

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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**Revised Draft: 8/21/13**

## **PROJECT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2013**

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Sinnott at 3:00 p.m. on July 10, 2013 in Marin Civic Center, Room 410-B, San Rafael, CA.

Sinnott welcomed MERA Special Project Administrative Assistant Alex Anderson. Self-introductions followed.

#### Committee Members Present:

Central Marin Police Authority	Nick Valeri (representing Cusimano)
City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Novato	Jim Berg
County Fire	Mark Brown
Marin County Sheriff	Mike Ridgway (representing Doyle)
Novato Fire Protection District	Gerald McCarthy
City of Sausalito	Jennifer Tejada
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Marin Transit	David Rzepinski
City of San Rafael	Diana Bishop

#### Committee Members Absent:

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
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#### Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Special Project Manager	Dave Jeffries
MERA Special Project AA	Alex Anderson
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackaberry

#### Guests Present:

Indie Politics/Price Campaign Solutions	Dan Mullen, Terry Price
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B. Approval of Project Oversight Committee Minutes from May 22, 2013

*M/S/P Rzepinski/Gaffney to approve the minutes from the May 22 meeting with correction that Berg was not in attendance.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

C. Finance Committee Report (Gaffney and Cassingham)

1) NBS Parcel Tax Study

Gaffney introduced the NBS Parcel Tax Study to the Committee noting that we were able to get the cost down to \$29 per parcel for single family homes and that there will be a cap of \$2500 for larger property owners. Parcel tax estimates now based on 124,000 units which helped to lower the average cost per unit. Gaffney is working with NBS to ensure cost estimates are defensible and equitable. Cassingham noted that MERA Counsel is working with County Counsel to ensure that these numbers are defensible and that the recent challenges against school district parcel tax measures will not effect our parcel tax cost estimates.

Gaffney suggested a few edits to the Executive Summary of the NBS Parcel Tax Study to reflect updated parcel tax costs. Price said the update was very good news given the poll results and greater support at the lower parcel tax cost.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Berg to approve draft of NBS Parcel Tax Study with suggested edits.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

2) New 700 MHz Emergency Radio System – Project Financing Plan

Gaffney noted that the \$40 million updated cost of the project reflected 3,000 radios versus 5,000. Tackaberry said he will adjust budgeted project costs in the project Feasibility Study based on 25% contingency cost, which is industry standard, and 4 additional tower sites. Berg raised a concern with having too much contingency in the budget. Price said the contingency is only there if we need it and if project comes in lower, the parcel tax may be lower. Also, contingencies will provide flexibility in dealing with additional tower costs and other issues that may arise. Bishop noted projects often come in over budget and planning ahead with increased contingency may be a positive. Tejada suggested adding a line-item for contingency to increase transparency and expressed concern of adding additional towers sites to increase the proposed budget.

Price suggested tabling discussion until we looked at proposed budget numbers. Pearce raised concern that the MERA Governing Board had not signed off on moving forward with a 700 MHz project. He stressed the importance of ensuring that all member agencies were on board with the project before locking in numbers and looking for sources of funding. *(Note: Agenda Item C-2 was tabled here and revisited after discussion on Agenda Item D).*

Tackaberry confirmed he will revise project finance plan to be consistent with NBS Parcel Tax Study before presenting to MERA Executive Board. Pearce asked for clarification on the lifespan of the proposed replacement system. Tejada responded she believed that the system will not be obsolete and will be upgradeable in 15 years. Tackaberry said that the lifespan of different aspects of proposed system varies. For example, radios have projected lifespan of 8 years, whereas backbone technology has longer life span. Gaffney suggested adding additional language to further clarify equipment's life-span to draft feasibility study.

Tackaberry suggested adding previous studies to MERA website for public reference.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Tejada to approve the draft Project Finance Plan with changes to costs and additional language clarifying equipment lifespan and present same to the Executive Board.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

### 3) Report on Current and Future Bond Terms

Cassingham reported she and Gaffney have been working to clarify where member agencies stand on current debt service payments for the 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds. She has confirmed that the final payment will be collected in August 2020. She noted that it remains to be seen how MERA Governing Board will use the current Bonds Reserve, but there is a possibility reserve funds could be used to make final payment in 2020.

### D. Draft Feasibility Study – Next Generation System (Tackabery)

Tackaberry reported the Finance Committee had asked for a project cash flow and noted his current report also incorporated some of the stakeholder questions raised in Chief Pearce's letter. The draft feasibility study builds on previous studies and responds to these questions while addressing county specific challenges, the existing system, system obsolescence and the need to act prudently, possible additional tower sites, and volunteer paging issues. Also includes a report on impending federal legislation and impact on current system. The Study summarizes RFP background, estimated project costs, and coverage options. He noted that the study is still in draft and his office will elaborate and provide more information as needed.

Gaffney asked what numbers cost estimates were based on. Tackaberry relayed cost estimates were based on bids from 2010. Bishop noted the economy has changed. Price suggested updating prices from 2010. Tackaberry said he would review cost estimates.

Pearce suggested it would be a good idea to go back and revisit 2010 AECOM report and possibly even update it. He expressed concern with clearness of Feasibility Study and moving forward with questions unanswered. Jeffries noted that the first round of MERA Next Gen presentations were in a week and asked for clarification as to how these issues may affect the presentation schedule.

