



**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**  
 c/o Town of Corte Madera  
 240 Tamal Vista Drive, Suite 110 – Corte Madera, CA 94925  
 PHONE: (415) 927-5050  
[WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG)  
**Governing Board**  
**Minutes of January 25, 2023 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order and Introductions**

The teleconferenced regular meeting was called to order by President Pearce on January 25, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. Lorena Barrera called roll.

**Governing Board Members**

Agency	Representative	Present	Absent	Late Arrival
Town of Corte Madera	RJ Suokko (Alternate)	X		
Town of Fairfax	Chance Cutrano (Alternate)			X
City of Larkspur	Dan Schwarz		X	
City of Mill Valley	Todd Cusimano	X		
City of Novato	Susan Wernick	X		
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney	X		
City of San Rafael	David Spiller	X		
County of Marin	Dan Eilerman (Alternate)	X		
City of Sausalito	Stacie Gregory (Alternate)	X		
Bolinas Fire Protection District	George Krakauer	X		
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox	X		
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi & Ron Naso (Alternate)	X		
Marin Water District	Don Wick	X		
Novato Fire Protection District	L. J. Silverman		X	
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Cathryn Hilliard	X		
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Jesse Peri		X	
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce	X		
Central Marin Police Authority	Michael Norton	X		
Town of San Anselmo	Steve Burdo		X	
City of Belvedere	Jason Wu		X	
Town of Tiburon	Ryan Monaghan		X	
Marin Community College District	Jeff Marozick		X	
Marin Transit	Mohamed Osman (Alternate)	X		
Marinwood Community Services District	Eric Dreikosen	X		
Ross Valley Fire Department	Tim Grasser		X	

Staff Present:  
 MERA Executive Officer Heather Plamondon  
 MERA General Counsel Trisha Ortiz  
 MERA Deputy Executive Officer, Next Gen Project Dave Jeffries  
 MERA Operations Officer Todd Williams  
 Recording Secretary Lorena Barrera

Guests Present:  
 Federal Engineering David Mortimer  
 Marin County DPW Michael Frost

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 a separate action be taken on a specific item.

1. Approve Minutes from December 14, 2022 Governing Board Regular Meeting
2. Adopt Resolution 2023-01 Reconsidering the Circumstances of the COVID-19 State of Emergency and Making Findings in Connection Therewith to Authorize Public Meetings To Be Held Via Teleconferencing Pursuant To Government Code Section 54953(e)
3. MERA Fiscal Year 2021-22 Audited Financial Statements, Auditors Comments and Measure A Audit

**MOTION:** M/S/C (Eilerman/Gaffney) to approve Consent Calendar items 1-3. (Chance Cutrano not present for the vote) **Roll call vote** Ayes: All, Noes: None, Abstain: None

B. Executive Officer's Report

1. Receive Report #107 on the Next Gen System (Jeffries – Report)

Dave Jeffries gave his update on the Next Gen System Project as included in the packet, first noting the updated schedule for staff meetings. He goes over the status of completed and upcoming bid packages, noting updated construction schedules for bid package 3 and 4. He states that over the last 6 months there has been some slippage, noting several weeks of rain that significantly slowed the work. Bid packages 1 and 1A are complete, bid package 2 final payment has been approved. Work is being done with test code plugs with Motorola, starting with Gen 1 moving on to Next Gen afterwards. Notes that the transition from AECOM to Motorola for construction management is still in progress. Data transfer is happening physically and digitally so Motorola can access all the available working files. AECOM is still working on Task order #3 for MERA. Member Hilliard asks if Dave Jeffries is physically going out to examine any sites, to which he responds that he and Heather Plamondon met with contractors and the MERA team and visited several sites including Skyview and Mill Valley, noting concerns and issues at each site. Member Hilliard also asks what it will take for completed parts of the project to be accepted, to which Jeffries explains that once construction/inspection is completed and signed off on, Motorola will then install all their equipment. Afterwards, Nokia will install all the microwaves in a batch, at which point the system will start to be functional and linked. Once all testing is finished, agencies will be brought in to start using the new system. After some time has passed in which it performs successfully, the final acceptance will be signed off on. Member Hilliard also asks how payment will be processed as the project closes out. Jeffries explains that much of the contracting work is invoiced as the work is done. The Motorola contract is divided into milestones as certain stages of the projects are done, at each point of completion receiving a percentage of the agreed upon payment. 5% of payment is withheld until the final acceptance is signed off on.

2. Review and Approve Re-Application for FCC Construction Licenses (Jeffries – Board Action)

Dave Jeffries explains that their FCC construction licenses expiration date is in the coming month. They do not know how quickly their extension request will be turned around, so they want to get going on this quickly. At the same time, the team wants to make new applications for the same sites, to protect against any potential competitive applicants on those frequencies. President Pearce questions the risk of both requesting extension and submitting a new application, to which Jeffries answers that in the case that both requests are accepted, MERA may be on the line for the application fee. In the case that the extension is not accepted, and this new application has not been sent in yet, there leaves a window of time that the frequencies are open to be applied for by other agencies.

**MOTION:** M/S/C (Cutrano/Cusimano) – to approve item B2 Re-Application for FCC Construction Licenses **Roll call vote** Ayes: All, Noes: None, Abstain: None

3. Review Process for Governing Board Officer Selection and Executive Board Appointments (Plamondon - Discussion)

Heather Plamondon introduces this topic by explaining why she thinks it is important to review the process, noting that it has been some time since it was last reviewed, and that she especially would like to go over it being new to the board. She explains that the appointment form that was approved in November of last year will be sent out to each member agency to be processed in the coming months. She notes that this comes as a “housekeeping” item, since May seems to be the time of year where much of the administrative work is done regarding MERA governing bodies.

4. Appoint Finance Committee members (Primary and Alternates) and set Committee meeting schedule (Plamondon - Board Action)

Heather Plamondon explains the recent difficulty in assembling Finance Committee members for ad hoc meetings, as well as the understanding that has been reached regarding its relationship to the Brown Act. These findings require that the members be officially reinstated or appointed by the governing board. The board then discussed the availability and desire of potential candidates to be appointed to the board, as well those who are currently serving that would be happy to step aside. Dan Eilerman was suggested to serve as Chair with Matthew Hymel as his alternate, and Eric Dreikosen was also suggested to the board considering his knowledge and expertise. Tom Gaffney agreed to stay on the board. Sheriff Scardina, though he inherited the role, expressed that he would not mind staying on. Todd Cusimano and Richard Pearce expressed that they would be happy to be alternates if needed. Michael Norton offered to step down and serve as an alternate at large. Cathryn Hilliard offered to serve as an alternate as well. Cusimano agreed to serve as a member as well. A standing meeting was set for this Committee, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 3:00pm. Meetings will be cancelled if no items need to be considered.

**MOTION:** M/S/C (Pomi/Wick) – to designate the following individuals as members of the Finance Committee and a set regular schedule for 3pm on the third Wednesday of every month. **Roll call vote**  
Ayes: All, Noes: None, Abstain: None

Dan Eilerman (Chair)  
Tom Gaffney (Vice Chair)  
Sheriff Scardina (Member)  
Eric Dreikosen (Member)  
Todd Cusimano (Member)

Alternates at Large: Matthew Hymel, Rich Pearce, Michael Norton, Cathryn Hilliard

5. MERA Budget Update (Plamondon – Discussion)

Heather Plamondon reviews the current contract obligations at the halfway point of the fiscal year through a broad Operating Budget overview. She explains several line items that are/will be paid through Measure A Funds, going over the contracts and some of the work that pertains to them. She notes that this is largely a working report, and that she is open to suggestions for a better format to present this information in a way that is useful to the board. She finishes by going over the Fund Balances (Total Current Assets) as of 12/31/22. Member Hilliard asks about how the payments are received from Measure A, and Member Pomi answers that 55% comes at the beginning of the Fiscal Year, 40% at the halfway point, and the remainder is cleaned up at the end of the Fiscal Year. Dan Eilerman offers a suggestion on presentation to include YTD budgets and a projection of income to improve clarity on receipt of large chunks of revenue. He also asks about access to an accountant to bring all this information together and remove some of the burden from Heather. Heather responds by explaining that the person who used to handle the high-level finance/accounting work, Dan Hom, has retired, and that she is currently working on acquiring support through Regional Government Services Finance department.

6. Finance Committee Report out on Next Gen Project Funding (Plamondon/Gaffney – Discussion)

Heather Plamondon and Tom Gaffney review the Report out on Next Gen Project Funding that was discussed at the prior Finance Committee meeting. Heather begins by presenting a draft of the financial plan for years 2023-2025, noting what they believe to be current costs owed and explaining where these dollars have come from with respect to each contractor MERA has partnered with, including Motorola, AECOM, Fidato, and Federal Engineering among others. Tom Gaffney reviews the project of capital revenues and expenses, noting the current costs of \$32,800,000 vs the available beginning balance of \$22,500,000. He explains that over the next 10 years the funding will come in full to pay off the project, but additional funds in the hundreds of thousands will be needed as a bridge loan to cover the upcoming costs of the next 3 years. He notes that considering the age of the cost estimates (8-9 years old at this point), the state of funding is not terribly dire, but additional financing would be a good move. Heather Plamondon mentions that the replacement funds that the board agreed

to roll into the operating budget has already been consolidated. She presents a spreadsheet that details the proposed new cost to each agency (using the landau formula) that would be required to reach an additional \$200,000 of member agency funding per year. The board agreed this would be an important topic for the new Finance Committee to examine at length.

C. Operations Reports (Williams)

1. Receive MERA System operations Update – December (Williams – Discussion)

Todd Williams gave his report on operations of the Gen 1 system, first noting adverse effects of the persistent rainy weather over a several weeks. He also notes some small replacements to parts and maintenance that was performed, but no outstanding issues there. Also notes several power outages due to rainy weather, but these were resolved and did not cause long term issues.

2. Review and Approve Request for Additional Radios to be added to the MERA Network – Marin County Fire Department (Williams – Board Action)

Todd Williams reviews request from Marin County Fire Department for 14 additional radios to support expansion efforts with the upcoming fire season.

**MOTION:** M/S/C (Pomi/Eilerman) – to approve item C2 Request for Additional Radios to be added to the MERA Network – Marin County Fire Department. **Roll call vote** Ayes: All, Noes: None, Abstain: None (Corte Madera not present)

3. Review and Approve Request for Additional Radios to be added to the MERA Network – San Rafael Police Department (Williams – Board Action)

Todd Williams reviews request from San Rafael Police Department to add 3 radios to support newly adopted social service response team.

**MOTION:** M/S/C (Gaffney/Eilerman) – to approve item C3 Request for Additional Radios to be added to the MERA Network – San Rafael Police Department. **Roll call vote** Ayes: All, Noes: None, Abstain: San Rafael (Corte Madera not present)

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 PM.

Recording can be accessed on the Agendas and Minutes Page at: <http://www.meraonline.org>