

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District
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Executive Board

Minutes of September 11, 2013 Meeting

A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Cusimano on September 11, 2013 at 3:33 p.m. in the Heritage Conference Room, Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery
MERA Special Project Manager	David Jeffries
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

B. 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 July 24, 2013, Executive Board Regular Meeting
2. Bi-monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances

3. Proposed Resolution Authorizing Destruction of Certain Records Per MERA's Records Retention Schedule
4. Report #14 on Strategic Plan Implementation

Cassingham requested items B-1 and B-2 for separate action.

M/S/P Pearce/Berg to approve Consent Calendar Items 3 and 4 as presented.

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

Cassingham reported that on Page 6 under C.1., first paragraph, the \$63,000 cost quoted by her through June 30 for the Feasibility Study was incorrect. \$63,000 reflected all DPW Strategic Plan costs through 6-30-13. The Feasibility Study cost was \$40,391 through 6/30/13. She noted due to ongoing work on the Study, there would be additional billings. Tackabery added that the Study was still within the budget of \$50,000 to \$60,000.

M/S/P Pearce/Doyle to approve Item B-1 as revised.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: Hogan
Motion carried.

Cassingham distributed the detailed breakdown of the Reserve Fund Balances per her B-2 Staff Report. She said Tackabery had provided updated budgets for two replacement generators at San Pedro Ridge and Big Rock Ridge, which revises the allocation from \$140,000 to \$100,000. This increases Fund 70036 projected balance as of 6/30/15 from \$304,251 to \$344,251.

M/S/P Doyle/Berg to approve Item B-2 as revised.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
Motion carried.

C. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Request for MERA Executive Board Seat – Novato Fire Protection District

Cassingham said Executive Board Chair Hymel received NFPD Board President Mansourian's request on August 21, 2013 for a seat on the MERA Executive Board. She summarized her staff report noting MERA Board approval of the current Executive

Board structure on June 20, 2012 which was intended to streamline operations and reduce redundancy with Governing Board functions. She suggested formation of an Executive Board Subcommittee to review the request and develop options for Executive Board consideration. Doyle said his understanding of the request was that the District, which is the largest Fire District in the County, previously had a seat on the Executive Committee and now no longer has a seat. Pearce said, as President and Chair of the Fire Chiefs' Association, he has reached out to Mansourian and the District on several occasions with regard to their concerns. Hogan inquired about whether this was to have a voice at the table, to which Doyle responded it was due to the loss of their seat. Doyle confirmed it would take a vote of the Governing Board to make governance changes. After further discussion, Pearce, Doyle and Stutsman volunteered to serve on a Subcommittee to further review the request and develop recommendation(s) in response for consideration at a future Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board agreed.

2. Update from County Counsel on NBS Parcel Tax Study Mechanism

Cassingham reported that County Counsel was reviewing the proposed mechanism since the County will be requested by MERA to place this matter on the November 2014 ballot. This review is in response to recent legal challenges to school district parcel taxes levied differently on commercial, residential industrial and other parcels.

General Counsel Ortiz has preliminarily reviewed the structure, finding that Government Code sections appear to support it but has deferred to County Counsel for a final determination as the possible levying authority. Chair Hymel is working to expedite this. Berg confirmed County Counsel will be including MERA's consideration of a low-income senior exemption. Cassingham added that a uniform tax would reduce funding by about two-thirds.

3. Update on Member Outreach

- Presentations
- Next Steps

Jeffries summarized MMA, Police and Fire Chiefs' Associations, West County Chiefs', Public Works Directors and member presentations to date, noting they are going well in providing information on the Next Generation System and generating feedback. He noted Chief Pearce's upcoming presentation, which will mark the 14th presentation to-date. The Transit District has opted out given their members sit on other Boards that have received the presentation.

The second round of presentations in early 2014 will provide more fine-tuned information and seek resolutions of support for the Project. Updated presentations will be previewed by the Executive and Governing Boards in November/December. Cusimano thanked Jeffries for all his work to date.

4. Other Information Items

None

D. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1. MERA Bay Hill Road Generator Replacement

Tackabery summarized his report wherein he is recommending expediting the Bay Hill Generator Replacement Project from FY14-15 to FY13-14 due to its deteriorating condition and failure to pass required load testing. No maintenance can be performed to extend its life within required specifications. Estimated project cost is \$70,000. He noted Cassingham was reviewing site subleases for any possible cost-sharing. Berg inquired about the County of Sonoma's participation. Cassingham said the review of the AT&T Mobility Sublease with MERA provides for no cost-sharing for generator replacement, maintenance, operations or fuel. However, she has obtained a copy of the AT&T Mobility Sublease with Sonoma County to determine if there are any such provisions. This copy is not executed so she is still seeking a fully executed copy for cost-share confirmation. She recommended proceeding with the project due to its urgency, followed by efforts to recover costs.

M/S/P Stutsman/Doyle to approve the replacement of the Bay Hill Road generator estimated at \$70,000.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

2. MERA Barnabe Utility Communications Building Repair

Tackabery summarized his report noting that the recent inspections of the building where MERA's equipment is stored found the floor deteriorating and roof leaking. Recommended action before the rainy season commences includes installation of a new roof membrane and vent covers, floor joints and seams repairs and painting at an estimated cost of \$30,000. This project will bring the building up to a good state of repair. Pearce confirmed this was an exclusively MERA project. Cassingham said the funding source was the Replacement Reserve and this project was included in the Reserves Report presented today.

M/S/P Doyle/Pearce to approve the repairs to the Barnabe Utility Communications Building estimated at \$30,000.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

3. Request for Waiver of Radio Moratorium

- Town of Fairfax

Tackabery said the Operations Issues Work Group has reviewed the Town's request for one radio and recommended approval.

M/S/P Pearce/Stutsman to approve the Town of Fairfax's request for one additional radio.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

Motion carried.

4. Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Chuck distributed copies of his reports which included Work Statistics for August 2013 at each site along with weekly, monthly, quarterly and semi-annual testing, maintenance and repair actions taken. This represents a typical month of services.

He also presented the MERA System Usage Report for August 2013, noting the different format thanks to the capability of the new Master Switch. The format provides the number of radio calls, radio hours, minutes and seconds, busy counts, busy seconds and percent of usage by member and non-member agencies. In the past, this required hand calculation which is now provided for in the switch package. Busy counts to radio hours are low, which is very good. In response to Doyle, Chuck clarified that Law includes all tactical groups together if not specific to an agency.

Pearce asked if non-members' hourly usage could be tracked. Chuck said he can break them out individually if they have their own talk groups. However, he cannot track mutual-aid users. Berg confirmed that per Governing Board action, non-members do not pay toward operating costs. Jeffries inquired about tracking push-to-talk usage from radios. Chuck said he would need the individual radios and that this would be a challenge. Chuck presented the standard pie chart for system usage in August, noting colored segments for the agencies.

5. Other Information Items

Tackabery said he was working on minor edits to the Feasibility Study and comparing current system operations and maintenance costs to estimated costs for the Next Gen System. They are also revisiting construction costs. He said given the feedback from Berg and Pearce to date on updating the AECOM Report at an estimated \$92,000, this may not be the best investment for MERA and he will not be pursuing this.

Tackabery is also proceeding with a re-review of Mt. Sutro coverage requested by Pearce and will make the information available. Pearce said revisiting Mt. Sutro/Twin Peaks could possibly cover everything in Southern Marin with one site. Regarding the Martha site status, environmental and development reports will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration on October 22. Finally, he reported that the draft Tomales site lease and road maintenance agreements will be distributed for review by Ortiz and Cassingham.

E. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

Cusimano adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m. in recognition and memory of September 11, 2001.

NEXT:

MERA Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 2013 – 3:30 p.m. -NFPD

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer

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WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG**