

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Town of Corte Madera
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GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of March 24, 2021 Regular Meeting

DRAFT: 4/21/21

Call to Order and Introductions

The teleconferenced regular meeting was called to order by President Pearce on March 24, 2021, at 3:32 p.m. Barrera called roll.

Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

Town of Corte Madera	R. J. Suokko (Alternate)
Town of Fairfax	Chance Cutrano, William Cade (Alternates)*
City of Larkspur	Don Schwartz
City of Mill Valley	Jacqueline Graf (Alternate)
City of Novato	Amy Peele*
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Steve Burdo
City of San Rafael	Bob Sinnott (Alternate)
County of Marin	Dan Eilerman (Alternate)
Town of Tiburon	Jamie Scardina
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox, Shelley Redding (Alternate)
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick (Alternate)
Marinwood Community Services District	Eric Dreikosen (Alternate)
Novato Fire Protection District	L. J. Silverman, Steve Metcho (Alternate)
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Cathryn Hilliard
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Mike Norton

*corrected 6-18-21

Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:

City of Belvedere
City of Sausalito
Bolinas Fire Protection District
Marin Community College District
Ross Valley Fire Department
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Operations Officer	Andrew LeBlanc
Recording Secretary	Lorena Barrera

Guest:

David Mortimer	Federal Engineering
John Maher	Maher Accountancy
Jonathan Sprague	AECOM

Pearce asked that Item B-1 be reordered before the Consent Calendar in consideration of John Maher's presentation.

Pearce noted that Agenda Item B-7 has been pulled.

B. 1) FY19-20 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Management Letter –
(Board Action)

John Maher of Maher Accountancy presented the Audit Report, as detailed in the staff report. He expressed gratitude for staff's hard work in providing them with the information they needed. He invited questions from the Board.

Hearing none, Chair Pearce expressed appreciation to Mr. Maher and his team for the effort put forth on the Audit.

M/S/P Pomi/Burdo to accept the FY19-20 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Management Letter as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

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 February 24, 2021 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report No. 108 on Strategic Plan Implementation

3) Proposed Resolution Authorizing Investment of Monies in
Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF)

M/S/P Eilerman/Wick to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 through 3 as presented. Roll call vote followed.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

- 1) FY19-20 Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Management Letter
(Board Action) **(This Item reordered before Consent Calendar.)**
- 2) Report No. 82 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries-Discussion)

Jeffries said they held a number of project meetings and conference calls, as detailed in the staff report. He noted that last month, Bid Package #1 was awarded to Fidato and they will hopefully have some firm construction dates by the next meeting. Bid Package #1a was released and four contractors completed the site walks. It is hoped that award will be presented to the Board at the April 28 meeting. There has been no response or reaction to the filing of the SEIR Addendum for Tomales. Jeffries shared a February 26 IJ article along with some early comments. On March 8, MERA issued the latest NGP Newsletter.

Jeffries reviewed the Project Summary Table, as detailed in the staff report. He noted that the week of May 24 they will be going to Elgin, Illinois, for in-person witness testing of the Project mountaintop fixed network equipment. In June, staff will be witnessing a similar process with Nokia, but it will be virtual because Nokia's Texas facility has not yet been opened to visitors. He noted these are significant project milestones, and a major Motorola payment milestone. After that, the equipment will be shipped here in preparation for installation. Mountaintop installation will follow the construction work. He said dispatch center work is also coming fairly soon.

Jeffries shared the Site Overview, showing the progress of the site work. Jeffries asked that the Board Members share the included Governing Board Project handout with their organizations.

Jeffries reported a new personnel change that came in too late to be included in the staff report – AECOM has brought in Bruce Bagnoli as Construction Project Manager in place of James McKenzie. An updated Org Chart will be provided at next month's meeting.

Chair Pearce was happy to see green bars on the Site Overview Chart indicating the progress of task completion. He also thanked the Board members for refraining from commenting to the press and referring inquiries to the Project PIO to ensure a continuity of messaging.

3) Proposed Bid Package No. 2 (Big Rock, San Pedro and Sonoma Mountain) and Notice of Inviting Bids – (Jeffries – Board Action)

Jeffries reviewed Bid Package #2 for Big Rock, San Pedro and Sonoma Mountain, as detailed in the project initiation form included in the staff report be released. Construction estimate is \$230,627, not including contingencies. Award of bid is scheduled for June, with construction starting in August. Upon release of this bid package, that will total 9 of the 18 sites.

Hilliard asked about the specs for the Project. Jeffries said the Bid Package manual, including specifications, is a much more extensive document and will be released through Bid Planet when they are ready to start the bid process.

M/S/P Hilliard/Suokko to Approve Proposed Bid Package No. 2 (Big Rock, San Pedro and Sonoma Mountain) and Notice of Inviting Bids, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

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

4) Finance Subcommittee Report on Next Gen Project Revised Budget – (Jeffries - Board Action)

Jeffries presented the revised Budget summary and adjustments, as detailed in the staff report. He thanked Eilerman and Gaffney for their assistance with the Revised Budget.

Eilerman said this revision provides a clearer picture of the various Budget categories. He noted funding for the Non-Public Safety Radios is an area of concern given the Replacement Fund is also used for current System needs. He said the Finance Committee discussed that along with the savings from 2010 Bonds retirement. This may be an opportunity to bring an idea to the Governing Board for consideration. Rather than enjoying what might be a 40% member agency savings overall, there might be an opportunity to enjoy a 25% savings in order to set aside some money each year while maintaining an overall flat Operating Budget for the next seven years. This would permit accumulation for a Replacement Fund of about \$4M over the next seven-year-period. Van Doren

agreed that the actual number of Non-Public Radios needing to be replaced had not been accurately estimated. She asked if the funding source Jeffries identified was adequate to pay for the non-Safety radios as well as current System maintenance. Jeffries said the estimated \$4M+ for non-safety radios would deplete this source, ergo the need to reduce these costs. He received confirmation from MERA Counsel regarding inclusion of some of the user group radios like Park Rangers, Open Space Rangers and Probation as public safety, which can be funded by Measure A. He said they may consider different radio models for non-safety users as a way to save some funds, like using the 6500 series. He added reducing some of the accessories will not likely make a significant difference. After additional staff review non-safety radio funding will be re-presented to the Finance Committee.

Van Doren said she would like to understand the trade-offs of downsizing the radio series or other options impacts.

Pearce said there was discussion at the Executive Board about presenting the creation of a Replacement Fund for future System needs to the Managers, Special Districts and Fire Chiefs, to get their feedback. Pearce added he would need to have his Board's approval of this funding commitment and assumed other agencies would as well. He said this concept needs further vetting to make sure everyone has input.

M/S/P Eilerman/Van Doren moved to approve the Revised Next Gen Project Budget Summary and associated adjustments; direct staff and the Finance Committee to continue review of Non-Public Safety Radio funding; and direct staff to provide the Governing Board with an updated Next Gen Budget Summary on a quarterly basis. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

5) Finance Subcommittee Report on Next Gen Project Cash Flow Needs –
(Jeffries – Board Action)

Jeffries presented the update on Next Gen Project Cash Flow, as detailed in the staff report. He requested that staff and the Finance Committee continue working on the Cash Flow Analysis, recommend any additional strategies as needed, and approve provision of updated Cash Flow Analyses during Q1 and Q3 of each CY through 2023 and annually thereafter. He said at the end of 2022 most of the construction work will be completed and 2023 costs will be associated with Motorola Contract costs.

M/S/P Suokko/Gaffney moved to direct staff and the Finance Committee to complete the Cash Flow Analysis and recommend any needed additional strategies, and approve provision of an updated Cash Flow Analysis during Q1 and Q3 of each year through 2023 and annually thereafter. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

6) Proposed Next Gen Project Wolfback Ridge Communications Site Lease between MERA and Sundial Broadcasting Company – (Board Action)

Cassingham presented the proposed site lease agreement, as detailed in the staff report. She said this action item is the culmination of months of negotiations between MERA and Sundial. She said this site is one of the eight new Next Gen Project sites. Staff recommended approval of the agreement and authorization for the Executive Officer to execute. She thanked Trisha Ortiz for all her legal help and David Mortimer for the technical assistance.

Naso thanked Cassingham for all of her hard work on this matter. He noted preconstruction will start in June 2021 and asked if this construction of this site will take longer than the others. Cassingham said she would defer to Mortimer regarding the construction complexity of the site. She said it is an existing communications site that MERA will be upgrading for its use. She clarified that preconstruction includes all the bid document preparation, public advertisement and notification of bidders, and other activities prior to the actual start of construction activity which occurs later this year. She noted the site lessor was originally willing to consider commencement of rent three months after construction but chose not to hold the site open for that period. This involved additional negotiation of the rent commencement date. Jeffries added the exact construction dates will depend on which Bid Package the Project is included in.

Silverman asked if the other occupants at the Wolfback Ridge site are also paying \$48,000 a year. Cassingham said Sundial has other telecommunications broadcast tenants She said this rent payment is for MERA's portion of the facilities and reflects consideration of its public safety communications use.

M/S/P Eilerman/Pomi moved to approve the Proposed Next Gen Project Wolfback Ridge Communications Site Lease between MERA and Sundial Broadcasting Company, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

7) Proposed Next Gen Project Mill Valley Water Tank Site between MERA and Marin Municipal Water District – *Removed from Agenda*

8) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports – (LeBlanc)

1) Request for Funding for Microwave Channel Bank Equipment – (Board Action)

LeBlanc presented the request for funding for microwave channel bank equipment at a one-time cost of \$87,068, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended approval.

