

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**AGENDA ITEM B**

## **OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2012**

**Draft: 10/2/12**

(corrected: 10/24/12)

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cusimano at 2:10 p.m. on September 12, 2012 in the Heritage Conference Room at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA.

Committee Members Present:

Twin Cities Police Authority  
City of Larkspur  
City of Novato  
City of San Rafael

Todd Cusimano  
Robert Sinnott  
Jim Berg  
Charly Taylor (Alternate)

Committee Members Absent:

Marin County Sheriff  
City of Sausalito

Robert Doyle  
Jennifer Tejada

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer  
MERA Operations Officer

Maureen Cassingham  
Craig Tackabery

Guests Present:

Indie Politics/Price Campaign Solutions

Dan Mullen, Terry Price

B. Approval of Minutes from July 26, 2012 Meeting

*M/S/P Sinnott/Cusimano to approve the minutes from the July 26, 2012 meeting as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Berg, Taylor

Motion carried.

C. Revised Draft Outreach Plan and Timeline:

Indie Politics and Price Campaign Solutions (Mullen and Price)

Price reprised the Revised Plan noting changes from the last meeting to the timeline and staffing element. He reviewed the Plan goal to fund the next gen system objectives and strategy, noting recently approved MERA governance changes and joint committee meetings to address work product coordination to implement the Strategic Plan. The next phase is the outreach effort to achieve the Plan's goal which involves reaching out to the 25 MERA member representatives, many of whom are new, and their elected officials, who may also be new. The goal is to get everyone on the same page and achieve support for passing a ballot measure. MERA Governing Board support must be unanimous for us to be successful. We will need to identify liaisons in each member agency who can work with us to develop this support. The proposed Deputy Executive Officer position will help coordinate these communications and guide this project forward with oversight by the Executive Officer.

Once we have unanimous support, Price said the next step is outreach to the community. A survey of voters will help us strategically by testing their reaction to a tax measure which in turn will help elected officials understand what their constituencies are feeling. The survey will also help us in developing effective messaging with voters to persuade them to provide financial support for this critical project. Timing of polling and staff appointments will require additional discussion. There has been a decision on a December Workshop for the Governing Board where we will roll out this strategy to everyone after the November election, which will also provide additional information on voter sentiment. The Workshop will both educate and recruit MERA members to actively help with this massive implementation effort.

Price noted the timeline is focused on a November 2014 election. A June 2014 election remains a possibility and is still under discussion. Mullen noted slack has been built into the timeline. We want to be aggressive but can only do so to the extent working with our 25 members allows us to be. Berg inquired about any restrictions on which election this measure could go. Price said it could be either one but voter turnout is a factor. Mullen added there are no legal restrictions but there are political implications. Price said the question is with all this Plan activity in 2013, how do we sustain our momentum in 2014. Continued member turnover can be an issue along with risking loss of voter interest, priority and intensity. Most measures are based on a 6-month window whereas this is a 3-year timeline.

Mullen said a poll at the beginning of 2013 would help communicate to elected bodies what the voters are thinking. Tackabery said we are targeting a 2018 new system live date. A June election has the advantage of getting us on the August tax rolls. He said the MERA Governing Board will have to determine the best timing for success. Mullen said the impact of MERA's project staff on all that needs to be done and the voter survey will help us to know where we are early next year. This will guide the length of the public education campaign.

Price recommended that the County Board of Supervisors decide when this will go on the ballot since they, not MERA, have the taxing authority. Time must be allocated to work with all 5 supervisors to get their unanimous support. Cassingham noted they will be looking for unanimous support from the 25 MERA members.

Price discussed creation of a Project Oversight Committee to guide the campaign using key members of the Governing Board, Executive Board, Outreach Subcommittee and Finance Committee plus various experts like Bond Counsel, General Counsel and others. Cusimano stressed the importance of Novato and San Rafael's participation to the success of this campaign. Berg encouraged the expanded participation of elected officials by appointing them to Board vacancies and working committees to increase their awareness and involvement. Cusimano added that with so many new chiefs and managers, this becomes another challenge to the process.

Cassingham said no formal action was needed on these Plan updates. She suggested that further comments could be sent to her, Price or Mullen.

D. Appointment of Project Oversight Committee

Price referred to Page 2 of the Plan for proposed Committee composition. Cassingham said the Executive Board would look to the Outreach Subcommittee for suggested appointments. Tackabery suggested the Chair of the Governing Board be included. Price and Mullen agreed. Price also agreed more elected officials be involved, like Kinsey, possibly as Ex Officio members. In response to Sinnott's comment on "all the Outreach members participating", Mullen said this was intended to reduce the meetings of this Subcommittee. Cassingham said Gaffney has agreed to serve as Fiscal Expert and that she would work with him as she had in the past on financing matters. Cusimano inquired about who would serve as the MMA rep, given the turnover they have experienced. Cassingham said Hymel is active with the group and confirmed that McCann and Stutsman are serving on the MERA Executive Board but both are somewhat new or new to MERA. Berg offered to reach out to Novato Manager Frank, but he too would be new to MERA. Berg confirmed with Mullen that this Committee would likely meet monthly depending on need. It was agreed this discussion be continued.

