

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945  
PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660

**E.C. Meeting (7/14/10) Agenda Item A-1**

**“DRAFT”**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2010, REGULAR MEETING**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Nordhoff at 3:38 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA.

#### **Committee Members (or Alternates) Present:**

County of Marin	Steve Kinsey (arrived at 3:46 p.m.)
County of Marin Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of San Rafael	Ken Nordhoff
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Novato Fire Protection District	Eric Nickel
Fire Districts: At-Large	Jim Irving
Ross Valley Agencies	Michael Rock

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Adam Politzer
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#### **Nonvoting Members Present:**

Marin Public Works Association	Nader Mansourian
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#### **Nonvoting Members Absent:**

Marin County Fire Chiefs' Association	Richard Pearce
Marin County Police Chiefs' Association	John Rohrbacher

#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
County Assistant Public Works Director	Bob Beaumont
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
County DPW Communications Division	Shelly Nelson, Communications Services Mgr.
Recording Secretary	Denise Wade

Introductions

Vice President Nordhoff introduced and welcomed Nader Mansourian, Assistant Public Works Director, City of San Rafael, who is representing the Marin Public Works Association.

A. Consent Calendar

All matters on the Consent Calendar are to be approved with one motion unless a Member of the Committee or the public requests that separate action be taken on a specific item.

1. Minutes from March 10, 2010, Executive Committee Regular Meeting
2. Proposed Agreement for FY 09-10 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy
3. Proposed First Amendment to Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and Novato Fire Protection District
4. Proposed Amendment No. 4 to Agreement for Professional Services between MERA and Regional Government Services
5. Proposed Amendment to Agreement for Strategic Planning Facilitation Services between MERA and CBG Communications, Inc.
6. Proposal for Additional Records Management Implementation from Gladwell Governmental Services, Inc.
7. Proposed MERA Cash Flow Management Policy and Procedures
8. Proposed MERA Investment Policy and Procedures
9. Proposed Revised MERA Public Records Policy and Procedures
10. Proposed Resolution Terminating 1999 Revenue Bond Fund and Creating 2010 Refunding Revenue Bond Fund
11. Confirmation of Bi-monthly Regular Executive Committee Meeting Dates:  
FY 10-11

Cassingham requested the removal of Item A-11 from the Consent Calendar.

*M/S/P Doyle/Berg to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-10 as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

Cassingham noted that the proposed Board meeting date listed in Item A-11 should be Wednesday, December 8, 2010, not December 9. She also encouraged Committee members and their alternates to calendar the bi-monthly regular Executive Committee meeting dates for FY 10-11 to facilitate quorums.

*M/S/P Doyle/Berg to approve Consent Calendar Item A-11 as revised.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Proposed Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham noted that the current agreement with the County for System Maintenance expires on June 30, 2010. The proposed new five-year agreement provides preventive and corrective maintenance at a reduced annual cost of \$28,195. The revised annual expense to MERA is \$407,430 versus the current annual cost of \$435,625. The reduction reflects DPW's experience with the system to date. She noted DPW's summary of changes between the two agreements. She said this is, once again, a fixed-fee agreement for maintenance services that are billed against the fee on a bi-annual basis. She thanked San Rafael Fire Chief Gray and Novato Police Lieutenant Jeffries for their assistance in reviewing the technical services in this agreement and noted that it represents nearly one-third of MERA's Operating Budget. There being no questions, Nordhoff asked for a motion for Board consideration.

*M/S/P Rock/Berg to recommend Board approval of the proposed Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

2. Proposed Agreement between MERA and County of Marin to Provide Funding for Communications Engineering Services

President Kinsey arrived and introduced the proposed agreement from the County to have MERA provide funding for communications engineering services for \$500,000 over the next three years. Cassingham noted the agreement would commence July 1, 2010, and provide the same scope of services at the same cost as the prior agreement. There being no further discussion, Kinsey requested a motion.

*M/S/P Nordhoff/Doyle to recommend to the Board approval of the proposed agreement between MERA and County of Marin to provide funding for Communications Engineering Services as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

3. Proposed FY 10-11 MERA Operating Budget

Cassingham introduced the proposed FY 10-11 Operating Budget noting the total of \$1,496,105 is \$145,895 less than prior year. If recommended to the Board as presented, there would be a nearly 9% decrease in member agency contributions. She noted the budget summary and detailed Exhibits, referencing the decrease in System Maintenance and increase in Site Rentals & Leases due to hazardous waste permit fees. Kinsey noted that the reduction to member agencies was welcomed but added a cautionary note that the strategic planning process would likely identify more system capital costs for members. He said the one-year respite in costs was happening at a good time but this is not the new paradigm.

*M/S/P Nordhoff/Doyle to recommend to the Board approval for the proposed FY 10-11 MERA Operating Budget as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

4. Proposed FY 10-11 MERA Other Budgets and Reserves

Cassingham introduced the MERA budgets for the 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service and New Project Financing–2007 Bank Note, along with the use of MERA Reserves and consideration of recommending the budgets/reserves resolution to the Board. She noted that the Revenue Bonds budget was not discretionary. Regarding the 2007 Project Note Budget, the City of Novato has inquired about assessing members the actual amount of the note of \$208,499

versus the previously established amount of \$225,000. The reduction would result in annual member savings of \$16,501. MERA has allocated the difference to be used for capital projects.

Cassingham summarized the status of the Replacement Fund noting that from its \$716,112 balance, the Board has approved expenditures of \$60,000 for completion of Forbes Hill Demolition and \$60,000 for strategic planning facilitation and technical services. Proposed additional expenditures from this fund are \$7,500 for strategic planning, \$5,901 for Bodega Road maintenance, \$3,502 for the prime site AC compressor, \$8,640 for DPW costs for estimating prime site relocation and \$21,000 for catalytic converters for four sites. Total expenses against the Replacement Reserve balance are \$166,543.

Kinsey felt there should be no adjustment in the New Project Financing-2007 Bank Note in that there will be a need for these funds for capital projects and the member savings are so small. Kinsey called for a motion on the budgets and reserves as presented.

*M/S/P Doyle/Irving to recommend to the Board approval of the proposed FY 10-11 MERA Other Budgets and Reserves as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

Cassingham noted that the debt service schedule for 2010 bonds would be sent out with the Board packet.

5. Nomination of Officers for MERA Board (President and Vice President)

Kinsey noted that these nominations would be forwarded to the Board at the next meeting. There being no other nominations, Kinsey asked for motions for both officers.

*M/S/P Doyle/Irving to nominate Steve Kinsey for President.*

*M/S/P Doyle/Rock to nominate Ken Nordhoff for Vice President.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

6. Other Information Items

Cassingham said on March 30 she appeared before an MMWD Board Committee considering a proposal to increase MERA's site lease at Forbes Reservoir from zero to market rate. MERA has a 20-year lease at zero rent for the first five years followed by annual requests from MERA to MMWD for rent waiver. The lease contemplates an annual market rent of \$36,000 plus CPI. She said she asked the District for a "public" market rent similar to what MERA is currently paying other public agencies for use of their sites. The range of those annual rents is zero to \$8,500, this latter amount being paid to the County of Sonoma. She advised the District Committee that the MERA system and Forbes site use was mutually beneficial to the District and all other MERA members. She noted MERA had completed the Forbes demolition project ahead of schedule with minimal disruption of MMWD and the surrounding neighbors which should be considered when a new rent is established beginning March 12, 2012.

Cassingham reported that she and Mansourian had provided an update on MERA to the MCCMC on April 28. She advised them about the status of MERA's strategic planning process, proposed FY 10-11 budgets, 2010 Refunding Revenues bonds outcome, MERA reserves and its expanded communications with member agencies and interested community groups.

C. Operations Reports (Mansourian)

1. Report on Capacity Improvement Project – MERA System Upgrade Information

Bob Beaumont, Assistant Director, County DPW, introduced himself, noting that Mansourian was called away to testify at hearings in Sacramento and Shelly Nelson would report on Mansourian's behalf. Nelson said in 2008 the County received a UASI grant too produce a roadmap for the future for MERA. The consultant's report provided four options:

- Option 1 adds some 700 MHz repeaters to MERA which helps out-of-area users when in Marin.
- Option 2 upgrades MERA to address existing capacity problems and adds 700 MHz for interoperability.
- Options 3 and 4 are the main options which respectively upgrade MERA capacity, add more sites to address coverage, and add 700 MHz for interoperability or replaces the MERA system with a 700 MHz system.

She said MERA's Strategic Planning Committee is weighing in on these issues and will address the new technology. The report outlines the options in great detail including environmental requirements and design. Kinsey asked if there

would be licensing issues. Nelson said there would be issues with either the new T-band or 700 MHz systems. In 2000, a regional group began planning for the 700 MHz system during which 26 licenses were allocated to Marin. In the next nine months, the County must submit a plan to capture the 26 and act on them within five years thereafter. Nordhoff asked if 26 licenses would meet our current and future needs. Nelson said possibly one simulcast would meet our current needs as well as provide for another 20% for mutual-aid users and 10-15% for growth. Kinsey noted this was an informational item and no action was required at this time.

2. MERA Expansion Project – Change Order #1 for Motorola Capacity Improvement Project (Action Item)

Nelson reported that the negotiation of the original contract for this project was very effective for MERA. Upon further review by Nelson and Chuck, it was noted that MERA already had some of the equipment resulting in the reduction of the contract with Motorola by \$100,000. Motorola has offered to credit MERA the \$100,000 or leave it in the contract and they will provide us \$170,000 in equipment and services. DPW staff recommends accepting the \$170,000 which would permit the addition of a channel to the Sonoma Mountain site and provision of additional system spare parts. The Sonoma site is our next capacity issue, and this addition would definitely help Novato Fire. Six months from now, the additional equipment may not be available and these spares will help address end-of-life issues. Kinsey noted that there are other coverage issues that need addressing. Nelson said enhancing Sonoma with one of the available frequencies gets the biggest bang now for our money.

*M/S/P Irving/Nickel to recommend Board approval of Option 2, to leave \$100,000 in the contract and Motorola will give us equipment and services worth \$170,000 to add a new channel to the Sonoma site and buy spare parts.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

Rock asked about why Motorola could just give MERA \$70,000 in equipment. Chuck and Nelson said the equipment is heavily marked up and is in current inventory.

3. Report on Coverage
- a. Southern Marin
  - b. Tomales
  - c. Stinson Beach

Nelson said equipment installation for the channel expansion project has been underway for three weeks. All equipment is onsite and the project is going well.

There is a draft lease for the Tomales site with the property owner. The consultant is working on site layout, permitting and community input. This is an unfunded project at this time. She said the cell site will be built first. Nordhoff suggested the lease be held up until funding was available. Nelson said the property owner was willing to wait.

Stinson Beach coverage has been helped by provision of a satellite phone. The Chief is seeking a permanent solution. Kinsey asked if the strategic plan would address these site challenges. Nelson said information has been provided to the Strategic Planning Committee. He asked if the information included a cost-benefit analysis. Nelson said that was not a part of her scope but could be provided. A permanent solution for Stinson would be very costly. Nelson reported that Southern Marin's request for improved coverage was on hold pending Tiburon Town Council support of the Martha property antenna site. Chuck met with Consultant Roberto, who represents the property owner, last week about different antenna sites on the property to serve only this property. County DPW has said this is not an option. Kinsey asked when Tiburon Council will take action and who is involved in considering this matter. He also noted we should have had an exclusive contract with Roberto that would have assured his sole representation of the County.

Irving said Tiburon Fire, City of Sausalito and Southern Marin Fire support the Martha property antenna provided the Town of Tiburon supports it; Kinsey asked of the property owner's desire to limit antenna coverage to the property itself had been discussed at the political level. He said that MERA Directors, the Mayor of Tiburon and County Supervisor for this District should be informed of the property owner's intent. He felt the parties should get active early. Kinsey asked Cassingham and Chuck to arrange a meeting with the right parties to address this matter.

#### 4. Report on Regional Activities and Projects

Nelson reported on the County DPW's involvement with the Bayweb Workgroup of ten counties, UASI Governance Work Group, UASI Fleetmapping Work Group, Bay Area Regional Tactical Emergency Communications Group, Northbay Regional Communications Systems Work Group, Region 6 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee and Northern California Association of Public Safety Communications Officials FCC Coordination Committee. Representing MERA and all agencies in Marin, County staff are present at these groups' meetings to assure Marin's needs are addressed in regional initiatives which are closely tied to future grants for emerging communications projects. Nelson said the counties are working to eliminate mobile data terminals to reduce third-party provider fees regionally and locally. The UASI will need a governance group to assure service to all and that our needs are met. BARTEC is in and operable at the Marin County Communications Center and waiting for CHP to get their end done. It is a system that permits the dispatch centers in the ten counties to talk to



each other. The Northbay Work Group is working on ways to avoid dual sites and to eliminate system redundancies. Region 6 is working with APCO which is working on the national 700 MHz system.

5. Report on Federal/State/Regional Grants – Communications Grant Program Status Report

Nelson reported that \$3.7M in communications grants is the new total obtained to date by DPW staff. These funds are being used from conventional VHF for mutual aid to ongoing participation in UASI interoperability and microwave systems. New equipment from these sources will aid the migration to 700 MHz. These grants will also help MERA to address its strategic planning needs. Kinsey asked if Marin is getting its relative proportionate share. Nelson said with Marin's active participation, it will be Marin's turn in 2011 to receive its due share. Marin is also getting overflow funding where other agencies have not been able to respond. Doyle said his office now has a staff member who is actively involved in the pursuit of these funds which has been very helpful in representing the North Bay Counties. Nelson is the chair of the Communication group of the four North Bay counties, which has been beneficial to Marin.

6. Request for One MERA Portable Radio and One MERA Mobile Radio – Mill Valley Fire Department

Kinsey asked if there were any policy issues regarding this request. Doyle and Nelson said because of the moratorium on new radios, requests like this must be approved by the Executive Committee. Kinsey clarified that the rationale for this request is due to the establishment of separate police and fire departments in Mill Valley, which used to be administered by a Director of Police and Fire Services.

*M/S/P Doyle/Irving to approve the request for one MERA portable radio and one MERA mobile radio for Mill Valley Fire Department.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

7. Status/Work Statistics Report.

Chuck noted the system was fully functional during April. MERA has been averaging 260,000 calls per month with 312 seconds busy. The expansion should reduce busies down to a really acceptable level. Kinsey asked about the length of the average busy. Chuck replied that the average over the last two months is 1.6 to 2 seconds. This is an issue only during major events and does not affect normal use. During this last week, there were beeps reported on the system. Preventive Maintenance found a board that would not have switched over during a major incident. No downtime occurred.

Nordhoff inquired about not receiving periodic statistical reports. Chuck said they were being provided to the Ops Group. He will send them to Cassingham for future distribution to the Committee. Nordhoff said they provide helpful information in noting usage trends.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None to report.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**NEXT:** MERA Executive Committee Regular Meeting  
Wednesday - July 14, 2010 – 3:30 p.m.

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Maureen Cassingham, Recording Secretary