MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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DRAFT: 6/19/19

GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of April 24, 2019 Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on April 24, 2019 at 3:32 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office; Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. Self-introductions followed.

Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano
City of Mill Valley	Alan Piombo
City of Novato	Pam Drew
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Doug Kelly
City of San Rafael	Glen McElderry (Alternate)
County of Marin	Dan Eilerman (Alternate)
City of Sausalito	Bill Frass (Alternate)
Town of Tiburon	Michael Cronin
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Community College District	Martin Langeveld (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick
Marinwood Community Services District	Jeff Naylor
Novato Fire Protection District	Steve Metcho, L. J. Silverman (Alternate)
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Cathryn Hilliard
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Michael Norton

Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:
City of Belvedere
Town of Fairfax
City of Larkspur
Ross Valley Fire Department

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Administrative Assistant – Next Gen Project	Maura Griffin
MERA Operations Officer	Ernest Klock
County DPW Communications Manager	Ethan Simpson
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Villa

Guests Present:

County Public Works Director	Raul Rojas
Federal Engineering	David Mortimer

A.   Consent Calendar

All matters on the Consent Calendar are to be approved with one motion unless a Member of the Governing Board or the public requests that separate action be taken on a specific item:

1) Minutes from March 27, 2019 Governing Board Regular Meeting
2) Report No. 80 on Strategic Plan Implementation
3) Update on NFPD/Town of Corte Madera Transition of MERA
         Office and Staff Services

M/S/P Kelly/Norton to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-3 as presented.

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

B.   Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1)   Discussion of County Response to MERA Next Generation Radio System
              Implementation Letter of Concerns dated March 13, 2019

Eilerman distributed copies of response letter from Hymel and Rojas to MERA dated April 10, 2019. He provided a message in Hymel's absence noting this Project is a top priority for the County and the County as a MERA member. The County's percentage share of MERA costs is 36% so they have the same interests in seeing the Project proceed on time and on budget. He added some of the issues with

the Project can be controlled and some can't. Given the increased workload with upcoming phases, the County has committed to adding staff resources to address it.

Eilerman said in reviewing the Project Budget, we are still within it given the approved and unapproved contingencies and reserves. He referenced the SUA approved by the Governing Board to extend Next Gen useful life by 15 years. The County shares the same concerns, interests and goals expressed in MERA's March 13 letter and the County's response letter speaks to that.

Pearce said he and Cusimano had met with Hymel, Rojas and Klock on April 22 to discuss MERA's Project concerns and needs going forward. He mentioned the current Project Implementation Agreement is sunsetting soon, noting it was based on a completion date of June 2019. It will be presented to the Governing Board for extension along with other areas for review. He agreed that MERA and the County have a number of common concerns about the Project, including identifying opportunities to shorten the Schedule.

Cusimano said another matter to be addressed is the formation of a subcommittee to focus on key decisions with Hymel, Rojas and Klock. Representing MERA on the subcommittee could be the President and Vice President or another combination to hone in on upcoming contracts and contract renewals to improve the decision-making process and provide better control. Eilerman added Hymel is always accessible as concerns arise.

Rojas reiterated this Project is a huge priority for DPW that they take very seriously. Recent meetings with Pearce and Cusimano have been helpful in addressing issues and strategies as we move forward. These meetings should be continued, noting how fruitful they have been. The Project has also been discussed in context with the County's budget and his performance evaluation.

2)   Report on March 27, 2019 MERA Orientation for New Governing and
           Executive Board Members and Alternates

Cassingham summarized her report, noting the emphasis of the Orientation was on MERA Administration and Next Gen Project Implementation. Ten members from eight agencies attended. Jeffries' Orientation PowerPoint was attached to her report. A number of good questions and comments were offered during the session. Considerable emphasis was placed on MERA Member communications. In particular, it was suggested that MERA make regular NGP presentations to Member Agency Boards and Councils and at Mayors and Councilmembers meetings. She added MERA staffing is not structured to provide this extent of briefings. MERA has developed additional tools for Governing Board member use in keeping their elected and appointed officials informed about Next Gen. MERA depends on communications between its representatives and their appointing authorities.

Cassingham urged member help in improving communications as staff has limited resources to do this. She added it is up to representatives and their agencies as to how they want these communications delivered. This could be by agendizing NGP updates at member meetings, internal staff reports or by passing on the one-pagers to Boards and Councils. She said MERA depends on this communication partnership to keep agencies informed and asked for representatives to confirm how their agencies would like to receive NGP updates.

Kelly said until recently he presented his report to the San Anselmo Town Council on their Consent Calendar. He is now on their agenda to brief them quarterly and keep them up-to-date. Cassingham said she and Jeffries are open to suggestions as to how to better help representatives communicate with their agencies, but it is not possible for staff to do regular in-person briefings. Hilliard thanked staff for the Orientation, noting it was extremely helpful. Adding the PowerPoint to the staff report allows her to reference or distribute as needed. She said Next Gen is listed on SMFPD agendas for discussion at every meeting. She said where she gets Board comments is on the differences between the promised and deliverables. Finally, she appreciates MERA's offer to brief the District, if needed.

Pearce said from the beginning of Next Gen, it was stressed that it was important to keep member agencies in the loop. Because this was not in place with Gen I implementation, issues arose that could have been avoided. He uses the one-pagers to keep his Board engaged and informed and urged others to do so. If members need more, we will do what we can to help. Jeffries distributed the one-page April 2019 NGP update.

3) <u>Report No. 54 on Next Gen System Project</u> – (Jeffries)

- Media Contacts Update
- Low-Income Senior Homeowner Parcel Tax Exemption Packet

Jeffries briefly updated the Project team composition of MERA and DPW staff plus Federal Engineering (FE) and upcoming calls and meeting with Motorola. He noted the rescheduled Project Oversight Committee meeting to June 26. Griffin is reaching out to the MERA members to collect information to create a database on mobile radio installations, including license plates and inventory numbers, mounting information, radio counts and bands to add to or verify current information. She will also be collecting more data on Wi-Fi capabilities for radio reprogramming.

Jeffries referenced the media contact information attached to his report. Three articles on Next Gen in the IJ were generated in one week with no further follow-up. The media information provides key talking points for member use but urged media contacts be referred to him as Project spokesperson. He asked that media referrals be emailed to him in advance of his follow-up. A Project Newsletter is also

being timed with the release of the SEIR, which can be referenced with the media.

Jeffries distributed the Measure A Low-Income Senior Exemption Application Packet for member use. The second Media Advisory went out today with a third planned for next month. This is an annual application based on income and age eligibility. Application information is also available on the MERA website.

4) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports – (Klock)

1) CEQA Process and Schedule Update – Next Gen Project

Klock said all the SEIR Chapters have been received for internal and house review except for Chapter 5. Staff comments are sent to the consultants to address. It is hoped the document will be released in the next month or two for circulation and public review this summer. He reiterated how complex this document is and how important it is for it to address all impacts to get the best document for public review.

Pearce asked about in-house review before MERA Counsel review. Klock said almost everything has been sent to Counsel except for Chapter 5. Several chapters have been received back from Counsel with comments which have been forwarded to the consultant. Ortiz said the biggest section, which is the impact section, has not been received. Klock said Chapter 5 is the whole analysis, which includes the impacts. Impacts are still being reviewed internally. The summary should not be extensive. Pearce confirmed there will be one final screen check copy before release.

2) Update on Motorola Contract Change Order #8: Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for Microwave Network

Klock said he intended to report on C.O. #8 to the Project Oversight Committee in April. However, some of the options presented required further review. C.O. #8 is a new network architecture to handle additional traffic. He is looking at MPLS after Next Gen is completed. Given this is several years out, it is hard to estimate costs. He is also reviewing where credits in the existing Contract will be reflected. Presentation to the Oversight Committee is expected in June.

Tyrrell-Brown asked about the additional expense for C.O. #8 if added later and if this delay was due to C.O. #8 cost. Klock said the cost of #8 was high and direction to him was to take time to vet all options. Four scenarios will be presented for Committee consideration, including front-end and back-end

additions and equipment only, foregoing SUA II costs.

3)   Report on Motorola Legacy System Support

Klock reported Motorola Legacy System support has been extended for the Smart Net System portion for one year. He was seeking an extension until Project completion. Motorola said it was difficult for them to ensure replacement equipment and wants to revisit this before June 2020. Simpson will report on System spares under the Operations Update.

4)   First Gen MERA Radio Surplus Policy Discussion

Klock said this issue arose out of Early Order Radios and the return by some members of old radios, prompting the need for a policy. Inventory forms are needed along with direction to the Radio Shop to remove radio code plugs and encryption. The proposed policy has been vetted at Ops several times. He is seeking comments and feedback before presenting it to the Executive Board. The policy also allows for members to donate old radios for a back-up radio cache for member use before Next Gen cutover.

Gaffney asked about non-member radios. Simpson said any MERA radio being surplused must have code plugs and encryption removed. Pearce noted non-member ambulance services that have ceased operations and asked the status of their radios. Simpson said non-member ambulance services still operating in Marin approached those ceasing operations for their radios but he will check further on them. Radios purchased by non-members have not been fully tracked. Pearce said we need to effectively manage and track all radios using our System. Simpson said we have an inventory of radios on the System, but they only inventory radios that are DPW property. An agency that changes hands may not inform DPW, which is why this policy is needed.

Simpson noted the County does not have the authority to direct the use of other user's property. Pearce said there apparently is no radio tracking system in place. He added Griffin will be surveying member agency counts but he is concerned about non-member counts and tracking. Jeffries said System access relies on system IDs and the Shop has the ability to block access. He said he knows of no mechanism that requires non-members to report radio movement. CHP has approached MERA about additional access to the MERA System, which is being vetted.

Klock said the proposed policy applies to members and non-members. In response to Gaffney, Jeffries confirmed non-members buy their own radios. Kelly said the hardware can be owned but software is licensed. Pearce asked if this could be covered in our agreements, as well as the policy. Rojas said the County does not track physical location of the radios. If they don't have an inventory, it is the

member's responsibility to know where they are. Possibly a master list could be created for Next Gen. There currently is no master list. Jeffries agreed it is good for the members to have their own inventories.

Pearce said it should be fundamental to have a complete system inventory. Jeffries said lost radios can be disconnected from the system as can radios that might fall into the wrong hands. He added that deprogramming was probably not required in the original LOAs.

5)   MERA System Operations Update – March 2019 – (Simpson)

Simpson reported some of these updates were noted at the April meeting. Bigger issues in March were correction to the SX1 Channel Bank and the T1 connections to the Central Site Controller which started producing false alarms. Service windows were needed at late night to change out parts in the Channel Bank to address and resolve these issues. This also required a reset of the MOSCAD. MOSCAD is included in the Motorola Legacy System Service Agreement.

Simpson noted the replacement of the Mill Valley Channel 5 controller board which affected bay station traffic by creating intermittent audio issues. This is being monitored to see if coverage issues have been addressed. There have also been air conditioner issues at some sites like Dollar Hill. None are impacting service. They are also working on getting Central Site Controller spare boards in order and building inventory. This controller handles the simulcast systems. Without this, the East and West cells would go down to site trunking. Simpson reported on board acquisition and testing last week. Most were viable spares. They cannot be purchased new and must be sourced. The Shop is in current talks with Orange County for parts. They will also be reviewing spares for the Quantar bay station repeaters.

Naso inquired about dead spots in Southern Marin. Simpson said Southern Marin and the Coast have always had coverage challenges due to terrain and coastline. Many of these will be addressed with Next Gen. He referred Naso to the coverage maps for specific areas. He will investigate any areas that had coverage but do not now.

Stevens noted a problem last week with their paging system and the Bolinas site was dead. He asked if this was the same issue as before. Simpson said the issue was failure of the radio amplifier. There have also been telephone line issues in the past. In response to Stevens, Simpson confirmed parts are available for the paging system.

Klock asked for feedback on the First Gen policy through Ops. Building a cache with member radio donations will allow Shop staff to harvest parts. In response to Pearce, Cassingham confirmed Governing Board feedback on the Policy is being

requested before it is presented to the Executive Board in July. In response to Gaffney, Klock said member agency radios in use on the System when Measure A passed would be replaced. He was uncertain about non-member radio replacement and assumed some non-members with LOAs would get replacements.

In response to Pearce on non-member radios with agencies no longer serving Marin, Simpson said he was aware new ambulance services were seeking those radios. Pearce said we need to track those radios to assure approved usage. Simpson said they have an inventory of what exists on the system, particularly County radios, which are their property, but no tracking of agency radios that change hands. The County does not have the authority to tell an agency what to do with their property. Kelly said he would ask San Anselmo for its radio inventory. In response to Pearce's concerns about tracking non-member agency radios, Jeffries said the Radio Shop can block specific radios IDs from the System.

Simpson summarized System usage statistics for March and year-to-date, noting ongoing agency reporting issues affected by talkgroup patching, which can affect data reporting. Jeffries said it is the first panel in a patch that gets recorded. Pearce reported APX knobs are breaking. Simpson said the estimated cost of these radios is $700 per radio.

6)   Other Information Items

None.

D.   Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Pearce reminded that the next Governing Board meeting is on May 8 and the Agenda Packet will be distributed on May 3.

E.   Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham
MERA Executive Officer
and Secretary