

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District
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DRAFT: 4/28/16

Executive Board

Minutes of March 9, 2016 Meeting

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on March 9, 2016 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:

County of Marin
Marin County Sheriff
Fire Services
Police Departments
Ross Valley Cities/Towns
Southern Marin Cities/Towns

Matthew Hymel
Robert Doyle
Richard Pearce
Todd Cusimano
Debra Stutsman
Jim McCann

Board Members Absent:

City of San Rafael
City of Novato
Special Districts

Chris Gray
Jim Berg
Tom Roach

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer
MERA Deputy Executive Officer/Next Gen System
MERA Operations Officer
DPW Communications Services Manager
County Communications Engineer
Recording Secretary

Maureen Cassingham
Dave Jeffries
Pat Echols
Shelly Nelson
Richard Chuck
Lauren Pallas

Guests:

Marin County Public Works Director
Motorola Solutions, Inc.

Raul Rojas
Rodney Hughes

CALL TO ORDER

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 separate action be taken on a specific item.

- 1) Minutes for January 13, 2016, Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Minutes for January 26, 2016, Special Joint Meeting – Coverage Analysis Workshop
- 3) Report No 37 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 4) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances
- 5) Summary of Cost Changes for Federal Engineering Contract (Jeffries)

Pearce requested Item 5 be removed for further discussion.

M/S/P Cusimano/Doyle to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-4 as presented.

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

Pearce said the cost changes in the Federal Engineering (FE) contract have come up at both the Governing and Executive Boards. He wanted to make sure that FE's work is not overlapping with the County and that work that was incorporated in the contract is what had been talked about. Jeffries added that, as we moved ahead with the vendor contract, detailed design negotiations should be monitored to reflect how changes come about and from which party. The FE changes reflected new items, needs that weren't envisioned and clarifications to the consultant that affected costs. Pearce said his concern was the FE contract dealt with smaller numbers while vendor contract numbers would be considerably larger with greater effects on Project cost.

M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve Consent Calendar Item 5 as presented.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1) Report and Direction from Governing Board Re: Next Gen Project Financing

Cassingham noted extensive work has been involved in the development of various financing options for the Next Gen Project. The Finance Committee on February 22 recommended to the Governing Board the Case A option set forth in Sperry Capital's analysis and proceeding with bond financing as soon as possible. Given the criticality of timing to capture low bond interest rates, the Governing Board on February 24 directed the preparation of bond documents to be presented to them on March 23. The Governing Board also concurred with the recommendation to issue \$30M in bonds now combined with parcel taxes collected to date through construction to fund the Next Gen Project cost of \$40M.

Cassingham referenced the draft financing schedule attached to her staff report. While the schedule is intense, several factors in MERA's favor will permit us to meet it. Those factors include our first year history of collecting parcel tax proceeds, the successful Measure A Validation action and the finalization of the financing team with today's selection of the Bond Trustee. She noted that current interest costs are 2.5%, including transaction costs.

Pearce added his congratulations to Hymel for pushing for bond issuance now after accelerated analyses by the Financial Advisors which supported his position. Cassingham said no action is required on the report as it is informational only.

2) Selection of Bond Trustee

Cassingham said selection of the Bond Trustee will complete the Bond Financing Team. She referenced the RFP attached to her staff report for these services. There were three responders. Sperry Capital has recommended US Bank as MERA's Trustee for its 2016 Bond issuance. She noted US Bank's fees are very competitive and consistent with what we are currently paying BNY Mellon and their references are stellar.

M/S/P Pearce/Cusimano to approve the selection of US Bank for Trustee/Paying Agent/Registrar Services for MERA's 2016 Special Tax Revenue Bonds for the Next Gen System Project.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

3) Request from Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) –
MERA Radios for MCOE and District Offices

Cassingham said the Governing Board directed on February 24 that this request be agendaized for Executive Board discussion and direction. MCOE's interest in using the

MERA System has been discussed several times over the years dating back to 1999. The latest request is for 400 radios, 20 for each of the Districts and 20 for the MCOE office. This request is based on the fact that their 800 MHz system is failing.

