

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**E.B. 7/24/13 AGENDA ITEM A-1**

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

Minutes of May 8, 2013 Meeting

Draft: 5/30/13

### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on May 8, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. in the Heritage Conference Room, Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

### **Board Members Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Todd Cusimano
Ross Valley Cities/Towns	Debra Stutsman
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann
Special Districts	Bill Hogan

### **Board Members Absent:**

City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
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### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery
DPW Communications Services Manager	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

### **Guests Present:**

Maher Accountancy	John Maher
Indie Politics	Dan Mullen
Price Campaign Solutions	Terry Price

### A. Consent Calendar

All matters on the Consent Calendar are to be approved with one motion unless a Member of the Executive Board or the public requests that a separate action be taken on a specific item.

1. Minutes from March 13, 2013 Executive Board Regular Meeting
2. Proposed Agreement for FY12-13 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy
3. Proposed Fourth Amendment to Office and Staff Services Agreement between MERA and Novato Fire Protection District
4. Report #12 on Strategic Plan Implementation
5. Confirmation of Bi-monthly Regular Executive Board Meeting Dates – FY13-14

Hymel acknowledged Maher and asked if there were questions regarding Item 2. There were none.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-5 as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
ABSTENTIONS: McCann – Item 1  
Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Nomination of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)

Cassingham summarized her staff report on the Governing Board officer nomination process. Hymel nominated Pearce as President. Hymel offered to continue as Vice President but entertained other nominations.

*M/S/P Cusimano/McCann to nominate Pearce and Hymel as Governing Board President and Vice President, respectively.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

2. Proposed FY 13-14 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham summarized her staff report noting the Agreement was for one year and the proposed increase in cost for Administration over prior year reflects a 3.3% CPI adjustment. Technical services costs have been included in the proposed FY13-14 Operating Budget.

*M/S/P Pearce/Stutsman to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY13-14 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

Tackabery clarified for Hogan that the significant increase in DPW Administrative Costs in FY12-13 reflected a catch-up for real costs incurred during the prior three-year Agreement. This prompted the move to an annual agreement to better address cost-recovery.

3. Proposed FY13-14 Communication Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham said this is a proposed one-year contract for Chuck's services which replaces the three-year Agreement ending June 30, 2013. The scope of services is the same and the cost is \$170,200 which reflects a 3.2% CPI increase.

*M/S/P Hogan/Cusimano to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY13-14 Communication Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

4. Proposed FY13-14 MERA Operating Budget and Fee Schedule for Non-member Users

Cassingham reported minor adjustments to the Proposed Budget since the Executive Board's approval of the Preliminary Budget on March 13. The proposed is 3.7% over prior year versus the 3.1% increase in the Preliminary. She noted two major line-item variances in County System Maintenance and Site Rentals and Leases.

In conjunction with the Budget is the proposed continuation of the Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for non-member agencies providing mutual-aid and automatic back-up to MERA members.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY13-14 MERA Operating Budget as presented and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-member Users.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

5. Proposed FY13-14 New Project Financing and Bonds Budgets

Cassingham said the New Project Financing Budget for the supplemental borrowing is set by Governing Board policy to remain the same annual amount of \$225,000 through the life of the Note. The Bonds Budget is for Debt Service and there is no discretion in the payment amount.

*M/S/P McCann/Berg to recommend Governing Board approval of the Proposed FY13-14 New Project Financing – 2007 Bank Note and the MERA 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets as presented.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

6. Recommendations from Project Oversight Subcommittee Re:  
Strategic and Outreach Plans Implementation

Cassingham said there are five recommendations from the Subcommittee which met on April 24. David Jeffries is recommended as part-time Special Project Manager under a contract with RGS. He will be responsible for Outreach Plan implementation through the November 2014 election. Chiefs Brown and McCarthy are recommended to join the Project Oversight Committee to assist with its work.

