

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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**P.O.C. 5/22/13 Agenda Item C**

## **PROJECT OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Draft: 5/16/13**

### **MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2013**

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. on April 24, 2013 in Marin Civic Center, Room 266, San Rafael, CA.

#### Subcommittee Members Present:

Central Marin Police Authority	Todd Cusimano
City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin Transit	David Rzepinski
City of Sausalito	Jennifer Tejada

#### Subcommittee Members Absent:

City of San Rafael	Diana Bishop
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#### Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery

#### Guests Present:

Indie Politics/Price Campaign Solutions	Dan Mullen, Terry Price
NBS	Tim Seufert
Student Observer	Michael Asmus

#### B. Approval of Project Oversight Subcommittee Minutes from March 29, 2013

Price suggested revising line 4/5 of paragraph two, Item E on Page 2, to read "MERA needs to work on more urgency in messaging".

*M/S/P Hymel/Doyle to approve the minutes from the March 29 meeting as amended.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Berg and Sinnott

C. Update on NBS Parcel Tax Study

Gaffney said Seufert of NBS would be doing the parcel tax study and we had a second meeting with him prior to this meeting, including Price and Mullen. He said the preliminary EDU counts to size the parcel tax look very favorable. A first draft of the study should be available about May 15. Seufert said the group discussed how to structure the counts, keep it simple and still achieve MERA's goals. Price said it appears the \$45 charge was high and it may be in the \$30 range which is good news. Seufert said how you equalize apartments and treat commercial, possibly based on small, medium, and large equivalencies, will make a difference. Shopping centers would be categorized as large and "mom and pop" operations may be equivalent to a single-family home. Hymel asked to have various pricing structures and scenarios due to price sensitivity found in the poll. Gaffney said it was critical that our approach be fair and equitable. Seufert said we are focusing on the annual amount generated versus 20 years. Price asked for a preview of this work at the next Subcommittee meeting. Gaffney said it will be a draft, not a final. He said we may include a senior exemption for low income provided it is easy to administer.

Seufert said he would review the data from other measures to determine how this exemption would affect revenue. Cusimano said Twin Cities averaged 5-9 applications per year. Doyle asked if senior applications for exemptions from school issues were higher than other issues. Seufert said more senior exemptions are not for income but for being age 65 or older. Price said the difference may be in the application process where, for example, with Twin Cities, the application is annual. He noted in some cases, applications have to be picked up while others are mailed. The exemption is a selling point if it could be added to the 75-word ballot measure. Tackabery asked if there would be any exemptions for vacant property. Seufert said they discussed vacant residential being taxed at a 50% rate. The plan at this point would be to tax all parcels except government owned. Agricultural land would be taxed, if not improved, as one EDU. They will look at larger agriculture, for example, dairies with single-family homes and other structures as more than one EDU. Rzepinski said to lower the parcel tax, we need to review the project budget and get to the bottom line. Hymel suggested a Finance Committee meeting to revisit this before the next meeting of the Subcommittee. Gaffney said the budget still includes 5,000 radios which is a policy decision. Rzepinski favors the 5,000 radios. Hymel asked him to be a part of this discussion as a Finance Committee member.

D. Member Outreach Update

Price discussed the pollster's response to questions regarding the impact of a lower parcel tax on swing voters. Craig Below, with FM3, said it was one factor but not a leading factor in changing minds. It might become a leading factor at \$25. He asked at what point does the lowering of the amount become a positive if it affects the purchase of necessary equipment which could affect member support. If we can get the amount down to the low \$30 range and still buy the radios, we are there. Mullen said having more

parcels to work with is a positive, but the Finance Committee will have to work on the budget and what we are planning to buy. Hymel said it seemed counter-intuitive that swing voters wouldn't be more price sensitive. The question is what would drive swing voters to support the parcel tax, such as more education about MERA. Price said Below noted other factors weigh heavier than price, such as stressing the need for a durable, reliable system in a major disaster, reliability for day-to-day emergency communications and that no funds would be used for operating, administrative or pension costs. Hymel said this fine-tuning would precede another poll which would better determine where swing voters were going. Price agreed with Gaffney that we need to settle the financial issues with vigorous internal debate, including the total project cost and number of radios, and then assess how this will impact how voters feel. At this point, amount of tax is not the driving force.

Mullen summarized the meeting with Supervisor Kinsey wherein the poll results and updated video were presented for his comments. Kinsey, based on the poll results, expressed the need to keep this issue urgent and in front of people without scaring them into voting for the measure. With all his experience, he quickly understood the poll results. Price noted in working with Kinsey on the video that FCC regulatory issues would not resonate with voters, which they did not.

