

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**DRAFT: 8-2-11**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN: OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2011**

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kreins at 3:07 p.m. on July 21, 2011, in the Cavallero Conference Room at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA.

#### Committee Members Present:

City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Novato	Joe Kreins
Twin Cities Police Authority	James Shirk (Alternate)

#### Committee Members Absent:

County of Marin Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of Sausalito	Jennifer Tejada

#### Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
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#### Guests Present:

Indie Politics	Dan Mullen, Terry Price
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#### B. Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2011, Meeting

*M/S/P Sinnott/Kreins to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2011, meeting as presented.*

AYES: Sinnott, Kreins

ABSTENTIONS: Shirk

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

#### C. Phase 2 – Recommended Actions to Enhance MERA Strategic Plan – Indie Politics (Mullen and Price)

Kreins noted that Mullen and Price had developed an outstanding report that hit all points on target. He said he was appreciative of all the work involved and looked forward to sharing it with the entire group so they can see the challenges facing us going forward.

Mullen summarized that they had initially thought that the report would be a set of “to-dos”. After the interviews were conducted, reading the minutes from the other strategic planning groups and reconsidering the Strategic Plan, they took a turn with their planning. They have taken a look at all of MERA to give recommendations to the Outreach Subcommittee and the rest of MERA and identified areas that need to be addressed before the public education and outreach campaigns can be initiated.

Price said the Strategic Plan, which is supposed to be a roadmap for the future, was just adopted in December 2010 with a formal review of it scheduled in another two years. He and Mullen are suggesting a re-arrangement of the Plan’s timeline and other changes. Developing a message is difficult at this point since so much seems to be a moving target like Governance, the amount of funding needed, funding sources, etc. A message now would be so generic that its impact would be minimal in light of the likely need for public support for a \$50M system replacement. They recounted their experience with the PR campaign for the Twin Cities measure, which stalled for a year due to lack of agreement on some issues between the two cities. They had to poll a second time which cost twice as much and they do not want to repeat this. All the pieces must be in place for an effective PR and public information campaign. Mullen noted the governance issues being discussed by the Governance Work Group and the September 20 joint meeting of the Strategic Plan committees. This meeting is a step toward achieving agreement on the costs and timing of the technology that needs to be purchased, how to finance the project and whether the matter goes to the voters. These pending issues are obstacles to effectively communicating with the public about the replacement system. Kreins agreed that until the issues of governance, technology, financing and costs are resolved, there is no use for a PR campaign because there are too many unanswered questions. This report gives us a roadmap as to how to move forward.

Price is proposing to put forth revisions to the Strategic Plan regarding outreach that would be highlighted in the text but did not want to proceed without Subcommittee input. Also, CBG facilitated development of the Strategic Plan and they are working with the Governance Work Group, so Mullen and Price would like to coordinate their inputs with them. Price noted that CBG’s Nielsen’s most recent meeting notes support working together. They cite that implementation of a new governance structure should be as soon as feasible, integrating new funding mechanisms and associated outreach. Also noted was the need to share information on critical tasks to generate a consolidation plan for moving forward.

Kreins said it was originally thought that Strategic Plan should be revisited every five years. Ultimately, it was agreed to revisit it every three years. Whatever the formal review timeline is, the Plan is a living document which should be subject to change and enhancement as needed along the way. He thinks the Executive Committee and Board would agree not to wait two to three years to make revisions.

Mullen summarized their recommendations for internal communications including formalizing a sign-off process for obtaining subcommittees agreement on basic issues and facts like changes to the Strategic Plan and creation of a fact sheet and FAQ. This would also help address organizational fragmentation. Their recommendation of more appropriate and consistent representation is primarily an acknowledgement of the difficulties MERA is always going to face with long-term planning needs and changing representatives. Kreins

said the FAQ and fact sheet would be something that each MERA member could take back to their organizations and elected officials to better communicate what is happening with MERA. This would be particularly helpful since all members face turnover in their elected officials and staff. Mullen concurred and cited recent changes in County Supervisors, San Rafael elected and appointed officials and Mansourian's additional SMART duties. He said development of presentations to Councils are planned in the future. Price sensed the Subcommittee's concurrence that the public outreach campaign will be triggered by decision making in the other areas we have discussed. The Outreach Subcommittee can only do its job once the other committees complete their tasks.

Price summarized their proposed revisions to the Strategic Plan, noting they will re-write areas pertaining to the website to include things that can be done immediately and other directions MERA could take it in. He suggested posting the FAQs and having a password-protected section for members use of the website. Mullen recommended checking with MERA's legal counsel regarding password access on a public agency website. Price said they recommend holding off on the development of a video. Mullen said they hope to save MERA from \$40K to \$90K in outreach-related expenses from the Strategic Plan's estimates based on non-action or revisions.

Mullen reviewed a proposed new timeline for the outreach campaign rollout based on the many moving pieces we are dealing with. The launch could start as early as this fall, possibly September or November, working on long-term funding options, creating materials for use with MERA members and creating an external outreach plan. This would tie in raising awareness about MERA and the need for this technology. If appropriate thereafter, they would assist MERA in laying the groundwork for a possible ballot measure. Price said the creation of the fact sheet and FAQs are vehicles to push and define the process. Kreins and Shirk agreed that the issues need to be forced and decisions need to be made. Kreins noted that elected officials and city managers will be concerned that we haven't paid off the Bonds for the current system, let alone the need for replacement technology.

Price talked with Cusimano about the Phase 2 report, as did Shirk, and he concurred with their findings and recommendations. Price summarized Indie Politics' next steps as doing the revisions discussed for the Outreach Subcommittee's review and adoption. Thereafter, Outreach can present these recommendations to the Executive Committee and Board. Price and Mullen would then start on an outline for the fact sheet and FAQs. Kreins confirmed that the Executive Committee will be asked to sign-off on these items. Price wanted clarification on Indie Politics involvement with the other committees. He felt a greater need for them to be involved with the Finance Committee to know what the funding vehicles are going to be. Mullen was also interested in future governance discussions. Neither of them need involvement with the technology discussions. However, Price said these matters are not within the purview of their current agreement. He said another report will be presented to the Subcommittee, which will include postponing the engagement of a PR firm this fall and reviewing their agreement to help set the stage for the other proposed activities. Mullen said Phase 3, which is the last deliverable, would include the fact sheet, FAQ, internal sign-off process and the Strategic Plan outreach revisions. Kreins said at the end of Phase 3, Indie Politics should provide MERA with a proposal based on their three reports, for their future involvement with MERA outreach, that the Subcommittee could present to the Executive Committee for approval. Sinnott asked if the Phase 2 document could be presented by Price

and Mullen to the Executive Committee. Price clarified that it is really the Outreach Subcommittee's report to them that Indie Politics will present.

Price inquired about the next Executive Committee meeting which is on September 14. Cassingham recommended that the September 20 joint meeting of Outreach, Governance and Finance precede any presentation to the Executive Committee to permit a "truing up" of their respective work products. On September 14, Cassingham will provide the Executive Committee with Report #4 on the progress of the strategic planning committees including an update on the work to date by Indie Politics. She confirmed the next regular Executive Committee meeting date of November 9.

D. Next Steps and Timeline

Cassingham summarized the status of the efforts of the Governance Work Group and Finance Committee. She noted that Finance was awaiting completion of Mansourian's feasibility study which will present system replacement costs, construction and financing timelines and identify planning and environmental issues. Governance will be reviewing a draft of governance options for the next gen system and the timing of changes to voting and funding formulas. Price asked if Outreach would be tasked to help deal with any planning or environmental issues that might arise. Sinnott said this is to be determined. Price said the sooner we know about replacement technology challenges we will know what, if any, public relations problems we may need to deal with. Mullen noted that the Governance Work Group's tagline seems like a marketing/outreach issue. Also, the role of elected officials in MERA's future governance and oversight poses a political question Outreach may want to weigh in on.

Regarding the life of the system, Cassingham clarified on Gaffney's behalf that he used the period of indebtedness as his basis for the life of the system while Mansourian was using vendor hardware support projections. Price noted he and Mullen were only reporting back on what people's impressions were. It showed them the differing understandings about system life. Kreins said lately we have been operating on the 5-7 year lifespan which is 4 years or more before the Bonds are retired.

In preparation for the September 20 joint meeting, Price asked about how and who will be facilitating it and the content of the agenda. Cassingham said she and Tom Robinson would be working on the agenda and he would likely be the facilitator. It was agreed Cassingham would schedule a conference call in August including Robinson, Nielsen, Price, Mullen and her to discuss the agenda and its presentation.

Price and Mullen reported that they will be doing more interviews and asked for assistance in scheduling a meeting with Supervisor Kinsey. Kreins will work with Doyle to assist. Price will be talking with Roger Sprehn, Corte Madera Fire, regarding MERA and his role as point person for their tax measure on the November ballot.

E. Other Information Items

None.

F. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled on October 13, 2011, at 3 p.m. at NFPD.

G. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.