MERA Operational Issues Working Group Meeting
March 7, 2007 – 9:30 a.m.
Room 304, Marin County Civic Center

Item D-1

PRESENT:

Name	Agency	Email	Phone No.
Farhad Mansourian	Marin Co. PW	fmansourian@co.marin.ca.us	499-6570
Mark Campbell	Belvedere PD/ Police Chiefs Assn.	mcampbell@cityofbelvedere.org	435-3266
Jim Fox	Inverness FD	ipud@horizoncable.com	669-7151
Mark Brown	Marin Co. FD	mbrown@co.marin.ca.us	499-6717
Richard Chuck	Marin Co. Radio	rchuck@co.marin.ca.us	802-2041
Shelly Grant	Marin Co. Radio	sgrant@co.marin.ca.us	499-7313
Bill McMurray	Marin Co. SO	bmcmurray@co.marin.ca.us	499-7244
David Augustus	Marin Co. SO	daugustus@co.marin.ca.us	339-8894
Mike Ridgway	Marin Co. SO	mridgway@co.marin.ca.us	499-6380
Clint Mason	Mill Valley FD	cmason@cityofmillvalley.org	446-4526
Ken Dunkel	Mill Valley PD	kdunkel@cityofmillvalley.org	446-4528
Roger Meagor	Ross Valley FD	r.meagor@rossvalleyfire.org	258-4686
Jim Irving	S. Marin FD	jirving@smfd.org	388-8182
Charles Taylor	San Rafael PD	charles.taylor@srpd.org	485-3088
Margaret Bohan	Marin Co. PW	mbohan@co.marin.ca.us	499-6529

1.   **Meeting Notes of February 7, 2007**

Farhad opened the meeting, and no changes were made to the 2/7/07 meeting notes, which will be sent to all Fire Chiefs, Police Chiefs and the MERA Executive Committee.

2.   **Policy Review Subcommittee – Report**

Farhad said all the policies should be put together, approved by the Fire and Police Chiefs, and incorporated into the training.

Shelly presented the draft report of 2/28/07 from the Policy Subcommittee, chaired by Dave Jeffries. Other members are Mark Campbell, Charlie Taylor, Jim Irving, Eric Nickel, Laurie Geissler, Richard Chuck and Shelly Grant. The pending issues in adoption of the MERA policy are (1) draft language for new users, (2) completion of a Table of Contents, and (3) approval of the user talk groups. The policy gives guidance how the system is to be used, and breaks it down by disciplines, including mutual aid users.

A discussion ensued on the many options available to each discipline depending upon the scenario, and the need for a simplified SOP for users to follow. Farhad expressed that a laminated "cheat sheet" would be helpful placed in vehicles for users who only occasionally use these features of the system.

Farhad will distribute the draft policy report to Fire and Police Chiefs, requesting their comments be sent to Shelly Grant (Dave is on vacation) by March 21st for the next Policy Subcommittee meeting on March 30th.

Mark Campbell said this was intended as an overall countywide policy, and the police chiefs fully intend to have an SOP, but it is up to each agency how to do their own procedures. We should have an SOP for at least law enforcement coming out of this group. We do best practices and offer them to the other agencies.

3.   Training Subcommittee – Report

On behalf of Dave Jeffries, Shelly reported the subcommittee members were Glen Godfrey, Dave Jeffries, Charlie Taylor, Dave Augustus, Anndora Lee and Shelly Grant. She reviewed their report dated 2/28/07, stating the instructors will pull the appropriate modules and chapters, depending upon their students, for the end user and dispatch courses. She expressed concern about the Supervisor/Manager Course where there are multi-disciplinary functions. Shelly said they need another work group for that course, and asked the working group to recommend, by the 3/30/07 meeting, those people who would work on the syllabuses. The working group should be made up of the people who are involved. It will be a scenario driven class, giving them some guidelines; with an escalation approach. This course development cannot be done within the timeline for training (Draft Revised 3/1/07) on the last page of the report.

Farhad noted the date of 5/1/07 for beginning instruction was set for fire training before the fire season, and then police, followed by public services. Shelly stated the End User and Dispatch training needs to be implemented for users. The training subcommittee has been gathering information from agencies when to do the training and needed 8 more public service instructors, as well as law enforcement teachers and fire instructors. Farhad said he would ask the police chiefs tomorrow for one teacher each from the Sheriff's Office, Twin Cities, Ross Valley and Southern Marin. Dunkel will work on getting a second teacher from Mill Valley law enforcement.

Shelly expressed the need for a coordinator to receive phone calls from potential teachers and their schedules. She will pass all calls to Farhad with their names and phone numbers, but asked for a full-time coordinator. Emails to her should put in the "subject" line whether it is a training or policy item.

The Manager/Supervisor training could be very helpful in the development of the SOPs. The ICS commanders will help to build those syllabuses. Shelly said that training would be on-going; they would have to have dispatchers for the syllabus work group, someone with responsibility. Charlie Taylor agreed a syllabus working group was necessary to help us. A manager/ supervisor would be a Sergeant or higher in law enforcement, or a Battalion Chief or higher in fire. Farhad said tomorrow he would ask the Police Chiefs for names of Sergeants or higher who would help with Manager/Supervisor training. Mark Campbell stressed making it clear to the Chiefs we are expecting to follow their advice and get their support. The subcommittee needs people who are "tactically savvy."

Bill McMurray questioned about putting fire first for training. He suggested starting with police and public service, and then running fire on parallel tracks. Shelly responded emphasis was on fire first because of the fire season, and then put in some law enforcement and public service; i.e., simultaneous training with fire being the heavy load. Jim Irving noted training for fire departments was a lot more flexible than law enforcement.

Shelly said she was ready to commit to the End User and Dispatch syllabus before us, if she could get trainers and training materials. The radios are here.

Jim Irving asked about the templates. Farhad said he reported to the Police and Fire Chiefs, and gave them the templates to delete Sonoma or Petaluma, with the agreement that unless it is a public safety emergency, we will not change the templates any more except once every two years or longer. He felt the Chiefs were happy with the changes and told them he would check in with them tomorrow and next week.

Shelly said the Manager/Supervisor training group's findings and decisions did not need to be incorporated into the training for the field users. A discussion ensued on having a standard for tactical channel use, other than using PD-Mac for emergencies. Richard Chuck clarified the Manager/ Supervisor training subgroup would develop scenarios for training supervisors and managers. Jim Irving said the issue is how to use the radio when there is an incident, when we are training to use a unified command; i.e., between Novato Fire and Novato PD, who to contact for resources? If a Novato Fire employee is on an incident and needs to call Novato PD, who does he call with two dispatch centers? These are the things to be worked on.

Bill McMurray said it was possible something could come up from the Manager/Supervisor training subgroup that could be incorporated into user training. He suggested the group meet before user training, but Mike Ridgway was concerned this would push back user training.

Farhad said we need to get more trainers, and also set up a new committee to write the syllabus for the Manager/Supervisor training subgroup. Initial members of the new Manager/Supervisor training Subcommittee include Mark Campbell, Ken Dunkel, Mark Brown, and someone from the MCFD Command Center.

4. Baseline Logging Recorder Subcommittee

Bill McMurray reported Richard Chuck received the Draft RFP in proposed final form. He asked whether it should be sent out as an RFP to award a contract after negotiations, or put it out as an RFI to give to the MERA Board for the next fiscal year?

Richard said $65,000 was put in the MERA budget about two years ago for replacement of the server. Mike Ridgway said approval was given to go out with the RFP to replace the whole server.

Bill McMurray said the five MERA recorders are part of the problem. They need to be replaced within the next few years. It will be $18,000-$20,000 per recorder, in addition to the servers.

Mike noted Bill Romesburg was hired for $5,000 by the SO, which drew up the RFP for total replacement of the system. The SO IST people worked on the servers, but it is a MERA asset and the SO does not have resources to do the improvements. The system needs replacing, and that is what the Romesburg RFP was designed to do.

Bill clarified that the scope Romesburg was working towards is all one system. You cannot change the system without changing the recorders. We are about 18 months away from replacing them. The scope was for replacement of the prime site recorders, the archive system, and to piggyback on the prime equipment.

Discussion took place on whether it is MERA's responsibility to maintain the server and replace the recorders. Bill said the question will be coordinating the replacement cycle.For example, if San Rafael wants access to the talk groups at the prime site where MERA is logging them, they will have to upgrade their system. Mike felt it was a budgetary issue for every agency because

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MERA cannot eat that cost. MERA's decisions have budgetary impact on each agency's budget. It needs to be clarified that recording at the prime site will not be included in each agency's pro rata cost.

Farhad asked that Bill and Richard Chuck review the MERA approval of the RFP and $5,000 cost, as well as the $65,000 decision. If there is duplication, he would bring it to the next MERA Executive Committee on 3/15/07.

The timetable for selection of the RFP was discussed, probably within three months. It could be pushed into the 2008/09 fiscal year. Farhad felt the best scenario is to have it done in June. He said if the SO has been maintaining MERA's work, he would take an invoice to MERA and request reimbursement. He asked Bill and Richard to report at the next meeting of the Working Group on the background and status of the RFP and $65,000.

The RFP will be sent to the dispatch managers for comments. Reimbursement of the SO for their "fixes" was discussed. It was decided the SO would send an invoice to MERA with a cover letter outlining MERA's approval. Dave Augustus noted that when MERA replaces hardware, the member agencies need to know what these costs will be. Farhad proposed setting up an amortization account so agencies can allocate funds every year. Shelly stated MERA has a backbone replacement fund.

5.   Report on Template Correction

Farhad reported the talk group template correction was distributed to Police and Fire Chiefs, and there were no issues. Farhad will confirm this with them and finalize the template at the next meeting.

Bill McMurray reported that one of the Sonoma SO channels will be eliminated, and everything will shift to the left on the template.

6.   CHP Interoperability Report

At the last meeting, three options were identified to provide CHP interoperability with MERA, and CHP decided in favor of buying portable radios so they can be on the SO frequency.

Lieutenant Choy is buying portable radios for officers in this area. Richard Chuck is working on an MOU for mutual aid.

Responding to Farhad's question who permits the CHP on the MERA system, Richard Chuck stated they are strictly on a mutual aid basis, not dispatching on MERA or talk groups, and the previous Executive Director of MERA had been given authority by the Board. Shelly said the CHP is also getting a portable radios for the plane/helicopter.

Bill McMurray asked about the timeline for getting the portables, and whether we are training the CHP because they should be trained before coming on the system. Shelly answered one of the MOU requirements was that a new user gets their people trained by the trainers.

7.   Richard Chuck/Shelly Grant Reports

Richard Chuck presented his status report dated 3/7/07 for the period ending 3/1/07. With regard to system wide coverage testing, he said the survey showed 97.2% overall coverage of

the area Motorola was supposed to cover. The last map in the MERA Phase VI Coverage Acceptance Test Report dated 2/15/07 indicates the white areas that were not covered in the original contract. Farhad noted Mike Thayer has been hired as an independent consultant, and one of his tasks is to review the coverage issues.

Richard will review the Motorola contract and the map, meet with Southern Marin and Novato agencies, MCFD and MCSO to see what their issues are. Farhad said now that Bolinas in on line, they are finding holes, or dead spots, in coverage. He said from the consultant's point of view, it is not 97.2% of the County but 97.2% of what Motorola said they would cover. Where is the area not covered? What is the financial value of that? What is the effect to agencies?

Richard reviewed his status report. Concern was expressed about the MERA system activity tabulation showing Marin County Transit District radio calls to be the highest busy count and busy seconds for January and February 2007. Farhad said these calls were from Whistlestop Wheels and MV Transport. Possible reasons were unnecessary conversation and lack of training that would reduce air time. Farhad will meet with the Transit Planning Manager to bring these concerns to the two transportation agencies. Possible solutions were use of cell phones, CAD programs, and more training of their users.

At the request of Jim Irving for a higher resolution map, Richard Chuck will email the coverage map to everyone. Jim was concerned about coverage in Sausalito south of the tunnel, and asked to be interviewed by the consultant.

8.   Other

Mark Brown informed everyone that there will be an Emergency Response Expo at the Marin Center on April 12th demonstrating a unified command ICS. The focus is on special operations and grants information to show what public agencies have been doing with their grant money. The MCFD will be using MERA communications channels, the event line, and will be asking for command units on display. The FD will be setting up a whole command structure, and invitations will be sent out.

The next meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for April 4th at 9:30 a.m. in the County DPW Conference Room 304.

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AGENDA
MERA Operational Issues Working Group Meeting
April 4, 2007 – 9:30 a.m.
Room 304, Marin County Civic Center

Item D– I

1.   Meeting Notes of March 7th, 2007 (Attached)

2.   Policy Review Subcommittee – Final Report

3.   Training Subcommittee – Final Report

4.   Baseline Logging Recorder Subcommittee – Final Report

5.   Operational Issues – Consultant Report

6.   Richard Chuck / Shelly Grant Reports

8.   Other

Next meeting: May 2nd, 2007, 9:00 a.m., DPW 304 Conference Room