Doyle asked for clarification about scaring voters. Mullen said Kinsey questioned the use of tsunami response in outreach or only focusing on disasters and not on the day-to-day. Hymel noted Kinsey initially wanted to come across as proactive but with the survey results, it has become clear to him we need to convey a greater sense of urgency. Mullen said voters are actually dissuaded by MERA's great track record and the 20 years its 25 members have been working together. Thus, why would we need a new system. Doyle said we need to communicate a sense of urgency about system replacement and how important this is to public safety in Marin County.

Price discussed the insertion of poll results into the MERA PowerPoint presentation which will be the public document. It will be a slimmed-down version of the original poll presentation. Hymel clarified that the media will probably prefer top-line poll information.

Price said the first edition of MERA's Newsletter has been distributed and had a very high open rate of over 50%. While everyone should have received it, he distributed copies for comments. There is no set schedule for sending it out as it will be sent when there is something to say. Price said the original mailing was to about 110 recipients, which will be expanded. The current database includes Governing Board Members and Alternates, Executive Board Members and Committee members. All member agency elected and appointed officials will be added. The Newsletter will be used for communicating and the database will be used for tracking support, best ways to contact these officials, log when presentations are made, log questions asked and more.

Tackabery asked for an update on the presentation to the MCCMC. Cusimano said the meeting is this evening. Mullen said there have been numerous calls and meetings to

develop and coordinate what will be primarily a presentation on emergency preparedness. MERA's video will not be included since there has been no sign-off. Len Rifkind will discuss the work of the DC3 Committee on disaster preparedness. Mark Brown will cover the national infrastructure. Cusimano will speak to the day-to-day emergency radio and data communications and agency coordination. Mullen said these remarks will set the stage and context for a MERA presentation later on. Mullen noted confusion on the part of many regarding emergency response technology and procedures which needs to be addressed.

Price and Mullen presented the updated video which has been pared down and edited based on poll results for presentation to member governing bodies. It may need further inclusions and revisions for presentation to community groups, especially regarding urgency.

After showing the video, Price noted member logos had been added at the end, new photos were included—namely of the EOC, SWAT team activity—and the length was reduced by 60 seconds. Mullen noted some things in the video that did not poll well, like life span, are still included for the benefit of elected officials. Hymel said he has received Board feedback on vendor lack of support for the current system. Tackabery says this drives the question of when the next replacement system will be needed.

Cusimano asked when the Executive Board will approve the video for broader use. Gaffney suggested noting that Next Gen will cover virtually the entire County versus 97%. Cusimano favored showing the video first to Councils followed by a presentation. Mullen said they would work with Jeffries on the components of the presentation. It was agreed that a Subcommittee approve each video iteration. Hymel noted the benefit of getting the video out to electeds sooner versus later, possibly before the MCCMC.

Price said the next step is to pull all the presentation materials together and create a calendar and order of member presentations. Tejada suggested starting with MMA and use that input to fine-tune. Sinnott added that the Police and Fire Chiefs' Associations be scheduled thereafter along with the Public Works Directors.

Berg asked if each chief would take the lead with these presentations or by a team of local leaders backing the chief. Mullen said the technical portion would be centralized. Locals would take the lead. Sinnott said Districts serving cities need to be a part of the local team. He suggested Fire Districts be the first Members scheduled as they are single-focused agencies. Cusimano added the Central Marin Police Authority should be in the first to be scheduled.

E. Recommended Appointment of Special Project Manager

Cassingham summarized the staff report she distributed at today's meeting regarding yesterday's results from the Interview Panel. The Panel of Cusimano, Tejada and Sinnott interviewed three candidates and has recommended David Jeffries as MERA's Special Project Manager and a contract for his services between MERA and RGS. Hymel asked

the Panelists about their recommendation. Tejada said Jeffries had extensive knowledge and background with MERA including the state of emergency communications before and since MERA. He enjoys great respect and credibility with his public safety colleagues and has excellent relationships with them. He understands the challenges and opportunities with the current and Next Gen systems. She said he has a clear understanding of his support role versus being the face of this Project. All around, he is the best candidate for this position.

Cusimano added that given the knowledge he has and respect he has earned, when he speaks to Chiefs, they will listen. With Mullen and Price's help from a political standpoint, he will be a formidable member of our team. Sinnott concurred that he was clearly the best candidate with his great technical and historical knowledge and will be a great resource to public safety leadership in working with their elected officials. Mullen and Price echoed support for this recommendation based on their work with Jeffries to date.

Sinnott confirmed Jeffries' availability based on his planned retirement later this year, as Cusimano said Chief Berg has been accommodating schedule-wise to make this possible. Berg added that Jeffries has learned gray areas and will be of great assistance to the Chiefs. His position with Novato comes first, and his scheduled time off will be coordinated and flexed to the extent possible for MERA.

*M/S/P Doyle/Rzepinski to approve the Subcommittee Interview Panel's recommendation of David Jeffries as MERA's Special Project Manager and recommend approval of a contract to the Executive Board on May 8, 2013, between MERA and Regional Government Services for his services.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

F. Annual Review of MERA Strategic Plan

- 1) Proposed MERA Administrative Update
- 2) Proposed DPW Update
- 3) Proposed Outreach Plan Update

Cassingham summarized her Administrative Update as part of the Annual Review of the MERA Strategic Plan. She noted the regular annual review scheduled for December 2012 had been postponed to the May 2013 meetings of the Executive and Governing Boards. Her report included actions taken on six of the Seven Plan Directions with a separate update from Tackabery on Direction 3, "System Technology Replacement Plan Development". Attached to her report are expenses incurred through March 31, 2013 for each directive. She noted Governing Board emphasis on implementing Directions 1-5 first, followed by 6 and 7.

Cassingham summarized the proposed redline changes to the Outreach Plan including renaming the Subcommittee, updating the Timeline and revising the 2012-2013 Budget leading up to the development of the 2013-2014 Outreach budget.

Tackabery said the Strategic Plan is a valuable framework which is now three years old. He is unsure about some of the next steps with Direction 3. The Plan provided four replacement system options which have been discussed and formation of an Operations Advisory Committee of the five largest system users to review and recommend an option, that was Option 4. Bids on Option 4 were received but not accepted. Section 4 on the Long-Term Funding Plan mentions four potential capital projects to expand coverage. He is unclear on who makes the final decision on the coverage projects and the role of the Operations Advisory Committee going forward on coverage. Northern Marin, Tomales and Tiburon sites have been recommended but nothing has been included on Stinson. Gaffney confirmed Tomales and Southern Marin as being included in the 700 MHz System. Tackabery noted there have been changes with GGNRA and Southern Marin Fire and that there are coverage issues there. He will be bringing coverage options to the Executive Board. Looking at the Strategic Plan, he is seeking direction on who is doing what and how this is brought together. Gaffney said if funds are available in the replacement project, these other coverage issues could be addressed. Tackabery assumed the Finance Committee would make recommendations on this to the Executive Board but asked if there was any expectation that these matters go back to the Operations Committee. Hymel said his reaction was that Tackabery should work coverage issues through Operations and that Committee should recommend to this Subcommittee if relevant to their work. Tackabery clarified that this Operations Committee was not the Operations Issues Work Group which meets monthly on user issues. He clarified that the Coverage Committee formed by the Executive Board late last year was charged with looking at Stinson coverage and 700 MHz system coverage with additional sites. Rzepinski said Next Gen System issues need vetting before presenting them to this Subcommittee. Hymel added that the Coverage Committee should report to the Executive Board. He said staff needs to make technical recommendations to the Executive Board which will refer them to the Finance Committee as needed.

Tackabery will work with Cassingham on the update for Direction 3. Gaffney inquired about the status of other special districts communications systems. Tackabery said some agencies such as sanitary districts have their own systems and noted some were antiquated. Gaffney said we might want to contact them about our Next Gen System. Hymel agreed about following up with them, noting the challenges in working with our current 25 members on the replacement system. Gaffney said we could explore adding members later. Price suggested putting them on the Newsletter list. Cassingham suggested at some point the Executive Board could weigh in on this. Hymel said the Strategic Plan should not be the driver of Tackabery's Work Plan. We need clarity on the Work Plan, and the Executive Board, Finance and Oversight and Committees will provide feedback.

After further discussion, it was agreed not to seek out new members at this time, given the enormity of the Next Gen System Project financing and implementation.

*M/S/P Hymel/Gaffney to forward the proposed Administrative Update to the Executive Board as part of the Annual Review of the MERA Strategic Plan along with the Operations Update to Direction 3.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

G. Draft Mater Calendar – November 4, 2014 Ballot Measure

Cassingham summarized the draft calendar which is intended to identify key dates for member agency, MERA Governing Board and Board of Supervisors' actions. Mullen said the timeframe for member presentations should allow for possibly three contacts including an initial educational presentation, member resolutions supporting the project and request for endorsement. Hymel suggested adding a Board of Supervisors' Workshop sometime in the next three months before starting member presentations. Mullen noted public agency actions must cease when the ballot measure is approved by the Board of Supervisors.

H. Additional Subcommittee Members

Cassingham reported on the follow-up with Chiefs Massucco and Weber of NFPD and County Fire, respectively. Massucco has assigned Battalion Chief McCarthy and Weber has agreed to Interim Deputy Chief Brown's participation in the Subcommittee.

I. Other Information Items

Cassingham distributed a handout on the Silicon Valley Regional Communications System project, noting the project budget.

J. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Subcommittee meeting be scheduled at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at the Marin Civic Center in a room to be determined.

K. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

L. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.