

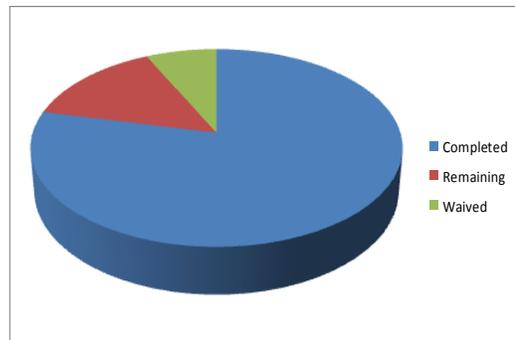
MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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DATE: October 9, 2013
TO: MERA Project Oversight Committee
FROM: Dave Jeffries, Special Project Manager
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM D-1: REPORT ON ROUND ONE PRESENTATIONS

Recommended Action: Receive, discuss and file Report on Round One Presentations.

Background: The Round One Presentations were designed to provide all MERA Member agencies with an update on the Next Generation System project and to introduce them to the funding mechanism chosen by MERA. Those presentations began on July 18, 2013 with presentations to the Marin City Managers and to a joint meeting of the Marin Fire and Police Chiefs.



Two MERA Member Agencies, the Marin Transit District and the Central Marin Police Authority waived presentations as all of their board members were scheduled to receive the presentation at their home Board or Council meetings. All of the remaining presentations, including one for the Marin Public Work's Directors, have now been completed (22) or scheduled (3), with one final presentation for Novato Fire pending scheduling.

A final report will be provided after the conclusion of all Round I presentations.

Presentation Feedback: During each of the presentations, questions and feedback were noted. In many cases, the questions were answered at the time, but some issues needed to be brought to the attention of the POC, especially in terms of funding alternatives. Some of these issues came up once, but some came up multiple times.

In the Round Two Staff Report, I will be recommending specific actions for some of these issues.

I have tried to categorize and summarize these comments and questions below, noting the questions not addressed in the presentation in bold or that need further discussion based on an overall view of all of the presentations to date:

Funding Issues:

- 1. Can MERA start a reserve account to fund the Gen III system?**
- 2. What are our jurisdiction's current bond and O&M costs?**
- 3. What are the O&M costs for Gen II?**
- 4. Would it be cheaper to lease rather than purchase equipment?**
- 5. Can we split the Gen II costs between Parcel Tax and Agency budgets?**
- 6. Is there a plan to sell off Gen I equipment? Does that affect Gen II budget?**
- 7. How do we begin charging non-member agencies for system use?**
- 8. Functionality for our agency and re-examination of O&M and distribution of costs essential for continued support.**
- 9. Noted the apparent 5% capital interest seems low.**
- 10. Parcel Tax – MFR – How did we arrive at \$26.10 per unit? Wouldn't setting this at @ \$29 help the overall project? Shouldn't these people pay the same as SFR?**
- 11. What grants have we/ will we obtain/seek? UASI?**
12. What happens if the Parcel Tax fails? Impacts on agency budget?
13. If the Parcel Tax fails, who decides new funding mechanism?
14. How did we determine averages for different categories of Parcel Tax?
15. Is there a contingency for changing technology? (In other words, if costs increase or technology changes from the time proposal is accepted to time of purchase what will we do?)
16. Do Parcel Tax rates vary from city to city?
17. Can we use specific costs in ballot language?
18. Request for more clarification between Capital and O&M costs
19. Can Grants be used to cover O&M?
20. Can the Parcel Tax be increased to cover O&M as well?
21. Can Gen I reserve be used to pay off final year of Gen I bonds? What will the reserve funds be used for?
22. Why is the State not paying for this system?
23. Why are operating costs omitted from the presentations?
24. How did we get Parcel tax down to \$29?
25. Can parcel tax factor in community usage of MERA system?
26. Can we use Taxpayer Obligation Bonds instead?
27. Why doesn't MERA already have a replacement account to address the Gen II acquisition?
28. Will each member agency pay for its own radios?
29. Will acquisition costs ever end? (Long-term for Gen III, IV, etc.)
30. West County – Frustration that tourism impacts do not result in funding breaks for West County members funded by other members and Federal government.

31. Happy that MERA is going to Parcel Tax for capital costs.
32. Shouldn't each member agency buy their agency's field radios?
33. Does the \$46M include unpaid monies from Gen I?
34. What are the \$5M in low interest loans?
35. Budget slide unclear, replace expense with investment.
36. This is a new revenue stream and taxpayers will be paying more than they did for Gen I.
37. Is the parcel tax county-wide?
38. Larger financial impact on smaller districts.
39. What guarantees are there that the public will get what they are promised and that costs will be under budget?
40. Why did Marinwood CSD O&M costs go up \$1200 in the past year?
41. What are the exact costs per parcel/homeowner right now?
42. Compare current public costs and future public costs.
43. Why is this system so expensive?
44. How are we estimating costs four years in advance of the system going live?
45. What if agency O7M remained fixed into Gen II and the Parcel Tax covered any increase?

Generation I Issues:

- 1. What is being done about the Gen I promise of radios for schools?**
2. Controversial nature of Gen I. Do not repeat "mistakes" of Gen I.
3. "We are golden" with Gen I compared to pre-MERA systems.
4. Why did MERA exceed Gen I radio estimates?
5. Recognized the importance of the MERA system and feels like voters will understand as well.
6. Be clear about what MERA can and cannot do. Overselling of Gen I.
7. What frequencies do we currently use?
8. Is there documentation of failures on the Gen I system?

Vendors:

- 1. Are there vendors besides Motorola?**
- 2. Will the RFP process be transparent?**
3. How many/which vendors will submit proposals?
4. Do vendors state up front how long equipment will last?
5. Upset that Motorola has forced us into this situation. Does not want Motorola included in the RFP process.

Technology:

- 1. Why can't MERA coordinate with other counties in same situation? (Super-system and joint purchasing)**
2. What is the life expectancy of the Gen II system?
3. Where will the new towers be located? How many?

4. Why can't we simplify and go back to an analog system?
5. What is FirstNet? (Question created by slide comment)
6. Will technology out last bonds? What do we think of that?
7. What is the Gen I technology?
8. What is the main driving factor for Gen II (Three factors noted)
9. What new technology will Gen II introduce?
10. Will the Gen II system be expandable?
11. How will Gen II address lack of service and coverage for West County?
12. How will Gen II address overlay issues?
13. Is there a difference in narrow-banding requirements between UHF and 700 MHz?
14. Pleased about better coverage and resolution of paging issues for West County.
15. Concerned about public works getting bumped off the system in Gen II.
16. Request for explanation of interoperability as MERA defines it.
17. Will Gen II offer video and data support?
18. How have we planned for future radio expansion?
19. Will there be guarantees that Gen II will last longer than the Gen II bonds?
20. Are we checking with other counties that are already on 700 MHz?
21. Can the existing technology be used for the new system?
22. What guarantees are there that MERA will work in the case of a major emergency?
23. Are we adding more radios?
24. Will there be new features on the radios?
25. Is there discussion of MERA combining with other system?
26. Are all agencies in the region being pushed to 700 MHz?
27. Why can't Gen I be upgraded? Why are we confronting obsolescence so quickly?
28. Will the new system have a built in obsolescence?
29. Will Gen II be able to track radios by GPS?
30. Who is overseeing technical aspects of this project?
31. Where are the current coverage gaps? How will Gen II address them?

Outreach:

1. Importance of public outreach and clarity of MERA's mission.
2. What is MERA? I don't call MERA in an emergency? (Public)
3. What are we doing for Public Relations? Quelling negative feelings and rumors?
4. How was the General Obligation Bond question asked in the survey?
5. Recommendation to use personal stories in outreach.
6. How do we expect to reach 2/3 vote based on current survey?
7. Concern about voter fatigue and impact of other tax measures in 2013 and 2014.

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8. Requests single slide in Round II of source and usage of finances and more detail on use of Parcel Tax.
9. Will the new tower sites be controversial?
10. What did the project poll at \$25 SFR?
11. Are there examples of major emergencies that show MERA's capabilities?
12. How many people were interviewed in the poll?
13. How does West Marin feel about the Gen II proposal?
14. What else will be on the November 2014 ballot?
15. What steps have been taken to develop a campaign committee?
16. Develop a video of first hand MERA experiences. Use NPAT or Channel 27?

Membership:

1. **Are their plans to expand MERA membership to other agencies?**
2. Why is North Marin Water not a MERA member?

Other:

1. Will there be training for public works employees on the new system?
2. Do cell phones go to different dispatch centers?