Pomi said at the September meeting there was Board approval of approximately \$252,000 to harden the System. At the October meeting less invasive improvements were recommended by the Radio Shop was discussed, at a cost of approximately \$110,000. LeBlanc confirmed that the proposed \$87,068 cost is a new proposal in place of the previous estimates and not in addition to them. He noted the reason for the delta is that DPW will only replace the specific equipment they need to harden the network. Pearce asked if there was any carryover benefit to the Next Gen system. LeBlanc said unfortunately there is not and this equipment is strictly meant for the current System.

M/S/P Pomi/Eilerman moved to approve the Request for Funding for Microwave Channel Bank Equipment, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

2) Proposed Disposition of Surplus Property – Stewart Point (Bollinas) Generator – (Board Action)

LeBlanc presented the proposal for the disposition of surplus generator property as part of the Stewart Point (Bollinas) site construction phase, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommends approval of the proposed disposition of surplus property.

Pearce asked about the estimated market value of this generator. LeBlanc said it is 20 years old and no longer meets California environmental requirements. He said the cost to remove it is greater due to the Bollinas location. A new generator of this size would cost approximately \$50,000. He estimated the value of the old generator at a couple thousand dollars. Pearce asked if it could be sold in another state

without those environmental requirements. LeBlanc said he is reaching out to the EOC VOAD Coordinator to determine if any local volunteer agencies in Marin could utilize it. It would then be the County's responsibility to remove it and one of the volunteer agencies to accept it. The concern about selling it on the open market is that it could go to a grow operation.

Pomi said the Surplus Property Policy states that the recommendation for disposition or disposal of surplus is to go the Executive Board not the Governing Board. Cassingham said that timing of the surplus of this equipment is such that it was brought to the Governing Board since there would not be an Executive Board meeting until May. She said the Governing Board is superior to the Executive Board so this would be keeping in the spirit and letter of the policy. Ortiz agreed and said there is no problem with having the Governing Board approve it prior to the next Executive Board meeting. Jeffries said site construction is out for bid. Staff intends to clarify for the contractors what is and is not their responsibility regarding the generator.

M/S/P Pomi/Silverman moved to approve the Proposed Disposition of Surplus Property – Stewart Point (Bollinas), as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

3) Update – Report on Gen I Initiatives – (Discussion)

LeBlanc provided the update on the Gen 1 Initiatives and Risk Mitigation Plan, as detailed in the staff report. He reported that Sacramento County has provided spare equipment, included networking cards and power supplies, which will allow the DPW to continue with the break-fix requirements of the Gen 1 Network. He said Sacramento County did not, however, provide any additional Channel Bank equipment, which is why purchase approval was requested. He said staff believes the current System is well positioned to ride out the next few years. He said Motorola was onsite earlier this month rebuilding the VMS. They reviewed MERA's spare's plan and master site. The System, given its age, is in very good shape; however, equipment may start to fail. Motorola recommended spares be on site. It was also suggested no equipment should be restarted that is operating correctly, leaving it as is. He said any power interruption could negatively affect equipment operation. He added that because uninterrupted power is critical for the master site, the County will proactively look at all power systems to ensure they are serviced and operating correctly.

4) MERA System Operations Update – February – (Discussion)

LeBlanc presented the February update, as detailed in the staff report. The VMS01 was replaced so redundancy was lost, but has been corrected by Motorola and been stable since. The Big Rock HVAC replacement is complete. The scope of work has been confirmed with the contractor for ATS replacement at Dollar Hill, anticipated to be installed in mid-May. There were some power supply failures in one of the Channel Banks which were replaced by spares. Some cards and the power supply were also replaced in the West Main site controller, which was causing problems in January. It has since been operating without any issues.

In February, there were 190,000 calls, 535 hours of talk time with 1 second of busy time and 100% network availability. Year to date there has been 390,000 push-to-talk calls with more than 1,100 hours of talk time and 2 seconds of busy time.

LeBlanc announced the hiring of a new Public Works Director, Rosemary Gaglione.

Pearce asked about the County's Federal allocation of \$1.9 trillion. He inquired if there was any possibility of earmarking some of those funds for the emergency communication system, recognizing that it is a critical part of COVID relief.

Eilerman said the County, cities and towns are receiving monies for specific uses. He said they are still waiting for clarification from the U.S. Department of Treasury on the definition of authorized uses of those funds. He said they may not have a response for several weeks. He added, regarding infrastructure, the Treasury referenced broadband, sewer and water, but nothing particular to emergency communications. He noted there was also a lot of public health COVID-related authorizations, local agency revenue backfill and more.

5) Other Information Items – (Discussion)
None.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda
None.

E. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maureen Cassingham
MERA Executive Officer
and Secretary