Cassingham said to better understand MCOE's request, the Executive Board is asked to approve a Subcommittee to meet with MCOE representatives and vet this request. She said it is unclear whether the request is to use the current System or Next Gen System or both. She added that the Subcommittee would need a technical and operational briefing to understand the effects of this request.

Hymel clarified that this would be a 3-member Subcommittee. Pearce, Doyle and Cusimano volunteered to serve. Pearce said this also dovetails into MERA's assessment of non-member users of the current System, their value-added, the possibility of them assisting with resources or costs. Doyle added that the Grand Jury originally recommended MERA fund the School's use of the System. He said he discussed with the Superintendent the proposed number of radios, which is a bit ambitious, noting the issue of System use without payment for the backbone. Pearce said under discussion is how we treat the mutual aid users of the System who serve the members. Hymel agreed that the MCOE request needs to be considered in the context of other non-member users. He added the MCOE request offers to pay for the radios which is different than past discussions. Doyle offered as an example the benefits to the Sheriff's Department in West Marin from NPS's and CHP's use of the System.

Hymel said he recalled past discussions of one radio per District. Jeffries added he thought the emphasis was on District to MCOE communications. Rojas suggested that the Subcommittee meet with the technical group first before meeting with MCOE. For example, there are insufficient talk groups so their use could be blocked when others are using. Pearce said letters of concurrence with all non-member users are being discussed which would memorialize usage, training, potential future charges and periodic renewals.

Hymel and Doyle noted the Humane Society's use of the System and that they provide a 24/7 service to the members. Cassingham said their radios were included in the original bond accordingly. Jeffries said any costs assessed the Humane Society would likely be reflected in increased costs to the members contracting for their services.

M/S/P Pearce/Stutsman to appoint a 3-member Subcommittee of Pearce, Doyle and Cusimano to meet with MCOE representatives to vet, with the help of technical staff, MCOE's request for MERA radios in context of other Non-Member System users.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

4) Report No 12 from Next Gen Project Committee (NGPOC) – (Jeffries)

Jeffries summarized his latest update on the Next Gen Project noting the successful Coverage Analysis Workshop in January which will contribute to the draft RFP. The draft was received by DPW on March 1 and was distributed to the Executive Board, Next Gen Project Oversight Committee (NGPOC), Ops Group and DPW and MERA staff on March 2. Deadline for comments is March 20 or 21. The comment list will be presented to the Oversight Committee on March 23 and forwarded to FE thereafter. The final RFPF will go to the Governing Board on April 27 and Board of Supervisors on May 3.

Echols added, proposals would be received by mid-July with a month plus thereafter for review. If appropriate, site visits would be scheduled. He said by end of summer, there would be a recommendation of the top vendor based on proposal ratings and references followed by negotiations into the fall. By the end of the calendar year, there would be an executed contract with the selected vendor.

Jeffries asked about using the same NGPOC subcommittee process for rating and recommending vendor proposals with staff participation as was used for the wireless consultant. Consensus was to use the same process possibly with different subcommittee members. Echols said the process would be presented in the staff report to the Governing Board on April 27.

5) Proposed Preliminary FY16-17 MERA Operating, New Project Financing and Refunding Revenue Bonds Budgets

Cassingham reported that the Finance Committee reviewed these budgets on February 22 and recommended Executive Board approval followed by immediate distribution to the members to assist in the preparation of their budgets. Final budgets will be presented to the Executive and Governing Boards on May 4 and May 11 respectively.

Cassingham said the Proposed Operating Budget for FY16-17 is \$1,888,142 which is a 4.2% increase over prior year. The Citizen Bank Note payment is the same as prior year as established by the Governing Board. The annual Debt Service is established by the Trustee and reflects a slight increase over prior year. The increase in Operating costs of \$77,000 is in the areas of Contract Services, Legal and Site Rentals (due to change in Bay Hill Site Lessors).

Hymel suggested adding FY16-17 to the page 1 comparisons of prior years' budgets. Cassingham confirmed the member payment schedules would be distributed to the members by the end of the week.

M/S/P Pearce/Doyle to approve the Preliminary FY16-17 Operating, New Project Financing and Refunding Revenue Bonds Budgets as presented.

AYES: All
NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried.

6) Update on 2016 Executive Board Appointments

Cassingham presented the informational update on the appointment process for Executive Board. She requested current Board members' assistance in facilitating reappointments or appointments from the entities they represent with the exception of Doyle. The next two-year term commences in September. Given some appointing entities may not have frequent or summer meetings, she is asking for these actions to be agendized sooner versus later so as not to disrupt meeting quorums and representation.

Cassingham added that Roach replaced the recently retired Bill Hogan as the Special District's representative and will fill out the remaining term. Hymel clarified that the current Executive Board members are being asked to do this with their appointing agencies.

7) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports (Echols)

1) FY15-16 System Analysis Projects Update

Echols summarized his informational update noting we are getting closer to completing negotiations with the property owners for the Tomales Site. Within the next 30 days, documents should be executed. DPW will return to MERA before commencing any final design or construction. DPW continues to monitor the Martha development proposal.

Echols said the Bay Hill Replacement Tower Project is complete. It came in under budget at \$32,162. All Site propane tanks have been repaired or replaced with the exception of the Barnabe site which is scheduled for April 2016. Generator replacement at Mt. Tiburon, Dollar Hill, Forbes Hill, Sonoma Mt. and Mt. Barnabe is scheduled for this Spring. Last year, the MERA Executive Board authorized a project for the City of San Rafael which would cost-share structural improvements to the Dollar Hill Tower to accommodate the loading added by the City's Traffic Signal Project and the Next Gen Project. DPW has been coordinating with the City which needs to complete their project this summer to accommodate SMART Train needs of downtown signals. MERA will require upgrades later in 2017.

2) MERA Mutual Aid and Communications Plan – Updated December 2015

Echols reported that the last update to the Plan was approved by the Executive Board on May 8, 2013. The Plan is required to be periodically reviewed by the Ops Group. The Group recommended the updated version before the Executive Board today on December

2, 2015. This version, if approved, will replace the current version posted on MERA's website.

Pearce asked if this should be posted on the internet. Jeffries clarified that this is a public document; however, the detailed training materials are password protected. Cusimano asked if there were many changes. Echols said, for example, call letters for talk groups were updated along with other minor updates.

M/S/P Cusimano/Doyle to approve the updated Mutual Aid and Communications Plan as presented.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

3) Update on KWMR Equipment at Mount Vision

Echols summarized KWMR's request to co-locate some additional equipment at MERA's Mt. Vision Site and needs MERA's approval to do so. KWMR became a Sublessee in 2008. They are proposing to add a 5' dish antenna which will allow them to access their equipment at the site via the internet installed by Tomales LAN. The installation will not allow commercial customer access. The Ops Group reviewed the request on January 6 and found it would not interfere with MERA operations and would enhance KWMR's capability to disseminate information to the community in a disaster. The Group unanimously recommended approval of the request.

Pearce asked about other community radio stations that might want to participate with MERA. Echols and Doyle said KWMR was the only one to their knowledge.

M/S/P Cusimano/Doyle to approve KWMR's request to co-locate additional equipment at MERA's Mt. Vision facility and direct staff to update their Sublease accordingly, if warranted.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

4) Other Information Items

Echols said the Ops Group met yesterday to do a high-level review of the RFP. He thanked Nelson for facilitating this to help the members focus on features and capabilities when they review it. 20 people attended. Jeffries has received 3 sets of comments to date. Echols said 20 was lower than the Group's average attendance which is disappointing, given all the efforts to increase participation.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Doyle reported his Department is still scheduled to go live with their new CAD this month, which affects everyone but San Rafael, Fairfax and County Fire.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham
Executive Officer and Secretary

NEXT: MERA Executive Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 4, 2016 – **3:30 p.m.** – MCC-CAO 315

AGENDA AND STAFF REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG