

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**DRAFT: 6/19/19**

## **GOVERNING BOARD**

### **Minutes of May 8, 2019 Regular Meeting**

#### **Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on May 8, 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:**

City of Belvedere	Craig Middleton
City of Larkspur	Scott Schurtz (Alternate)
City of Mill Valley	Alan Piombo
City of Novato	Pam Drew
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
City of San Rafael	Robert Sinnott (Alternate)
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	Bill Frass (Alternate)
Town of Tiburon	Michael Cronin
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (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	Chris Tubbs (Alternate)
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Hamid Khalili (Alternate)

#### **Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:**

Town of Corte Madera  
Town of Fairfax  
Town of San Anselmo  
Inverness Public Utility District  
Marin Community College District  
Ross Valley Fire Department

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Casey Strong
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:**

Federal Engineering	David Mortimer
Town of Corte Madera	Lorena Barrera

A. Election of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)

Executive Board Chair Hymel said Pearce and Cusimano agreed to continue serving in their respective capacities as President and Vice President. The Executive Board nominated them accordingly.

*M/S/P Hymel/Tubbs to elect Pearce as MERA Governing Board President and Cusimano as MERA Governing Board Vice President.*

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

B. 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 April 24, 2019, Governing Board Regular Meeting  
**(to be presented at June 26 Governing Board Meeting)**
- 2) Report No 82 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Additional Term Appointments of Measure A  
Citizens Oversight Committee Members
- 4) Confirmation of Regular Governing Board Meeting Dates: FY19-20

*M/S/P Hymel/Tubbs to approve Consent Calendar Items 2-4 as presented.*

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

C. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Report No. 56 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries noted little had changed from his Report to the Governing Board on April 26. There have been a few more Project meetings. The Project Oversight Committee Meeting has been rescheduled to June 26 to permit development of additional information on Motorola Change Order #8 – Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for Microwave Network. Griffin is working on a field survey to verify radio counts and mobile radio installation information.

Jeffries noted the release of a third Media Advisory for the Low-Income Senior Measure A Parcel Tax Exemption in May preceding the June 1 application deadline. The application packet is attached to his report for member use. He distributed copies of the May 2019 Next Gen Update for member distribution to their elected and appointed officials. Finally, he noted two media contacts today regarding the CEQA process status for Next Gen.

2) Proposed FY19-20 Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham noted this was the first of three major service agreements with the County. All three agreements have been reviewed and recommended by the Executive Board. Their costs are included in the Proposed FY19-20 Operating Budget. The System Maintenance Agreement for FY19-20 is \$493,322, which includes a 2.5% CPI. Agreement tasks are the same as in prior agreements, namely preventative and corrective maintenance and equipment programming.

*M/S/P Wick/Gaffney to approve the Proposed FY19-20 Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

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

3) Proposed FY19-20 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA  
and the County of Marin

Cassingham presented the second annual agreement with the County, which is recommended by the Executive Board. It provides for Training, Technical Services and Administrative Costs. Proposed cost is \$250,190 which includes a 2.5% CPI increase on the Administrative component.

*M/S/P Tubbs/Middleton to approve the Proposed FY19-20 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

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

4) Proposed FY19-20 Communication System Services Agreement Between MERA  
and the County of Marin

Cassingham presented the third Agreement with the County, which includes support services for the current System provided by the Communications Services Manager and Senior Technicians at a cost of \$225,609, which includes a 2.5% CPI. She noted that with Chuck's retirement, there is no longer a Communications Engineering Services Manager. This position has been reconstituted as a Communications Services Manager.

Gaffney asked if the actual amount of the contract would be reduced due to the elimination of engineering services position. Pearce said the County is bringing on additional personnel to support Next Gen and using FE to provide current System engineering services as needed. Hymel added that FE would be contracted for this support.

*M/S/P Pomi/Wick to approve the Proposed FY19-20 Communication System Services Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

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

5) Report on Marin Transit Non-Member Contractors Letter of Agreement (LOAs)  
and Marin Civil Grand Jury Wildfire Preparedness Report

Pearce noted MERA was mentioned in this recent Grand Jury Report regarding evacuation emergency communications. Cassingham provided background on her

report and invited Van Doren to comment. DPW Radio Shop was approached by Marin Transit last December to program their spare radios for emergency coordination and communications between their Transit Supervisor and their four contractor dispatchers.

Cassingham said MERA was contacted by the Radio Shop to confirm if the contractors had or needed LOAs. LOAs were developed in consultation with Van Doren and submitted to them. Three executed LOAs have been received to date with GGBHTD pending. Van Doren is assisting with responding to GGBHTD comments to assure them they are not required to use MERA. As to the Grand Jury Report mentions of MERA, this may have occurred as a result of Van Doren being interviewed for the portions of the Report pertaining to evacuation communications and Marin Transit's MERA member status.

Cassingham said she is seeking Governing Board direction in terms of responding to the Grand Jury Report even though MERA was not interviewed for it or asked to respond. Attached to her report are the excerpts where MERA is cited. Van Doren said in addition to her MERA Governing Board service, she is an active participant with the Marin Emergency Operations Center. Spare Transit radios are being activated for Center communications to contractor dispatch centers if cell phones and landlines are not usable in an emergency.

Van Doren added that the Grand Jury may not have understood that Marin Transit has always been a MERA member and that their paratransit contractor Whistlestop and its successor is on the MERA System. They are trained to keep MERA usage to a minimum and use mobile data terminals for primary communications. She said the Grand Jury Report implies all Marin Transit contractors should participate in and be integrated into the County command structure and MERA. She emphasized they are contractors to Marin Transit and work through her agency in the command structure and in requests for resources.

Pearce said the language in the Report was concerning for MERA. Hymel said a letter from MERA to the Foreperson could clarify MERA's role and accurately reflect its emergency operations communications role. Gaffney asked whether a response should be from MERA or Marin Transit. Van Doren said it was her General Manager's decision to respond on Marin Transit's behalf. Pearce said MERA should respond to the Grand Jury on its radio communications role during wildfire emergencies. Cassingham will assist with the response.

6) Other Information Items

None.

D. Public Hearings

1) Proposed FY19-20 MERA Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users

Cassingham presented the Executive Board's recommendations on the Operating Budget for next fiscal year and continuation of the Non-Member System Users Zero-Rate Fee Schedule. Total budget is \$1,991,510, which is a 3.1% increase over prior year. MERA has enjoyed a good track record in containing operating costs over the years. Members will be invoiced for their service payments after June 1 for payment due after July 1. Gaffney inquired about FY17-18 actual expenditures of \$1.7M while budgeting \$1.9M for FY 18-19. Cassingham said actual expenditures less than the Budget can happen and that Budgets are based on County Agreement estimated expenditures.

*M/S/P Middleton/Gaffney to approve the Proposed FY19-20 MERA Operating Budget and Continuation of the Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users as presented.*

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

2) Proposed FY19-20 MERA New Project Financing – 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets

Cassingham said the 2007 Note payment continues to be \$225,000 as originally established by the Governing Board and the 2010 Bonds Debt Service is \$2,120,000 as determined by the Trustee. Agency contribution amounts are attached to the staff report. Members will be invoiced by MERA for the Note and invoiced by the U.S. Bank Trustee for the Bond payment. Invoicing will occur after June 1 with note payment due after July 1 and Bond payment due by August 1. In response to Pearce, Cassingham confirmed these Budgets were previously reviewed and recommended by the Executive Board.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Hymel to approve the Proposed FY19-20 New Project Financing – 2007 Bank Note and MERA 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets as presented.*

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

3) Proposed Resolution Adopting the FY19-20 Operating, New Project Financing – 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets

Cassingham presented the Resolution, which combines the prior Budget approvals for Audit purposes.

*M/S/P Tubbs/Hymel to approve the Resolution 2019-01 Adopting the Proposed FY19-20 Operating, New Project Financing - 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets as presented.*

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

Pearce closed the Public Hearings.

E. Operations Reports – (Klock)

1) CEQA Process and Schedule Update – Next Gen Project

Klock reported they are working daily with the consultants to finalize the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR). It has taken longer than expected and is not yet ready for release. All Project impacts must be accurately described and more time is needed to do this. He noted this is a complex document and he is working diligently on its release.

Hymel noted monthly updates are being provided to Pearce and Cusimano to assure MERA leadership is in the loop on what's outstanding. Pearce felt these updates were important to assure continuity in what is being reviewed and status of those reviews to manage the timeline for the SEIR. Klock said he has requested a status from the consultant on the chapters that have not been forthcoming. He will continue to press for this and will share it with leadership.

2) First Gen MERA Radio Proposed Policy

Klock noted the Proposed Policy has been reviewed several times by the Ops Group and by this Board. It has been amended to include the disposal of non-member radios. Pearce said this policy is key to tracking First Gen radios and their security. Jeffries added Ops feedback has been thorough and helpful to policy development.

*M/S/P Metcho/Van Doren to approve the Proposed MERA First Gen Radios Surplus Policy as presented.*

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

3) MERA System Operations Update – April – (Simpson)

Simpson reported overall April was a good month for the MERA System. The Radio Shop worked with Motorola to configure spare boards for East and West Simulcast site controllers. Spare counts were doubled but some spares were not valid. They are working with Orange County and other vendors to get additional spares for Quantars and base stations. We are in a much better position today versus a few months ago in efforts to extend current System useful life.

Simpson reported that, due to PG&E power shutdowns to reduce fire hazards, the Radio Shop and Garage have been reviewing and confirming backup generators are in good condition. Most generators are new so it is a matter of keeping fuel levels up. Pearce said some PG&E service delays are projected to be 3-5 days and asked if there is a fuel contingency plan to obtain and deliver it to the sites. Simpson said some sites use diesel fuel and others propane. In the past, diesel has been delivered to the sites in emergencies by other County agencies. They will be exploring with propane vendors the option of retainers and public safety priority service.

Pearce asked about remote monitoring of fuel levels. Simpson confirmed monitoring is in place, which generates low-fuel alarms and power interruption signals from PG&E, which trigger generator takeover. They also monitor the time backup generators are in use to signal fuel replenishment. Van Doren received information from Cal OES that local governments should plan on 14-day fuel supplies in the event of a PG&E shutdown.

Simpson said in response to Executive Board feedback, future System Usage Reports will be revised to reflect categories of users, number of calls, call time, busy time and percentage of usage. This is due to the inaccurate call data by individual agency, which is occurring due to how talk groups are patched by dispatchers, especially during afterhours. Hymel said discussion was around presenting righthand column data versus the distorted detailed information to assure greater accuracy. Detailed information is still available on request by an agency. Busies are the most important information and they are accurate.

4) Other Information Items

Klock reported the County Board approved 2 full-time positions and recruitments have started to bring staff on quickly to assist his operations.



F. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

G. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary