
Governing Board Communication

2021 Executive Officer Work Plan Report

The 2021 Executive Officer Work Plan was approved by the Governing Board on December 9, 2020. This report provides the status of that Work Plan with Maureen Cassingham serving as Executive Officer through April 30, 2021 and Mary Morris-Mayorga serving as Interim Executive Officer through the remainder of the year:

1. Develop/input on staff reports, policies and recommendations on administrative matters and financial operations including preparation of operating, capital and Measure A NGP budgets, reinvestment of 2016 Bond Proceeds options and NGP Cash Flow Schedules/Updates for Finance Committee, Executive and Governing Board review and action.

Maureen Cassingham provided administration and analysis on Board reporting, policy development, and financial reports including NGP cash flow/budget and establishment of the Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) for investment of bond proceeds. The Interim Executive Officer has continued on this esteemed path while implementing improvements and enhancements aimed at recognizing MERA's professionalism by incorporating logo on documents and consistency in reporting formats.

2. Continue to facilitate completion of remaining Strategic Plan tasks, including coordination and supervision of work performed by contract staff and consultants. These tasks include: ongoing implementation of the Next Gen System Project, finalization of Next Gen sites leases/licenses, expansion of member and public outreach on Project progress and construction, development of new partnerships and strengthening communications between MERA Board and Committee members and non-member agencies.

Maureen Cassingham began the year and has secured 17 out of 18 NGP sites. The Interim Executive Officer continues with focus on Next Gen Project Implementation, including development of long-term, comprehensive Next Gen Project Budget and Cash Flow, timely member media and public communications on Project progress, documentation of Non-Member partnerships for use of current and Next Gen resources (e.g., pending update of Marin Transit provider Non-Member System User Letters of Agreement) and continued relationship-building with MERA contractual and community partners to benefit the Authority.

3. Facilitate finalization of new MERA Administrative Organization Chart and reporting relationships.

Maureen Cassingham completed this update with governing Board approval in April 2021. Additional staff has permitted the opportunity for realignment of tasks. After evaluation of workload, the Interim Executive Officer has developed a Staffing Plan to better align tasks with appropriate level staffing that will lead to associated cost savings for those lower-level tasks performed by staff at lower rates. This will also provide a level of business continuity in the event of a staff absence.

4. Provide administrative and financial analyses and logistical support to the Operations Officer on current System operations and Next Gen System implementation.

Maureen Cassingham provided management support and input, coordination and logistical assistance for the Operations Officer's work on day-to-day operations, Next Gen System Project approvals, System equipment/facilities repairs and other special projects with the Interim Executive Officer continuing. This position will be changing in 2022, so will be re-evaluated as necessary.

5. Maintain and enhance meraonline.org to best inform about current organization operations and activities, status of the Next Gen System Project and other special MERA projects, along with finalization of Records Imaging Project and NGP Construction Documents storage for secure remote access.

Maureen Cassingham provided and/or oversaw timely website content updates on MERA meetings, agendas, policies, projects and posting of related documentation for Member and public reference. The MERA Records Imaging Project she initiated that was halted in 2020 due to COVID-19 has been restarted with the Interim Executive Officer and will continue into 2022. In addition, a shared Virtual Private Network (VPN) drive has been established for consolidated access to documents for RGS staff.

6. Provide information to member agencies, County professional organizations, media, and other Marin County groups on current MERA operations and Next Gen System implementation.

Maureen Cassingham advised and oversaw outreach to Members, media, County organizations and the public about the Authority and MERA special projects. The Interim Executive Officer has continued and completed final review of the Next Gen Project Plan which was presented to the Governing Board.

7. Provide orientations on MERA with Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project for new Executive Board and Governing Board Members and Alternates, member agency elected and appointed officials and other interested persons.

Due to COVID-19, the Executive Officer and Deputy Executive Officer for Next Gen Project did not provide an orientation this year in March for newly-appointed Members and Alternates of the Governing Board. The Interim Executive Officer has begun developing these orientations to provide via Zoom in 2022.

8. Perform all other duties as outlined in the Executive Officer Scope of Services or as directed by MERA Executive and/or Governing Boards.

Maureen Cassingham initiated conversations related to the proposed New Replacement Fund. The Interim Executive Officer has established a process for this which incorporates a thorough review of existing Reserve Funds, Reserves Policy, Project Budget/Cash Flow timing needs, and proposed alternatives for further discussion in 2022.