Cassingham said the annual Administrative and Operations Reviews of the MERA Strategic Plan Directives are being submitted at the Executive and Governing Boards' May meetings due to CY-ending workloads. Also presented are the proposed revisions to the Outreach Plan, which include a Committee name change, Timeline updates and the FY13-14 Budget. Finally, a tentative Master Calendar of Governing Board and Board of Supervisors required actions which must occur before the November 2014 election, is presented as information.

Hymel noted that in addition to Cassingham, four Subcommittee members were present to answer questions. He suggested the date of August 6 at 9 a.m. be added to the Master Calendar for a BOS Workshop. In response to Stutsman's question, Berg clarified that MERA would be a separate off-duty assignment for Jeffries and that he would continue his primary full-time duties with NPD until his retirement on November 2.

*M/S/P Doyle/Stutsman, based on the recommendations of the Project Oversight Committee:*

- (1) Approve the appointment of David Jeffries as Special Project Manager and a part-time Special Project Administrative Assistant via an agreement with Regional Government Services;*
- (2) Approve the appointments of County Interim Deputy Fire Chief Mark Brown and NFPD Battalion Chief Gerald McCarthy to the Project Oversight Committee;*
- (3) Recommend Governing Board acceptance of the Annual Administrative and Operations Reviews of the MERA Strategic Plan;*
- (4) Recommend Governing Board acceptance of the changes to the MERA Outreach Plan and FY 13-14 Budget; and*
- (5) Receive and file the Tentative Master Calendar for MERA Governing Board and County Board of Supervisors actions before the November 2014 Election as amended.*

7. System Analysis FY12-13 Capital Projects Update and Proposed  
FY13-14 System Analysis Capital Projects

Tackabery distributed a revised cost-breakdown matrix to his staff report. He said this was an update on both fiscal years' capital projects. He noted the Command Conventional Channel would be completed by the end of this fiscal year. No additional funding is required in FY13-14. The Tomales coastal permit has been secured and a draft lease has been negotiated with the property owner. The access road is leased to Verizon and MERA would need to negotiate its shared maintenance. A waiver is also needed with MALT. Another \$8,000 is budgeted for staff time next year to get this project ready for construction. This \$2M site is included in the Next Gen Project.

The Martha Company project draft EIR was circulated in April 2011. Final draft is expected shortly. One of the mitigation measures is to provide a tower site. Another \$10,000 is budgeted for next year to coordinate easements and agreements. The Next Gen System Feasibility Study will require \$20,000 in funding next year. The Study is coming to a close. Remaining issues are coverage and what will be in the Next Gen System. This will be discussed under Item C-2. Next Gen System grants for statewide allocations and national competitive grants have not been pursued yet. A detailed proposal will be presented along with a budget to the Finance Committee. Tackabery is seeking approval of these projects.

Hymel confirmed some grants have been received. Tackabery said \$2M in UASI formula grants were awarded to the County. The other competitive grants listed in his report are the ones he is proposing that MERA apply for. Doyle said some of these sources are diminishing on the Federal level. DPW will work with consultants knowledgeable about which grants are the most cost feasible to apply for. Price asked if any of these application costs are reimbursable as part of the Next Gen Project. Tackabery said Tomales and Martha staff time would likely be reimbursable but not the Command Channel. Any cost attributed to Next Gen should qualify. Pearce asked what else was included in the Feasibility Study. Tackabery said it was background on what the System is, related costs, number of radios needed and system coverage. Pearce asked if the upcoming EOF switchover locks us into Motorola. Nelson said this platform is vendor specific to Motorola. A panel of five MERA member representatives reviewed proposals on this and Motorola was the vendor of choice. Hymel clarified that this small part does not lock us into a vendor. Nelson confirmed that we could consider other vendors for Next Gen.

Tackabery said new bids would be sought for Next Gen to get the best possible pricing.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Pearce to approve the FY12-13 and FY13-14 System Analysis Capital Projects as presented pending a detailed grant-writing proposal to the Finance Committee.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

8. FY12-13 MERA Reserves Budget Update and Proposed FY13-14 MERA Reserves Budgets

Cassingham distributed and reviewed the FY 12-13 MERA Reserves Budgets for Funds 70032, 70036 and 70037. The projected New Project Financing Fund balance as of 6/30/13 is \$209,995 which reflects previously approved projects in the System Analysis Agreement, the Roberto contract balance and the Command Conventional Channel. The Replacement Fund balance as of 6/30/13 is projected at \$927,353 which reflects previously approved Strategic Plan implementation expenditures, today's requests for additional Strategic Plan implementation costs, and DPW equipment replacement costs totaling \$85,000 through 6/30/13. She noted Governing Board policy requires a minimum \$500,000 balance be maintained in the Fund. The Emergency Fund balance as of 6/30/13 is projected at \$504,167 as it too has a minimum balance requirement of \$500,000.

Cassingham presented the Proposed FY13-14 Reserves Budgets. The New Project Financing Fund proposed expenditures of \$26,000 for System Analysis projects will reduce the beginning fund balance of \$209,995 to \$183,995 as of 6/30/14. The Replacement Fund

proposed expenditures of \$343,624 for Strategic and Outreach Plan implementation and \$2,500 for Bond administration would decrease the beginning fund balance from \$927,353 to \$581,229. The Emergency Fund projected 6/30/14 balance is \$505,000.

Proposed Replacement Fund expenditures bring the fund balance within \$81,229 of the minimum required \$500,000 balance. The post-Audit transfer from the Operating Fund balance to the Replacement Fund improves this situation. She requested the Executive Board recommend Governing Board approval of the FY12-13 and FY13-14 Reserves Budgets and direct Finance Committee review of the Reserves and available balances and Reserves Policy at their next meeting. McCann asked Cassingham if she anticipated additional projects in FY 13-14. She said if grant-writing services were approved, another estimated \$50,000 expenditure could be incurred. Other projects associated with current coverage issues might also be presented.

Berg asked if any grants could offset some of these expenditures. She said if external funding could be identified for Next Gen expenses, this could reduce or eliminate MERA costs. Pearce said some grants would not apply to our proposed uses. Pearce asked about proposed RGS expenditures in FY 13-14. Cassingham said this represents a full year of employment for the part-time Special Project Manager and Special Project Administrative Assistant at 19 hours average per week including RGS expense. Stutsman clarified that the Manager position begins May 8 with Executive Board approval and Jeffries retirement is November 2.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to recommend Governing Board approval of (1) the proposed additional expenditures of \$85,000 from the FY12-13 Replacement Fund, (2) proposed expenditures of \$346,124 from the FY13-14 New Project Financing and Replacement Funds, and (3) direct Finance Committee review of available Reserve Funds and the Reserves Policy at its next meeting.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

9. Other Information Items  
None.

C. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1. MERA Update to Mutual Aid and Communications Plan

Tackabery said this was last presented to the Board of Directors in 2007. The Operations Issues Group has updated it. With Executive Board acceptance, it will be made available to all MERA users. Chuck said the update is primarily the new law template.

*M/S/P Doyle/Cusimano to accept the updated Mutual Aid and Communications Plan as presented and make it available to all MERA users.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

2. Report on Coverage Committee

Tackabery said the Committee was first formed to address Southern and West Marin coverage issues. There have been many meetings with local Chiefs and others which have led to additional contacts with agencies such as GGHTD. The District and NPS could provide sites to help Southern Marin, DPW has recommended preventative radio maintenance for Inverness. Most of DPW's time has been with Stinson Beach reviewing short and mid-term options such as sharing with GGNRA, car-to-car, a Muir Beach water tank site, low band radio operations, Troposcatter and Next Gen with additional sites. A site along Highway 1 was tested which resulted in limited benefit. Nelson said portable testing at the water tank looks promising. This might be a repeater site or MERA Next Gen site based on further analysis. Chuck said it covers from Muir Beach to Stinson Beach and back canyons listed as problems. Tackabery said no short-term solutions for Stinson were identified so this may require another Next Gen site which increases the budget by another \$2M-\$4M.

Tackabery distributed color coverage maps for the current and Next Gen systems. McCann asked about Troposcatter. Nelson said signals are bounced off the ionosphere which is not a viable option at this time. Doyle acknowledged that coverage has always been a challenge at Stinson due to topography. Hymel asked, with Next Gen what it will cost to get 100% coverage, which is likely not achievable given we are at 97% now. Pearce said work-arounds are being used in these places but Stinson and others want to make sure this is addressed with Next Gen.

Tackabery presented four coverage options for Next Gen, which require policy decisions. Nelson said Map 1 is the present T-band system coverage of 97% reliability in shaded areas for portables. Makeup is fifteen sites, two simulcast cells and three IR system coverage. The vendor has mapped the present system against the 2010 RFP. It adds a North County site, moves Bay Hill to Tomales, adds Wolf Pack and removes Civic Center as a receive site. Mullen asked about percentage of land mass coverage calculations. Nelson does not have this information. Map 2 is the RFP and has 14 simulcast and one ARS sites, including Tomales and Wolf Pack. Map 3 is the RFP plus Martha. Map 4 includes Stinson, Southern Marin Fires' new duties in National Parks and other coverage issues to date. It requires 19 sites, one receive at Civic Center plus two ARS. This adds Martha, a Muir Beach site, landfill site, a second Stinson site, a toll plaza site plus Bay Hill. This addresses all areas being reviewed by the Coverage Committee.

Hymel said, given the \$2M-\$4M cost per additional site, possibly members could contribute more if more coverage was agreed to. Tackabery noted the same review process would be used for new sites like Roberto handled Tomales where there was no opposition. Nelson said the North County site had yet to be specifically identified, so siting issues are unknown.

Pearce asked about redundancies with the possible sites. Nelson said they might need to be manipulated to avoid phasing. Hymel asked about further analysis of the sites, along with cost/benefit information, to assist the Executive Board. Chuck said sites cannot be added later because it would be expensive and require system reconfiguration. Hymel asked for the Coverage Committee Report to be added to the May 15 Finance Committee Agenda.

Discussion ensued about overlaying call volumes and call locations on the coverage maps. Doyle said his office and other police departments may be able to provide this data and that he will check. Chuck and Pearce discussed costing out the maps to see what each achieves. Hogan said call volume could be reviewed against the cost of additional coverage. Hymel said adding sites should have compelling public safety benefits. He asked for a breakdown of the benefits and costs for each of the five new sites. Cusimano suggested the Ops Group help with plotting call volumes over coverage maps. Hymel added that the focus be on the areas in question. Tackabery asked for this information to be received and filed and that more would follow.

3. Status of FY12-13 Equipment Replacement Requests and Proposed  
FY13-14 Equipment Requests

Tackabery summarized his report on backup generators at each MERA site. On January 16, the Executive Board approved replacement of the Pt. Reyes generator at \$38,000. Further scoping increased the estimated cost to \$42,000. No generator replacements are planned for FY13-14. Three generators are scheduled for replacement in FY14-15.

It was the consensus of the Board to accept the revised estimated cost for FY12-13.

4. Request for Waiver of Radio Moratorium – Marin County Sheriff’s Office

Tackabery presented this request for one additional radio for the County’s new all-risk response vehicle. The Operations Issues Work Group recommends approval.

*M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve the request from the Marin County’s Sheriff’s Office for Waiver of Radio Moratorium for one additional radio.*

AYES: All  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried.

5. Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Chuck reviewed the MERA System Operations Update for April 2013 and 2013 Year-to-Date.

6. Other Information Items

None.

D. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda  
None.

E. Adjournment  
The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

**NEXT:** MERA Executive Board Meeting  
Wednesday – July 10, 2013 – 3:30pm

**Special Note: This meeting has been rescheduled to July 24, 2013 – 2:30pm**

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[WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG)**