Price and Mullen noted that the first round of presentations are purely informational and that we would not be asking member agencies to decide or vote on moving forward with project. Tackaberry said that the fundamental question was whether or not we were planning on moving forward to solicit feedback on the proposed project to convert to a 700 MHz system. Pearce said he did not believe the Governing Board had voted to move ahead with the 700 MHz system.

Rzepinski relayed it was his understanding based on previous committee meetings that we are fundamentally working towards a 700 MHz system. Cassingham offered to produce a chronological chain of events to determine if vote was held on moving forward with 700 MHz system. Price said presentation schedule should move forward as planned, soliciting feedback from member agencies. He noted that nothing has been decided and that we are still in the exploratory phase and that the Governing Board can vote on project specifics at the meeting in December 2013.

Gaffney recommended adding a table of other options we have considered to the Draft Feasibility Study.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Tejada to approve the Draft Feasibility Study with direction to revisit costs and add table of other options that have been explored.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

E. Member Outreach Update (Price, Mullen and Jeffries)

1) Outreach Calendar

Jeffries said staff is beginning work to schedule MERA Next Generation Project Presentation and study session to member agencies.

2) Board of Supervisors Workshop

Jefferies discussed the informational presentation to Marin County Board of Board of Supervisors on August 6, 2013. MERA staff will be meeting with County CAO Matthew Hymel on July 23, 2013 to prepare for Supervisors' presentation.

### 3) Newsletter

Jeffries said MERA staff plans to send out next MERA newsletter after Executive Board Meeting to include any updates from Project Oversight Committee, Finance Committee, and Executive Board meetings. The Newsletter will also include a short story regarding law enforcement response to Mt. Tam fire to illuminate how MERA is used in the field.

### 4) MERA PowerPoint Presentation to Agencies

Jeffries introduced overview of MERA Next Gen Presentation and Study Session power point presentation, noting it had been updated and modified from the presentation introduced during the January meeting. He noted the presentation roll out will begin with the Marin Managers Association and a joint meeting of Police and Fire chiefs, and will be updated periodically with feedback provided by member agencies. Additionally, presentation will be updated to reflect findings in the NBS Parcel Tax Study.

The MERA 'Seconds Save Lives' video will be a part of the presentation. Presentation will be roughly twenty minutes plus any additional time needed for questions and answers. Jeffries asked for input regarding presentation prioritization for member agencies. Sinnott suggested starting presentation rollout with Kentfield Fire Protection District and Central Marin Police Authority. Rzepinski noted, scheduling the Marin Transit Board could be pushed out given crossover membership. Gaffney suggested producing a media release before Board of Supervisors' presentation.

### 5) Updated FAQ's and Fact Sheet

Jeffries introduced drafts of MERA Next Gen Project FAQ and Fact sheet to be used in public presentations. Berg asked about expansion of radio sites in question #5. Tackaberry responded that the baseline proposal includes costs for 3 new radio sites, and that the Executive Board is considering adding additional sites. Berg asked about use of 'best in the world' language in question #7. Jeffries suggested we change language. Pearce requested question #3 be expanded to better explain why we are asking for parcel tax if public's current taxes are already being used for system. Jeffries and Tejada agreed we should clarify between taxes used for current system and revenue needed for replacement system.

Price noted there is another document currently in development of a more expanded FAQ. Jeffries explained this presenter's FAQ sheet would be a more expansive question and answer list used by presenters of the MERA Next Gen Project Presentation and Study Session to aid in answering questions their councils and boards may have during presentations. Jeffries noted that the presenters FAQ would likely evolve over time as we solicit feedback from various member agencies during round one of presentations. Mullen added that this document includes answers to all questions raised during January workshop and to questions raised within Pearce's stakeholder questions letter.

Gaffney asked for clarification of cost estimates used in FAQ and Fact Sheet. Mullen said that the numbers needed to be updated to reflect the changes in costs estimates in the NBS Parcel Tax study and the Draft Feasibility Study.

6) Video

Jeffries noted that there is a final version of MERA video that has been produced. There are two updated versions, a smaller file version to be uploaded to MERA's website and larger file version to be used for presentations.

7) MERA Website

Mullen said he is exploring options to update and expand MERA's website. Cassingham and Jeffries will examine options and make recommendations to Project Oversight Committee.

8) Database Development

Anderson has been developing MERA database to include all elected officials that are involved with MERA member agencies. Jeffries said we are also looking to track which elected officials are up for reelection in November so as to avoid any oversight.

F. Outreach to Schools and Other Agencies and Organizations (Jeffries)

Jeffries discussed exploring reaching out to school districts for support of MERA Next Generation Project. He suggested revisiting issue at next meeting.

G. Updated Draft Master Calendar – November 4, 2014 Election (Cassingham)

Cassingham noted two items have changed on MERA's draft master calendar. She said we have added first round of informational presentations and second round of presentations during which MERA will request a resolution of approval from member agencies. Also noted the Board of Supervisors will vote on placing parcel tax on ballot in August 2014 and the addition of actions that will need to take place following that vote.

I. Next Meeting

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for August 7, 2013.

J. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

K. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

*Minutes Submitted By: Alex Anderson  
MERA Special Project Administrative Assistant*