasing radios or upgrade her own system. Berg said whatever is decided could be precedent setting for other new members. Tackabery said Schools might become a non-member user given the limited scope of use. Hymel said non-member System users benefit MERA and pay for their radios and no O & M. In summary, we are open to the Schools' use of Gen II.

Tackabery reported the Governing Board unanimously approved the Feasibility Study in December as recommended. Kaselionis asked about additional audio gateways between radio devices and why this wasn't included in the Gen II project budget. Staff was asked to review this, which will be done with the Ops Group. Hymel expressed concern about changing project scope and funding. Tackabery wants to fully understand what is being requested and be responsive.

D. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING OF MERA EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**Wednesday, March 12, 2014 – 3:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer