

# MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**Draft: 6/13/13**

## GOVERNING BOARD

### Minutes of May 15, 2013 Regular Meeting

#### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Hymel on May 15, 2013 at 3:34 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

#### Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

City of Belvedere	Mary Neilan, Tricia Seyler (Alternate)
Town of Corte Madera	Roger Sprehn (Alternate)
Town of Fairfax	Larry Bragman (Alternate)
City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Mill Valley	Angel Bernal
City of Novato	Jeanne MacLeamy
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Kay Coleman
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Town of Tiburon	David Hutton
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Inverness Public Utility District	James Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren (Alternate)
Marin Municipal Water District	Bill Hogan
Marinwood Community Services District	Bruce Anderson
Ross Valley Fire Service	Richard Shortall
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Jim Irving, Cathryn Hilliard (Alternate)
Stinson Beach Fire District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce

#### Governing Board Members & Alternates Absent:

City of San Rafael  
City of Sausalito  
Marin Community College District  
Novato Fire Protection District  
Central Marin Police Authority

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
General Counsel	Jim Karpiak
County DPW/MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery
MERA Special Project Manager	Dave Jeffries
Communications Services Mgr. (DPW)	Shelly Nelson
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

**Guests Present:**

Ken Massucco, Interim Fire Chief	Novato Fire Protection District
Trisha Ortiz	Richards, Watson & Gershon
Dan Mullen	Indie Politics
Terry Price	Price Campaign Solutions

A. Introductions

Hymel welcomed those in attendance and requested self-introductions. He introduced Dave Jeffries, MERA's new Special Project Manager. Jeffries said he has been with MERA since the beginning including the original RFP process and System Training. He is retiring as a Captain with Novato P.D. on November 2.

Hymel noted the meeting would be adjourned in memory of former MERA Board Member Richard Collins who represented the Town of Tiburon.

B. Election of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)

Cassingham presented the Executive Board's nominations of Pearce as President and Hymel as Vice President.

*M/S/P Irving/MacLeamy to elect Tiburon Fire Protection District Chief Richard Pearce as MERA Governing Board President and County Administrator Matthew Hymel as Vice President.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

C. Closed Session: Public Employee Appointment, Government Code Section 54957 –  
General Counsel

Pearce convened the Closed Session at 3:40 p.m. and reconvened the Governing Board Meeting at 3:48 p.m.

*M/S/P MacLeamy/Irving to appoint Ms. Trisha Ortiz of Richards, Watson & Gershon as MERA's General Counsel effective June 1, 2013.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

D. Consent Calendar

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

1. Minutes from December 12, 2012 Governing Board Regular Meeting
2. Minutes from January 16, 2013 Governing Board Special Meeting
3. Report #12 on Strategic Plan Implementation
4. Proposed First Amendment to Personal/Professional Services Contract for General Counsel between MERA and Richards, Watson & Gershon, LLC

*M/S/P Irving/Gaffney to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 through 4 as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

E. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Proposed FY13-14 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham summarized her staff report on the proposed one-year Agreement noting a 3.3% CPI cost increase over prior year. Services provided include training, technical and administration. Agreement costs are included in the proposed FY13-14 Operating Budget.

MacLeamy inquired about the significant variance in Administrative costs between FY11-12 and FY12-13. Cassingham said the estimated costs in the three-year Agreement did not recover actual costs of work performed by County staff.

*M/S/P MacLeamy/Irving to approve the Proposed FY13-14 Technical Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

2. Proposed FY 13-14 Communication Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin

Cassingham summarized the proposed one-year agreement for Chuck's services, which replaces the current three-year agreement which ends June 30, 2013. Scope of services is the same and the annual cost reflects a 3.2% CPI increase. Agreement cost is included in the proposed Operating Budget for FY13-14. Anderson asked about the 3.2% CPI when his agency is using 2.2%. Nelson clarified this was the October to October percentage for the San Francisco Bay Area.

*M/S/P Irving/Bernal to approve the proposed FY 13-14 Communications Engineering Services Agreement between MERA and County of Marin as presented. Anderson asked about the 3.2% CPI when his agency is using 2.2%.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

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

Cassingham presented four recommendations from the Project Oversight Subcommittee which are recommended by the Executive Board to further implement the Strategic and Outreach Plans. Proposed actions include approval of an agreement with RGS for part-time Special Project Manager and Administrative Assistant staff through November 2014. Also proposed are the Annual Administrative and Operations Reviews of the MERA Strategic Plan which, due to workload, were not presented to the Governing Board in December as planned. These reviews update the seven Plan Directions.

Cassingham reviewed the proposed changes to the MERA Outreach Plan, which include a title change for the Oversight Committee, revised Timeline and the FY13-14 Budget. She also presented the Tentative Master Calendar of MERA Board and County Board of Supervisors actions preceding the November 2014 election. A workshop about the Project with the Supervisors has been added. Tyrell-Brown asked if the RGS contract included a not-to-exceed dollar amount due to the extensiveness of the Project workload. Cassingham said the Project Manager's hours were based on 19 average per week until the November 14 election. Her average weekly hours have been increased from 15 to 19 to address the Project until November 2014. Likewise, the Administrative Assistant will be compensated for 19 hours average per week until November 2014.

*M/S/P Hymel/Irving to (1) approve an Agreement with Regional Government Services for the part-time services of the Special Project Manager and Special Project Administrative Assistant and authorize Executive Officer to execute same; (2) accept the Annual Administrative and Operations Reviews of the MERA Strategic Plan; (3) accept the changes to the MERA Outreach Plan and approve the Outreach Plan FY2013-2014 Projected Budget;*

*and, (4) receive and file the Tentative Master Calendar for MERA Governing Board and County Board of Supervisors actions before the November 2014 Election.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

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

Tackabery presented updates on the Conventional Channel, Tomales Site, Martha development proposal and Next Gen Feasibility Study, which are all underway. The Channel project should be completed by the end of the fiscal year with no additional funding. A development permit has been secured for Tomales and lease negotiations are underway with the property owner and owner of the joint access road. Martha is a private development application in Tiburon. A final EIR should be out shortly. Included is a mitigation measure to provide for a tower site. Significant work has been done on the Feasibility Study for the Finance Committee, including project phasing and cash flow. Additional work is underway on coverage options to further improve the project. Coverage will be discussed later.

A grant seeking strategy is being developed to assist with project revenues. We would be seeking Federal and State competitive grants and have done well to date with formula grants. This funding would be supplemental to the parcel tax. MacLeamy clarified that an antenna site in Tiburon is needed for improved coverage in the area. She asked who would pay for the \$3.3M for the site. Tackabery said on the public's behalf, the project would be conditioned on the developer paying for this before they start. MERA has paid for DPW review and comments to date. Regarding Next Gen grants Tackabery, in response to MacLeamy, said there must be a significant cost benefit to MERA in the grant amount before pursuing it. Pearce confirmed the amount of formula grants received to date as \$1.3M and applauded the success to date. Tackabery said some grants require a local match and the parcel tax could be a key element to funding it.

5. Other Information Items

None.

F. Public Hearings

1. Proposed Resolution Confirming MERA FY12-13 Capital Project Budgets and Expenditures from Fund 70032 (New Project Financing) and Fund 70036 (Replacement)

Pearce opened the public hearings on Items F-1, F-2, F-3 and F-4.

Cassingham reviewed her report on F-1. The proposed Resolution identifies and records capital project budgets and expenditures approved during the fiscal year by the Executive and Governing Boards from Funds 70032 and 70036. Projected ending fund balances are

\$209,995 and \$927,353, respectively. Irving asked about the Conventional Channel. Nelson responded it is a five-site UHF T-Band conventional non-trunked command channel which will cover the 101 Corridor. This project was mostly grant funded and this is the local share. All dispatch centers will have access to the Channel.

*M/S/P Irving/Gaffney to approve Resolution 2013-02 Confirming MERA FY12-13 Capital Project Budgets and Expenditures from Funds 70032 and 70036 as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

2. Proposed FY13-14 MERA Operating Budget and  
Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member Users

Cassingham said the Finance Committee and Executive Board have reviewed both items with minor Budget revisions. The total proposed budget is \$1,651,432 which is 3.7% over prior year. The Budget includes the DPW contracts previously approved today. While budgets to date have been tightly managed, the MERA system is aging and will require more maintenance. Two major line item variances are for County System Maintenance Services and Site Rentals and Leases; the latter are established in our Site Agreements.

Attached to the proposed budget is the recommended Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-member Agencies which provide mutual-aid and automatic back-up to MERA members. In response to MacLeamy, clarification was provided that these agencies are both public and private including CHP, Humane Society and private ambulance companies. Hymel said a formal review of the relationship of agencies to MERA was undertaken two years ago to confirm they were helping MERA with mutual-aid. Pearce added they buy their own radios.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Irving to approve the Proposed MERA FY13-14 Operating Budget and a Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-member Users as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

3. Proposed FY13-14 New Project Financing and Bond Budgets

Cassingham presented the Budgets for these funds which have been reviewed by the Finance Committee and Executive Board. The New Project Financing was a supplemental capital project borrowing. The annual \$225,000 payment was established by the Governing Board to remain the same through the life of the Note. The Revenue Bonds annual debt service was established with the sale of the Bonds and there is no discretion. Member invoices will go out after June 1. Payment schedules are attached to the staff report.

*M/S/P Sinnott/Hymel to approve the Proposed FY13-14 New Project Financing and Bonds Budgets as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

4. Proposed Resolution Adopting the FY13-14 Operating, New Project Financing and Bonds Budgets and Capital Projects Budgets

Cassingham presented the Resolution which adopts the preceding Budgets plus the FY13-14 Capital Projects Budgets. She noted the Emergency Reserve Fund is also included in the action.

*M/S/P Irving/Bernal to approve the Resolution Adopting the FY13-14 Operating, New Project Financing and Bonds Budget, and Capital Projects Budgets for FY13-14 as presented.*

AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE  
Motion carried.

Pearce closed the Public Hearings. There were no public comments.

G. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1) Report on Coverage Committee

Tackabery summarized the creation of this Committee of Pearce, Gray and DPW staff and meetings to date to review short-term options to address coverage issues along with the Next Gen System's long-term coverage capabilities. For Southern Marin, no short-term options were identified. GGHTD was contacted about using the Toll Plaza as a long-term site option. Chief Fox, with Inverness Fire, was contacted about doing preventive maintenance of their radios to address intermittent audio concerns. DPW also met with Stevens resulting in the identification of six options including mapping of additional sites. Those options are sharing a talk group with GGNRA, which would have limited benefit versus costs, car-to-car which would be the status quo, a conventional relay in the Stinson area with a Muir Beach water tank as a site, low-band radios, Troposcatter and Next Gen with additional sites.

Tackabery reviewed the four coverage maps which portray the present 15-site, T-band system; Next Gen RFP of 15 sites moving Bay Hill to Tomales, adding Wolfback, removing the Civic Center as a receive-only site and adding a North County site; adding Martha to the Next Gen RFP for 16 sites; and, adding Muir Beach, Redwood Landfill, Stinson Beach, Toll Plaza, Bay Hill and Civic Center sites for 22 sites. The Finance Committee has seen using the present system plus Tomales, Martha and North County as the project budget for Next Gen. The Executive Board has reviewed these maps with interest in addressing the coverage issues while living within our means. The Ops Group will be reviewing coverage options and developing

criteria to determine which are the best investment given limited funds. The Finance Committee is reviewing what a parcel tax supplemented by other sources can fund.

Pearce called for general discussion of additional sites to avoid overlapping and urged that coverage questions be answered early on. He noted that a lot of expense is associated with each site, so better to address them on the front end. Coverage is a big deal and greatly affects financing as each costs between \$2M-\$4M. Hymel added the Finance Committee is reviewing available sources including what a parcel tax would generate based on poll results along with the project budget and scope. Coverage will be improved with Next Gen including Tomales, Martha and North County, but 100% coverage will be very costly. A cost benefit analysis is needed for each additional site, including call volumes. No additional sources to fund these costs have been identified; MacLeamy confirmed recommendations will be made to the Governing Board based on this analysis.

Pearce said there is overlap with the new sites being discussed and we need to confirm what the final system will look like and get the most bang for the buck. MacLeamy confirmed the purpose of the maps was to clarify the differences between 15 and 22 sites and while 66 might be ideal, costs would be exponential.

2) Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Nelson summarized the April statistics noting the top five users are S.O., San Rafael P.D., Central Marin P.D., Novato P.D. and Southern Marin P.D.s, which include the smaller departments. There was a slight increase in busies due to site upgrades associated with the new Master Switch. Year-to-date system activity tracks with last year's numbers. Tracking is affected by seasonal events.

3) Other Information Items

None.

H. Open Time for Items NOT on Agenda

None.

I. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

**NEXT: Regular Meeting of the MERA Governing Board**

**Wednesday – December 11, 2013 – 3:30 p.m.**

**AGENDA AND STAFF REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG)**