

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945

PHONE: (415) 878-2690

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 8, 2009**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Kinsey at 2:05 p.m. at the Marin Nonprofit Center, 555 Northgate Drive, San Rafael, Downstairs Conference Room.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Kinsey, County of Marin  
Ken Nordhoff, City of San Rafael  
Marc Revere, Novato Fire Protection District  
Jim Irving, Southern Marin Fire Districts  
Michael Rock, Ross Valley Agencies  
Anne Montgomery, Southern Marin Cities/Towns

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Robert Doyle, County Sheriff  
Joe Kreins, City of Novato

NONVOTING MEMBERS, GUESTS/STAFF PRESENT:

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer  
John Rohrbacher, Marin County Police Chiefs Association  
David Rzepinski, Marin Public Works Association  
Farhad Mansourian, DPW Director  
Richard Chuck, Project Engineer, DPW  
Denise Wade, Recording Secretary

Introduction of Sausalito Police Captain John Rohrbacher, Marin County Police Chiefs' Association Representative and Recognition of Retiring Captain Don MacQuarrie.

**Agenda Item A: Consent Calendar**

1. Minutes from May 13, 2009 Executive Committee Regular Meeting

*M/S/P Revere /Irving approved Consent Calendar Item 1 as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

Motion carried

**Agenda Item B: Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)**

1. Recommendation to Board – Update on MERA 1999 Bond and New Project Fund Balances and Use of New Project Fund Balance for Capacity and Coverage Projects

Cassingham reported that on March 11, the MERA Board approved the use of the 1999 Bond Fund in the amount of \$2.9 million for the capacity and coverage projects. The capacity project at that time was estimated at \$1.6 million and the remaining cost of \$2.0 million was for the Tomales site coverage project. It was accurately reported at that time that the Bond Fund balance was \$2.9 million. Since then it has been determined that only \$1,041,262 is currently available for the projects. The difference is the restricted reserve for the 1999 bonds, which is unavailable for projects. Cassingham stated she did not complete verification of the balance with auditor John Maher.

Mr. Maher prepared an attachment to the staff report reconciling the net assets per the financial statements to fund balances for the individual funds as of May 31, 2009. These are unaudited numbers. He has projected \$1,041,262 is available for projects from the 1999 Bond Fund balance and \$1,194,886 from the New Projects Citizens Bank Loan for a total of \$2.2 million. The funds are available per General Counsel and Bond Counsel for these projects. The Acting Board President, County Administrator, Board President and the Operations Officer were briefed on the situation of the overstatement of funds available.

The Executive Committee should consider recommending to the Board, if we move forward with the coverage project, the use of the New Projects fund balance to fund the remaining costs of frequencies installation and partially fund the coverage project. Mansourian has produced for your consideration two staff reports—Agenda Items C1 and C2—that are complementary to this report, which update the two capital projects based on available resources and timelines.

*M/S/P Nordhoff/Revere to accept the updated report on the fund balances.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

Motion carried

2. Report on Records Management Project – Phase III (Implementation of Active Records Recommendations from Phase II)

Cassingham requested authorization to execute a contract with Gladwell Governmental Services, Inc., to implement Phase III of the MERA records management project in the amount of \$1,127. Phase III implements the recommendations from the Phase II evaluation of our active files. The implementation of Phase II recommendations did not occur through the Administrative Services Associate. Given MERA's transition to the Novato Fire Protection District, Cassingham highly recommended that active files be in good working order, easily retrievable and in updated file folders. It is proposed that Gladwell be onsite on July 15 to implement Phase III. She will also provide basic training for the Executive Officer and NFPD staff on how to maintain the system, how to retrieve and re-file so that system integrity is maintained.

*M/S/P Montgomery/Nordhoff to approve Phase III Records Management Project with Gladwell Governmental Services.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

Motion carried

3. Recommendation to Board – Appointment of Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

As part of the Executive Officer's Work Plan for 2009, the Board approved development of a strategic plan for MERA. To start the process, Cassingham requested appointment of an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee. It is proposed that the Ad Hoc Committee be about the same size as the Finance Committee that was recently reconstituted by the Board, possibly numbering four members in total, which will permit ease of convening meetings and moving the strategic planning process along more quickly. In Cassingham's staff report, she gave the Board-approved description of the strategic plan. She solicited any comments or changes to the plan the Committee might have and asked for suggestions as to who might serve on that Committee, with the Board confirming the appointments on July 15. She also inquired whether it would be beneficial to the project, in terms of its completeness and timing, to have it professionally facilitated. MTA has engaged CBG Communications to do their strategic plan, from which they have developed an extensive knowledge base of Marin County communications. Some funds are available in contingency to assist with this project.

Kinsey said the Committee should include representatives from law enforcement, fire, city management and technical staff/users. Nordhoff suggested a member with MERA history. Revere suggested representation from the Police and Fire Chiefs' Associations.

Kinsey, Irving, and Rock supported professional facilitation as a worthwhile investment in this important project. Mansourian said he was unaware of this proposed project and expressed concern about its impact on his heavy MERA workload. Nordhoff asked if CBG, with its experience in Marin communications, could approach this project in phases to help manage costs and the project timeline. Mansourian said his focus is to maintain the \$30M system we have versus focus on 700 MGHZ technology, which does not yet exist. Kinsey and Chuck commented on San Diego's whole system upgrade. It was noted that Motorola will cut its support at some point and MERA does not want to be caught short in planning for the future.

Kinsey requested that Mansourian provide a cost estimate for technical support of the strategic planning process since DPW is best positioned to present the state of technology, future direction and current system evaluation. Revere said that strategic plan development should be coordinated with the MERA Finance Committee. Cassingham will work with CBG to develop a proposal responsive to these inputs for a process not to exceed one year with a finite number of Committee meetings. CBG will be asked to facilitate only and DPW will provide the technical support. Discussion of this matter will be presented to the Board on July 15.

#### 4. Other Information Items

Cassingham reported that the Executive Officer Work Plan Subcommittee needs to be convened for their quarterly meeting in July, schedules permitting. The Subcommittee includes Chief Revere, Chief Kreins and Ken Nordhoff. Agenda for the meeting includes the status of the work plan and Executive Officer performance.

Cassingham said that we have had some responses to the draft chronological history of MERA, which was sent to all members and anyone else who was suggested as interested in giving input to the process. Cassingham will include those edits in the chronology of events, along with updates to present and re-circulate to the Board.

Cassingham proposed convening the Finance Committee to address three items: (1) an invoice approval policy that was recommended during the discussion of the CSI payments; (2) a reserves policy; and (3) an additional radios cost policy, including a re-visitation of the Lando formula on same and mutual aid and allied agencies cost assessments.

Cassingham reported that the Forbes Reservoir Demolition Project has been small but extremely challenging. The phone line for the Sanitary Districts is undergrounded and subleases are still pending between MERA and Ross Valley Sanitary District and Los Galinas Sanitary District. Work is expected to start on July 13. Demolition will take

three to five days, followed by underground storage tank removal and soil remediation that will take a day or two.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Forbes Project, as well as the Logging System Recorder Project, could not be completed in FY 08-09. The Board, in a brief memo at the July 15 meeting, will be requested to reallocate project balances for expenditure in FY 09-10.

Cassingham attended two meetings of the Joint Power Oversight Committee: (1) a sub-committee meeting on May 11 and (2) a full JPA Oversight Committee Meeting on June 18. This is a Committee of the Marin County Mayors and Councilmembers. A report will be issued from the JPA Oversight Committee in the near future, which will be distributed to the MERA Board.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for August 12 at 95 Rowland Way, Novato CA, from 2-4 p.m.

**Agenda Item C: Operations Reports (Mansourian)**

1. Report on Additional Frequencies: Recommendation to Board on Capital Project Implementation Timeline Based on Revised Financial Resources; and
2. Report on Tomales Site Coverage Project: Recommendation to Board on Capital Project Implementation Timeline Based on Revised Financial Resources.

Mansourian stated his reports on the capacity and coverage projects reflect the availability of \$2.2M for these projects versus the \$4M Cassingham had reported to the Board on March 11. DPW originally estimated the capacity project at \$2M and the Tomales project at \$2M because it was reported that there was \$4M available. The Board approved both based on that assumption and did not advise which project to do first or second.

Based on the revised balances of \$2.2M and the fact that the Board did not advise which project should be done first or second, Mansourian's recommendation is to proceed with the frequencies since we are already committed to their purchase. The FCC is issuing the licenses and they will be ours August 2. Once MERA has the frequencies, they must be built out in one year. In addition to the purchase price of \$562,500, he estimates \$1M to buy the related equipment and install it.

Mansourian stated that if we stay on schedule, the capacity project will be \$1.6M, leaving \$600,000 dollars to do the Tomales coverage project. The Tomales project could be a simple or impossible project; simple because we can have the site and negotiate access to

Verizon's utilities and road. Whether MERA can get permits without doing a major environmental study and encountering other issues is another matter. Mansourian recommended engaging John Roberto, who has done this kind of work for us before, is very familiar with the nature and history of this site, plus the feasibility of an 80-foot tower. Without knowing this information and the costs involved, an informed decision cannot be made about the Tomales project.

Nordhoff requested the development of a resolution for Board action on July 15 that would allocate \$1.6M for the frequencies project and \$600,000 for the Tomales coverage project from the 1999 Bonds and New Projects Fund Balances of \$2.2M.

3. Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Mansourian and Chuck reported that a meeting was set up with Southern Marin Police and Fire Chiefs to discuss coverage problems and options. Mike Cronin took the lead. It was agreed that the most practical option was the Martha property, currently being developed in Marin County. It is proposed that MERA would seek, as a requirement of development, a site for an 80-foot antenna to improve Southern Marin coverage. The Tiburon City Council has been approached for support and they will consider the matter in the Fall. Supervisor McGlashan has said he supports this concept.

4. Other Information Items

None to report.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda (*limited to two minutes per speaker*).

None to report.

E. Meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

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Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer

**AGENDA AND STAFF REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
WWW.MERAONLINE.COM**

cc: Diane Patterson (for posting)  
MERA Staff

General Counsel  
Novato City Clerk (w/minutes)

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