E. Pollster RFP and Selection Process

Price said the Plan calls for pollster solicitation in December, followed by poll development and going into the field in January or March. The poll must be completed and analyzed before presenting it to the member agencies in April. The problem is we are collecting data very early on voter sentiment and it could become stale for a November 2014 election. We may need more shorter, targeted quick fire polls as we get closer to the election, which would increase MERA's costs. He said this may be a reimbursable expense under the bonds. In response to Berg, Mullen said the first poll would cast a wider net in capturing what the broader public would support. The quick fire polls would solicit new, targeted input. Tackabery concurred the first poll will guide us on what needs to be done next.

Price referred to the previously distributed draft pollster RFP which would be followed by a review and approval process by this Subcommittee. He will update and redistribute the RFP.

F. Discussion of Proposed Deputy Executive Officer Position and Supportive Staff

Cassingham reported on the status of these proposed positions. Price and Mullen developed draft position descriptions for what is now being referred to as a part-time Deputy Executive Officer-Special Project and Administrative Assistant. They were presented to President Revere and Vice President Hymel. She will incorporate their comments in revised drafts for their second review and ultimate presentation to this Subcommittee. As Executive Officer, she would oversee and coordinate with the two positions. The AA position could be an existing NFPD staff member, temp person or RGS contractor. Support skills must be high level. Proposed hourly rates for the DEO is \$75-\$85 and \$25-\$35 for the AA, over a period of 2-3 years at 15-19 hours average per week. PERS retiree candidate status and benefits are still under review. She discussed with Revere and Hymel the challenge of identifying the right candidate who will be the face of this project. Preference is for a public safety candidate with Marin County experience and knowledge of MERA, who can commit to a several-year project. She voiced her concern about the effectiveness of the proposed DEO hourly rate. Berg asked about duration of these appointments. Cassingham said this has yet to be determined since they may be extended through project preconstruction and beyond.

Regarding position funding, Cusimano requested a breakdown of the \$2.2M staff line item in the next gen system budget. Cassingham said Bond Counsel clarified that these positions could be reimbursed from bond proceeds and he recommended staff contracts should be project specific. Tackabery confirmed \$2.2M in the project budget was for project implementation through its durations and he will provide a breakdown of that line item. Cusimano felt the amount should include funding for these two positions. Berg asked if the DEO would be focused solely on this project. The title infers that it is the MERA DEO which could be construed that it is an expansion of the MERA operating budget. He encouraged that the title be clear and tied solely to this project. Cassingham will work on this. Cusimano asked if this could be done by RGS contract. Cassingham said yes, as well as it could be performed by an independent contractor. Price asked for further clarification on what is reimbursable from the bonds. Cassingham said Bond Counsel would provide this. She will facilitate this along with Bond Counsel review of FAQs and Fact Sheet. Price asked about current budget sufficiency for technical services to the Oversight Committee. Tackabery said their funding should be sufficient but not unlimited. Price inquired about funding for grant writers since grants are a critical component for ballot support. Tackabery said this will be discussed after the Workshop when the Governing Board authorizes the next steps.

G. Discussion of December Governing Board Workshop

Mullen referred to Page 4 of the Outreach Plan and what was to be included in the Workshop. It will be held immediately after the December 12 Governing Board meeting. The intent would be to educate and get Board Members on the same page. Possible venue is San Rafael Council Chambers. A "Save the Date" announcement will be sent when the location is confirmed. In response to Cusimano, Price said Members will be encouraged to invite their elected officials, Managers and Chiefs and begin a dialog with them about MERA ahead of the Workshop. The program content is as noted in the Plan with the hope that Supervisor Kinsey will be keynote.

Price and Mullen will work with MERA Members doing the specialized presentations and they will handle the Outreach portion. Tackabery suggested making this a joint meeting of the Executive and Governing Boards and the Subcommittee concurred.

Cassingham said the agenda would be structured to handle regular Governing Board business at the beginning, the Workshop followed by direction to the Executive Board to implement the Outreach Plan. Berg also suggested this structure could be flipped.

H. Other Information Items

None.

I. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Outreach Subcommittee Meeting be scheduled for Wednesday, October 31, 2012 at 2 p.m. at NFPD.

J. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

K. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.