

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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DATE: March 14, 2012
TO: MERA Executive Committee
FROM: Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM **B-1**: REPORT #7 ON MERA STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Recommended Action: Receive and file Report #7 on Strategic Plan Implementation as presented; approve an extension of CBG Communications, Inc.'s facilitation and support services contract not to exceed \$10,000 through the end of the fiscal year to complete their work with the Governance Work Group and Joint Strategic Plan Committee meetings; and, authorize MERA General Counsel to commence providing public finance legal advice to the Finance Committee on tax/fees/assessment options available to the Authority and other related issues, not to exceed \$10,000.

Background: Since Report #6 was issued to the Executive Committee on January 11, 2012 MERA President Revere, Vice President Hymel and the Operations and Executive Officers met on January 20 to review the draft 700 MHz Feasibility Study and projected timeline for construction of a replacement system. Recommended accelerated timing for the project reflects current system diminishing useful life and increasing equipment failure, a 3-5 year construction timeline for the replacement system along with development of support for public funding of same for a possible November 2014 ballot measure.

On February 7, the Outreach Subcommittee met to receive an update on the 700 MHz Feasibility Study and replacement project timeline, review the draft Fact Sheet, FAQs, and tag-line, Indie Politics proposal for additional communications consulting services, and acceleration of the Subcommittee's work leading to a possible November 2014 ballot measure. On February 8, the Governance Work Group reviewed and gave input on draft amendments to the MERA JPA Agreement and Bylaws prepared by General Counsel which will implement the Executive Board New Governance Structure. The GWG also reviewed the tentative timeline and meeting requirements for implementation of the amendments.

A Joint Meeting of the Governance Work Group, Finance Committee and Outreach Subcommittee was convened on March 1. These Joint Meetings are intended to

coordinate and accelerate tasks and timelines. Agenda items included the draft cash flow for the new system, discussion of possible funding sources, status of the current system, Indie Politics consulting services and timeline, possible November 2014 public safety ballot measure, current and new MERA members participation in the new system, technical advisory input from members, and Proposed JPA Amendment No. 5, Amended and Restated Bylaws and the timeline for these governance changes.

Extension of the current contract for CBG Communications, Inc.'s, facilitation and support of the Governance Work Group and Joint Strategic Plan Committee meetings is recommended through the end of this fiscal year, not to exceed \$10,000. This extension is intended to coincide with Executive Committee and Board actions on JPA Amendment No. 5 and the Amended Bylaws in May/June.

Also, given the need for timely special legal advice to MERA's Finance Committee on tax/assessment and fee options to fund a new system, General Counsel Karpiak and his firm Richards Watson Gershon should be engaged to assist in exploring and analyzing the viability of these options, including outlining the steps and timelines involved before the Finance Committee invests too much effort in approaches that may not work for MERA. As with other Strategic Plan Implementation expenses, these public finance legal services will be charged to the Replacement Fund. Approval of a \$10,000 budget for General Counsel's time for this assistance is recommended.