

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District
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Executive Board

Draft: 9/26/14

Minutes of September 10, 2014 Meeting

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on September 10, 2014 at 3:32 p.m. in the Heritage Conference Room, Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

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
DPW Communications Services Manager	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

Guests Present:

County Deputy Fire Chief	Mark Brown
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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) Minutes from July 14, 2014 Executive Board Rescheduled Regular Meeting

- 2) Minutes from August 13, 2014 Executive Board Special Meeting
- 3) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances
- 4) Report on Bay Hill Site Lease Cost Reimbursement Project
- 5) Report #21 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 6) MERA Executive Board Membership List

Cassingham requested to present Items 3 and 4 for action separate from the rest of the Consent Calendar.

M/S/P McCann/Berg to approve Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, 5 and 6 as presented.

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

Cassingham summarized Item 3 noting estimated Reserve Balances for Funds 70032 and 70036. Fund 70032 reflects expenditures for the Forbes Undergrounding Project, Tomales and Martha, and 70036 reflects expenditures for equipment replacement, namely prime site batteries and generators and Strategic Plan Implementation. Additionally, 70036 will bear outreach and election expenses through November 2014 in the amount of \$274,000. Fund 70036 will receive a transfer of \$150,000 from Operating and interest earned (\$1,000) upon Governing Board acceptance of the annual audit. This will bring the estimated Fund balance to \$324,150 as of 6/30/15.

Hymel asked about the Bond Reserve. Cassingham confirmed that was a separate Reserve maintained by the Bond Trustee. She also confirmed these Reserves being reviewed are at the discretion of the Governing Board.

M/S/P Stutsman/Berg to receive and file the Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances as presented.

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

Cassingham summarized Item 4 noting this was the latest on the billing of Sonoma County for its 50% share of generator corrective maintenance and fuel costs at Bay Hill. She noted that Sonoma County should have been billed beginning in April 2006. For various reasons, this was not done by MERA. While the first estimate was \$9,000 in recoverable annual costs, this amount has been revised downward to \$1,907.38 for FY13-14. Billings for prior years are likely

to be for similar amounts. She said Sonoma County was not required to cost-share for the replacement generator.

M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to receive and file the Report on the Bay Hill Site Lease Cost Reimbursement Project as presented.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Mid-Year Review of Executive Officer Work Plan and Hours – Executive Officer Work Plan Committee

Cassingham said this item was suspended at the July 14 meeting due to the extent of business. The Work Plan and Hours have been updated through August 31. She deferred to the Committee for further comment. Pearce said his major concern was the number of hours being worked beyond the 19 set forth in the RGS Agreement. He asked the Board to consider increasing the compensated hours. The original scope of work was for a maintenance organization and we are now in a totally different mode. He suggested a new average of 25 hours. Cassingham asked for consideration of retroactivity to July 1, 2014 and requested no action on prior years. Pearce asked to revisit the hours in December when the CY2015 Agreement with RGS is considered by the Governing Board. Cassingham concurred with this given the unknown scope of work with the addition of the Next Gen System Project.

Hymel asked if this required an amendment to the RGS Agreement. Cassingham said meeting minutes or a letter from the President may suffice. She added that hours up to 29 per week do not trigger RGS benefits. She suggested that her general administrative hours be increased from 15 to 18 to compensate for special projects and from 4 to 7 for Strategic Plan Implementation and the Next Gen Project. Sources of funding for the administrative component would be from the \$3,000/year savings from the NFPD Staff Support Agreement and Contingency Line Items to cover increased RGS costs from July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. The Replacement Fund would bear the increased hours for Strategic Plan Implementation. She confirmed for Berg that Replacement Fund costs would be reimbursable from the parcel tax.

M/S/P Pearce/Berg to increase the Executive Officer's compensated average hours from 19 to 25 retroactive from July 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014, which is within budgets with corresponding revision of the MERA/RGS Agreement as needed.

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

2. Report from Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Citizens Oversight Committee (COC)

Cassingham summarized the Ad Hoc COC Subcommittee's first report to the Executive Board. She said Members Tyrell-Brown, Gaffney, and Shortall were seeking feedback on their suggested application and appointment processes, number of members, term length, qualifications, duties and meetings. The Subcommittee suggests delegation of the appointment of COC members to the Board of Supervisors and one member coming from each District. They support a five-member COC and initial term lengths of two and four years with four-year terms thereafter. MERA General Counsel advised the COC must continue through the 20-year life of the parcel tax. Longer terms were discussed but some members felt they could be a deterrent to commitment to serve.

The Subcommittee added property taxpayer status, commitment of time and areas of experience to the qualifications. Suggested duties reflect the Tax Ordinance and are left broad accordingly. Meetings are proposed to be quarterly but not less than annually. Gaffney suggested more frequent meetings initially while the Project is under construction. Cassingham was asked by the Subcommittee to identify examples of COC bylaws, and General Counsel will advise if they are required. Pearce clarified that COC bylaws would be approved by the MERA Governing Board after the Subcommittee developed a draft and Executive Board reviewed them.

Hymel said MERA should develop membership recommendations to the BOS, which they would confirm. This is a MERA project and MERA would staff the COC so MERA Governing Board input is needed. Stutsman asked if COC openings would be advertised. Cassingham said the application process would be public and MERA would process the applications. Hymel clarified that MERA would screen applicants and forward recommendations to the BOS. Cassingham, in response to Stutsman, said the Subcommittee favored public interviews by the BOS followed by public appointment. Stutsman asked if we had originally envisioned appointment delegation to the BOS. Cassingham said this is the Subcommittee's idea. Pearce said these discussions are intended to move the COC formation process forward so that upon passage of the parcel tax, the Governing Board can take action. He added there are differing opinions on COC appointment and that the Subcommittee's delegation to the BOS was intended to assure it was not appointing its own people. Stutsman added that this was probably intended to de-politicize the process. Doyle said MERA could screen and get the BOS to ratify. Hymel asked why the Subcommittee would favor delegation. Cassingham said the thinking might be that MERA is not really set up to make County-wide appointments and BOS input would be helpful to MERA.

Tackabery noted from the Tax Ordinance that the MERA Governing Board was required to appoint the COC. Cassingham said the Subcommittee was aware of the language but wanted consideration of broadening the process. Berg added that COC applicants could be put forth from each District. McCann said the language in the Tax Ordinance needs to be followed. Hymel asked what the benefit would be in taking this to the BOS. McCann said this would add transparency. Stutsman said delegation seemed awkward to her since MERA only approached the BOS as a conduit to get the measure on the ballot and that this is a MERA project. Hymel said a report could be provided to the BOS about creation

of the COC by the MERA Governing Board prior to it taking final action. Stutsman said her Town Council has made appointments to several Committees, noting their meetings are probably better attended. Cassingham added that appointments by elected officials are more usual than appointments by appointed officials like MERA's Governing Board. McCann said MERA could do the outreach, screen applicants and send a short-list to the BOS for confirmation. Hymel said the MERA COC Report to the BOS could precede what McCann has outlined. Cassingham will share all this feedback with the Subcommittee.

3. MERA Community Presentations – Update (Jeffries)

Cassingham summarized Jeffries' report. There are 11 scheduled presentations from August 15 through October 6. Jeffries has offered presentations to any groups inquiring about the Next Gen Project, which are scheduled only upon invitation. Presentation content and handouts have been reviewed by General Counsel. Hymel asked about the feedback Jeffries has received from the presentations. Berg said he has been present at 4 of the presentations and today he spoke to the Retired Teachers who are very supportive. The Marin Economic Forum discussed a depreciation account or sinking fund for Gen III. This also came up with the Teachers group. All were positive. Cusimano said campaign information mirrors the public information MERA developed. Endorsements from the North Bay Leadership Council and others are coming in. Feedback has been very positive. Representatives from the campaign are willing to attend any community presentations.

4. Report on Bodega/Bay Hill Tower and Site Leases

Cassingham reprised prior reports on the Bodega/Bay Hill Site. Crown Castle's Site Lease with Rancho Vista Del Mar has expired and MERA's facilities are located on their tower. Crown Castle also owns MERA's facilities. Incline Partners is the new lessor of the property and they intend to replace the tower there to accommodate more users. MERA now is a holdover tenant on the tower and the site, and we continue to make timely payments to Crown Castle and Rancho Vista Del Mar.

MERA is being helpful to the new lessor thanks to Tackabery, Nelson and Chuck providing timely technical information about our current tower facilities and future needs. Incline Partners is working with Sonoma County on permitting and construction. Both Crown Castle and Incline Partners have assured MERA there will be no disruption to our operations there as the parties' relationships and Tower issues are resolved.

Pearce confirmed with Cassingham that, in fact, MERA's facilities at Bay Hill are owned by Crown Castle. She added that lease costs with Incline are likely subject to change.

5. Other Items.

Cassingham reported on today's site meeting for the Forbes Undergrounding Project. A trenchless methodology, namely horizontal directional drilling, has been recommended by the subcontractor. Success of this approach depends on soil conditions. All risk with this option will be borne by the subcontractor. She is awaiting cost estimates for this change order and will work to assure there are no additional costs for MMWD to review

a second set of submittals. Pearce commented on the need for MMWD to re-review trenching submittals as originally planned. Cassingham said we are currently under budget but this is subject to change. She acknowledged the importance of MMWD folding the undergrounding into their Reservoir Improvement Project.

Cassingham said there have been collection issues from member agencies for FY14-15 Operating, Bank Note and Bond Debt Service payments. She is analyzing why this happened to correct it going forward. Six Members needed to be re-contacted regarding their Ops and Note payments and six others required follow-up on their Debt Service. NFPD collects the Ops and Note payments and BNY Trustee collects Debt Service. Payment deadlines have remained the same, so we will identify how this anomaly occurred and resolve it. Hymel confirmed that the affected agencies have been contacted.

Cassingham said there is approximately \$3,000 in savings in the current year's service contract with NFPD. Executive Assistant Supervision has been reduced and Felciano is fully acclimated to MERA's work and doing well.

Cassingham asked Hymel, as Committee Chair, to summarize the topics addressed by the Finance Committee earlier today. He said extension of the Next Gen System's useful life and funding its replacement were discussed in response to the feedback received from our public outreach. With the passage of Measure A, we will have the opportunity to set aside funds by continuing to assess the current debt service. \$1.8M annually would be available to offset increased operating costs, fund a System Upgrade Agreement to extend useful life with software upgrades and set aside a reserve for Gen III. Without the parcel tax, we would need to turn to the smoothing financing option to implement the Project.

Cusimano said discussions of a set-aside with a parcel tax have been favorably received by various groups. Hymel said while a set-aside would not entirely fund a Gen III, it would meet the goal of extending useful life to 20 years and start a Reserve for Gen III. Members would need to agree to continued payments and prioritize first draw on them. This would help assure we are not in the same situation we are now with the current System. Pearce noted future systems will be increasingly software based so the SUA assures we have the latest versions.

C. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1. Review of FY14-15 Operating Budget Line Item

Tackabery said Items 1, 2 and 3 were carried forward from the July 14 meeting. DPW has found the intent of this line item is to pay Trainers from any agency. When the FY15-16 contract is presented in May 2015, new language will clarify Trainers can get reimbursed for expenses, including conducting training, up to \$140 per hour. Hymel clarified that the amount of training will be increasing. Tackabery said training is ongoing and all training material is being updated. Goal is to complete the updates by end of this year along with the TOT list. Berg asked what is being updated given the change in radios. Nelson said field user supervisor/manager and dispatch training for the

existing system is being scrubbed to get us through 2018. Pearce asked why MERA was in the training payment loop. Nelson clarified how training is requested of the County by Members. Trainers on the TOT list provide the training, and MERA is invoiced to reimburse the County after the County pays the Trainers. Berg said the proposed change will allow Member trainers' costs to be recouped.

2. Request for Review of Additional Radios Policy and Procedures

Tackabery said the Ops Group reviewed this on June 4 and felt the Policy had been successful. Their reasons included it slowed down requests, identified who wants radios and identified training and operational needs. Ops recommended regular review of the policy every 2-3 years or after a major incident taxing the System. Ops also recommended that non-Member users be sponsored by a MERA Member.

Hymel clarified this is not a moratorium but a review. Pearce suggested adding language about recommending dual band radios when replacing. Doyle and Hymel agreed that this is the place to include this recommendation. Hymel said dual band radios were discussed at the Finance Committee meeting so that replacements work with Next Gen, noting dual band radios cost more. An incentive to member agencies to do this was also discussed. This would mitigate MERA's having to buy dual band for non-police and fire users. Berg noted the dramatic growth in Member radios may have an impact on the Lando Formula or whatever formula is used for Next Gen O&M. Tackabery said the radio itself does not tax the system; it is the use. Berg said a regular review of numbers of radios should be conducted.

Tackabery will present a Revised Policy reflecting this discussion to the Executive Board on November 12.

3. MERA Operational Issues Working Group

Tackabery said he reviewed the Group's purpose as he was trying to increase participation. Years ago, DPW formed its own Group which MERA has relied on since. Ops recently discussed Group purpose, membership and meetings. Hymel asked about the Group's size. Nelson said currently it is about 10 and used to be larger. She said a core group attends each time. Tackabery said the Group is very helpful in flushing out issues. He asked for the Executive Board's help in getting more subject matter experts from Members involved. Nelson, in response to Pearce, said some Group Members were also Trainers. Berg confirmed the Group's monthly meetings, the most recent being September 3. Tackabery said agenda packets are emailed in advance of the meetings and input is welcome if attendance is not possible.

4. Review of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Radio Transmissions

Tackabery presented an analysis of EMS usage noting transmission length was double or triple the regular transmission of 6.4 seconds. Ops vetted this with the consensus being this usage is a small percentage of the total. Essentially these are mutual-aid communications and training emphasizes brevity. DPW recommends no change in EMS usage of MERA. Hymel noted, apparently training has reduced EMS transmission time. Consensus of the Executive Board was to support DPW's recommendation.

5. Review of MERA Generators Shelters Options

Tackabery said DPW has reviewed the use of generator shelters to prolong MERA generator life. Nelson presented DPW's analysis noting generator life expectancy is 15-20 years. At some sites, generator life is considerably less due to environmental conditions. There are 10 sites where shelters could be installed. This type of construction costs \$150 psf. A 20x15-foot shelter would allow sufficient space for maintenance at a cost of \$45,000 or \$450,000 for 10 sites. Pearce said he envisioned tuff sheds versus costs like these. Nelson said tuff shed size will not accommodate maintenance and fuel lines. She said site lease revisions and negotiations might be needed to add these structures. Shelters may require custom design, venting and climate control.

Nelson said generators being purchased come with a housing around the mechanics. Bay Hill and Pt. Reyes casements were upgraded to help withstand corrosion and rodents. Gray said maybe some locations would benefit from a shelter and suggested further review on a case-by-case basis. Nelson added that County DPW site assessment studies cost would be about \$75,000 for the 10 sites. Gray noted electrical design costs to install one of his station generators was \$12,000 and the installed generator was less than that. Pearce said his tuff shed cost \$6,000 including installation, venting, commodious space and permits. He agreed with reviewing shelters on a case-by-case basis.

Nelson said this has come up because of the need to replace generators including Big Rock and San Pedro this year. These were put on hold to develop shelter information for the Board. Cusimano asked what Tackabery would recommend. Hymel asked if either site would warrant a shelter. Tackabery said the generators come with a housing. Nelson added there would be building maintenance on the shelters as well as the generators. Hymel said as generator replacement occurs, shelters should be evaluated to see if warranted. Doyle asked what generators cost. Nelson said about \$38,000 to \$70,000. Cost of shelters may be more than the generators. It was agreed that shelters would be evaluated case-by-case and DPW would seek additional funds if funds were not available for them in the replacement project budget.

6. Review of Bolinas Fire Volunteer Paging Transmitter Relocation Project (Brown)

Tackabery said this is a request to use some of MERA's microwave site at Martinelli Ranch. Nelson said AT&T phone lines have been problematic including failure, prompting a review of relocating the volunteer paging transmitter from the Bolinas Fire Station to the MERA microwave transmitter site at Martinelli Ranch in Bolinas. Some T1 circuits are available to do this. There are FCC licensing and site lease issues involved. Estimated costs are about \$9,000. Leased line savings could be \$200+ per month. The Ops Group recommends allocation of the MERA T1.

Brown added this would reduce liability, improve coverage, reduce County employee time dealing with downed lines and eliminate payment for the lines. Bolinas will help fund this. Pearce confirmed that this is not a MERA Project but a request to use the T1 to facilitate it. Cassingham said a cursory review of the Martinelli Ranch Lease noted a

request for owner consent should not affect our rent. While the lease is permissive about additional equipment, the Family's written consent is advised along with a submittal about the project. Pearce asked about MERA future needs for this capacity. Tackabery said there is excess now. Nelson said there would be room for future projects. Doyle asked about project funding. Tackabery said the County and two fire districts would cost share.

McCann added if future capacity was not affected by sharing, this seemed appropriate. Pearce added the benefit would reduce, if not eliminate, volunteer paging problems.

M/S/P Gray/Pearce to approve allocation of MERA's T1 for the Bolinas Fire Volunteer Paging Transmitter Relocation Project.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

7. Marin County Fire Department Fire Detection Camera Project (Brown)

Tackabery said this is a similar request but for a different project. This would permit the mounting of cameras to scan for and sense fires. The County has received a grant from PG&E with a short implementation timeline. Nelson said sites include Tam, Big Rock, Pt. Reyes and Barnabe. The proposed allocation would not limit MERA capacity. The Tam-to-Barnabe link would leave a single T1 remaining. She would recommend this final T1 be reserved for emergency use and no further use requests be considered. McCann confirmed this is different T1 capacity than the previous Project.

Tackabery said Ops recommends the proposed allocation of T1s for the Project. He asked Cassingham about site lease implications. She said Big Rock is leased from C&C Equipment Company. New equipment would require written consent and could trigger a rent adjustment. Pt. Reyes site permit is with NPS. Rent is zero and written consent is recommended. Mt. Tam is an American Tower lease requiring written consent for additional equipment, which could trigger a rent adjustment.

Brown said there is benefit to the property owners from these cameras where fire detection is a problem. Property would be better protected by fire detection equipment which also has a video surveillance feature to help promote vault security.

Brown added that the State mandated PG&E to fund wildfire protection through cameras. Fire Safe Marin, a non-profit, will receive the funds. A check has been cut to the vendor for this Project which must be implemented by October 31. Gray suggested adding a graphic on the area to be covered when contacting site owners.

M/S/P Gray/Doyle to approve allocation of MERA's T1s as recommended by DPW and Ops Group for the Marin County Fire Department Fire Detection Camera Project with

the understanding the one remaining T1 from Mt. Tam to Mt. Barnabe be reserved for emergency use.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

8. Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Chuck said data was supplied for May, June and July. He cited total monthly hours of System activity, which has been consistent. After the Napa earthquake, he developed a report for the four Sundays in August with total call time. The August 24 Sunday showed increased activity due to the quake. There were no busies on that date. The System was not affected at all.

9. Other Information Items

None

D. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda

None

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer

NEXT: MERA Executive Board Regular Meeting
Wednesday - November 12, 2014 – 3:30 p.m.