

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

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DRAFT: 5/24/16

Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee

Minutes of March 16, 2016, Regular Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herrerias at 3:44 p.m. at the Marin Civic Center CAO Conference Room 315, San Rafael, CA 94903. The Chair reordered the agenda items; however, the minutes are presented per the Noticed Agenda.

Committee Members Present:

District #1 Elizabeth Greenberg

District #2 Bill Levinson

District #5 Paul Herrerias

Committee Members Absent:

District #3 Chuck Reite

District #4 Larry Luckham

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer

Maureen Cassingham

MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project

Dave Jeffries

A. **Minutes from December 16, 2015 Citizens Oversight Committee Regular Meeting**

M/S/P Levinson/Greenberg to approve the minutes as presented.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

B. Update on Status of Next Gen System Project (Jeffries)

Jeffries presented his informational report noting the actions taken to advance the Project since the Committee's last meeting. The Lifecycle Recommendations and Coverage Analysis Workshop were critical components in the development of the RFP. How to extend the new System's useful life closer to the 20-year projection has been a major focus for MERA. The vendors will propose various options with attendant costs for extending System life.

Jeffries said there were 60 attendees at the Coverage Analyses Workshop. During the Workshop, Federal Engineering (FE) presented the current coverage maps and how coverage would be affected with the new 700 MHz System along with delivered audio quality. With higher audio quality levels, there were some areas with reduced coverage. However, most coverage remained the same. FE also presented maps with the addition of the four sites included in the Project Budget to show the impacts on coverage. The Corta Site, which had not been previously discussed, came up at the Workshop. It is located near the Marin and Sonoma County line and might be a good substitute for the Landfill Site and likely easier to develop in that it is not in proximity to any homes.

In response to Herrerias, Jeffries said we are also looking at two San Francisco sites, namely Sutro Tower and the Toll Plaza. MERA currently uses Sonoma Mt. and Bodega Bay as two of its sites. The new System will allow us to operate throughout the Bay Area by special mutual aid channels.

Levinson asked if MERA had been contacted by the County Office of Education. Jeffries said a letter from MCOE had been received and assigned to an Executive Board Subcommittee to meet with MCOE to explore their request for radios. 400 radios for MCOE and the 19 Districts are being requested. It remains unclear whether MCOE wants to use the current System or wait for Next Gen. Jeffries said MCOE current system is very old. He added that given the members outlay for MERA current System capital and operating costs, this may be a sticking point if MCOE does not agree to cost share. Next Gen capital costs will be paid for by the parcel tax; however, the members will still need to pay operating expenses.

Jeffries noted MERA is an emergency system not to be used for yard duty. During an event, police, fire, and public works users will put considerable demands on the system. He said it makes sense for the District Offices to communicate with MCOE. However, communications between the schools in each District to their District Offices is a more extensive configuration. Cassingham said the Subcommittee will have an operational/technical briefing on March 23, followed by a meeting with MCOE.

Jeffries said FE issued the draft RFP in early March, which is under review by MERA's Executive Board, Project Oversight Committee, Ops Working Group and DPW and MERA staff. Deadline for comments is March 20. Final comments will be presented to FE by the end of March. The final RFP draft will be presented to the Governing Board on April 27 and Board of Supervisors on May 3. Greenberg asked how many companies will be sent the RFP. Jeffries said the RFP will be posted on the County's website, consistent with legal posting requirements. He said there are 5-6 vendors qualified to respond to a project of this magnitude. Proposals will

be due by late July. From that date, the review process will extend into early October. Vendors will be interviewed. Technical responses will be reviewed separately from fees. A vendor will be selected and contracted by year's end.

Greenberg asked if there was a fixed format for the vendor responses. Jeffries said the format set forth in the RFP will provide for consistency of review as much as possible. For example, when a vendor is not on point or is unresponsive, they will be asked to provide other solutions or options. Herrerias asked if vendor selection by December 2016 is still doable with a Project completion date of October 2018. Jeffries said the schedule has been vetted by FE and staff, and confirmed as doable.

C. Report on Next Gen System Project Financing (Cassingham)

Cassingham said the Financing Team has been assembled with the selection of U S Bank as Trustee on March 9 by the Executive Board. The Team has been working diligently since February 29 on the bond documents authorized by the Governing Board on February 24. The financing strategy is a combination of pay as you go with parcel taxes collected to date through construction and issuance of \$30M in bonds to fund the \$40M Project cost.

Cassingham said given current historically low interest rates, MERA is expediting bond issuance to capture the present 2.5% interest rates, including costs of issuance. She added that this financing is very straightforward and secured by a first year history of Parcel Tax collections, a Validation Action by Marin Superior Court confirming the legality of Measure A and Marin's strong tax base and economy. She noted the proposed financing schedule attached to her staff report for further reference.

D. Report on Draft Measure A Special Parcel Tax Fiscal Year 2015-16 Annual Report

Cassingham reviewed the draft Annual Report format the Committee will be asked to act on subsequent to the end of the fiscal year. This is informational only and does not contain at this time the 2,000+ pages of individual parcel levies for the fiscal year. This Report will be prepared by NBS and MERA staff. In response to Greenberg, Cassingham said the Annual Tax Administration Service is \$14,000. In addition to the Annual Report, the Committee will review the Annual Independent Compliance Audit which will be performed by MERA's Auditor, Maher Accountancy.

Greenberg asked if the number of Low-Income Senior Exemptions are expected to level out. Cassingham said that is unknown at this point given the more extensive outreach being undertaken by MERA in Year Two of Measure A. In addition to Media Advisories and outreach through MERA members, senior organizations in the County are being contacted and provided FAQs and applications. Jeffries said these efforts should achieve nearly all of the likely applicants who must apply annually for the exemption. Cassingham noted that income eligibility is subject to change year-to-year based on HUD Household Income Guidelines.

Herrerias asked how much MERA was spending to get the word out. Jeffries said staff costs and copying were modest and most of the outreach materials content is easily updatable.

E. Other Information Items

None.

F. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

By consensus of the Committee, it was agreed future meetings will begin at 4 p.m.

G. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham
Executive Officer and Secretary

NEXT: Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2016 – 4 p.m.
Marin Civic Center