

**G.B. 9/27/17 Agenda Item A-1**

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945  
PHONE: (415) 878-2690 FAX: (415) 878-2660  
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

**GOVERNING BOARD**

**DRAFT: 9/20/17**

**Minutes of August 23, 2017 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Cusimano on August 23, 2017 at 3:30 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. Self-introductions followed.

**Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:**

Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano
City of Larkspur	Scott Shurtz
City of Mill Valley	Jacqueline Graf-Reis (Alternate)
City of Novato	Pam Drew
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of Anselmo	Doug Kelly
City of San Rafael	Bob Sinnott (Alternate)
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	John Rohrbacker
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick
Marinwood Community Services District	Tom Roach
Novato Fire Protection District	Steve Metcho, L.J. Silverman (Alternate)
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Chris Tubbs
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
Central Marin Police Authority	Michael Norton

**Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:**

City of Belvedere  
Town of Fairfax  
Town of Tiburon  
Marin Community College District  
Marin Transit  
Ross Valley Fire Department  
Tiburon Fire Protection District

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Deputy Executive Officer - Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Operations Officer	Pat Echols
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Villa

**Guests Present:**

City of Sausalito	Lt. Stacie Gregory
Federal Engineering Project Manager	Denis Marin
Public Member	Eric Vanderbilt

A. Consent Calendar

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

- 1) Minutes from June 28, 2017 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report No. 57 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Update on Non-Member MERA System User Letters of Agreement (LOAs)
- 4) Update on Measure A Parcel Tax Delinquent Utility Parcel Payments

*M/S/P Kelly/Roach to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-4 as presented.*

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

- 1) Report No. 30 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries summarized his report, first noting the successful August 10 Equipment Fair with over 80 attendees. Member radio inventories are under development, leading to our submission of the subscriber equipment order to Motorola. He noted that Fire and Law Committees are working on talk group templates, which is well underway. When finalized, formats for the other talk group templates for Public Works, Schools and other groups will follow. These details will affect the cutover plan.

Jeffries said we are working with Motorola on the technical details of the cutover plan for the transition period for parallel operation of the Gen 1 and Next Gen Systems over several months. Denis Marin noted we are working on the transcoder with Motorola to make this happen, hopefully at little to no cost to MERA. Jeffries added that getting the transcoder will greatly simplify the cutover process and save time.

Regarding frequencies, Jeffries said discussions are underway with Motorola regarding the use of 800 MHz frequencies versus 700 MHz. Moving to 800 MHz may provide advantages on certain technical issues. He said the revised Project schedule is expected in the next few weeks pending the outcome of some of the issues he has presented. Microwave pathways and sites are included with these pending issues. An updated schedule also drives financing and cashflow.

Jeffries said a blunt conversation with Motorola was conducted earlier this week about delivery dates and discounts that have shifted due to Motorola's schedule slippage. Delivery dates for radio and mountaintop equipment before year-ending were tied to Motorola's business model for sales. Motorola was asked to revisit delivery and discounts with their bosses.

Tyrell-Brown asked, given schedule slippage, if there would be adjustments to assure MERA would be given its discounts. Jeffries said his recommendation to Motorola will be that financial incentives were based on the schedule Motorola provided in the contract. Given the schedule slippage, MERA can live with the incentives adjusted forward accordingly. In response to Kelly, Jeffries said Motorola may not want to do this but, practically speaking, they will probably agree, given MERA's past experience of taking early delivery only to have equipment sit for years.

In response to whether there was a cost going from 700 MHz to 800 MHz repeaters, Jeffries said no equipment has been ordered, with Marin noting nominal cost difference. Echols noted subscriber equipment does not change when mountaintop equipment and antennas might be altered. Jeffries said the challenge Motorola ran into looking at the actual frequencies are the strict requirements of interfering with other users. These restrictions could affect our coverage maps. Certain 800 MHz channels may not have those restrictions. 800 versus 700 will have no effect on end users. This matter will be presented to the Project Oversight Committee once all the information is at hand, likely by mid-September.

Echols said he has requested Motorola provide in writing that 700 MHz will work given the reduction in the number of sites they proposed. The frequency coordination licensing issue has identified interference restrictions not previously known. The Wolfback Ridge site, due to its height and power needed to provide coverage, is bleeding outside the 5-kilometer limit. He asked what it would take to stay within the limits at 700 MHz, namely how many sites it would take to

achieve the coverage we need. We may need to retain existing sites like Mt. Tiburon, Forbes Hill and Mill Valley City Hall.

Jeffries said some of the existing towers will not need to be replaced, but we will need new towers at proposed sites. Each site has different requirements with some having no issues at all. Some have tree issues and dish height concerns. He said line of sight surveys are underway, which will provide more information. Motorola's sales team put their proposal together including mapping and computer analyses. The Motorola Project team is now detailing the preliminary mapping, which is identifying the real issues.

Cusimano asked about the timing of the schedule. Jeffries said the number of issues that must be resolved to create a credible schedule has first priority. For example, a number of site issues are in abeyance which prevent us from locking down a project description for the CEQA process, along with development of a meaningful schedule. In response to Gaffney, Jeffries said, optimistically, the CEQA process is 12 to 14 months once we have our documents. He added that Fire Station Alerting (FSA) will have its own schedule to coordinate, which will depend on our core schedule.

Jeffries said Motorola would like us to take delivery on the radios next month in return for a no-cost model upgrade. Gaffney confirmed that a \$500,000 discount for taking delivery in 2017 is only 3% of Project cost. Kelly added that Motorola wants the sale in a fiscal year, which could be 2018. In response to Cusimano, Jeffries said some of the pending issues can be addressed in the next 30 days, but others may take longer. Gaffney asked if the EIR consultant had been selected. Echols said WRA is the selected firm to prepare the CEQA documents, adding they are poised and ready to begin their work to the extent they can.

2) Other Information Items

None.

C. Public Hearing

1) Proposed Resolution Approving the Proposed FY17-18 Capital Project Budgets and Expenditures from:

Fund 70032 (New Project Financing)

Fund 70036 (Replacement

Fund 70038 (Next Gen Project)

Fund 70039 (2016 Bonds)

Cusimano introduced the Proposed Resolution and opened the Public Hearing. Cassingham presented the beginning FY17-18 balances for each Fund along with

the proposed expenditures from each. The New Project Financing Fund, which reflects the supplemental borrowing needed for the Gen 1 System, has an estimated beginning balance of \$186,000 with \$7,000 in proposed expenditures for financial, administrative and legal services. The Replacement Fund, with a beginning estimated balance of \$1,235,000, will be augmented by \$1,750,000 from the 2010 Bonds Surplus Fund for a total of \$2,985,000. Proposed expenditures of \$2,040,000 include financial and administrative services, equipment replacement, capital repairs and Next Gen System non-safety radios.

Cassingham noted the Next Gen Project Fund has a beginning balance of \$1,106,000, with proposed expenditures of \$345,100 for professional, financial/administrative, Trustee, Tax Administration, arbitrage, NFPD support, and website services. Also included are insurance, auditing and legal services. The 2016 Bonds Fund begins with a \$31M balance and estimated \$29,796,000 in expenses for the DPW Implementation Agreement, Conventional Channels, Federal Engineering Project Management, Motorola Contract, Motorola Fire Station Alerting Change Order and Site Acquisition/Construction. She said this Fund budget is subject to change based on the Project schedule, which may push some expenditures into FY18-19.

Gaffney commented that the Surety for the 2010 Bonds was acquired to free up the Surplus Fund to be used for non-safety radios because they cannot be acquired using Measure A Parcel Taxes. Cusimano called for public comments and, there being none, closed the Public Hearing.

*M/S/P Kelly/Gaffney to adopt Resolution No. 2017-07 Approving the Proposed FY17-18 Capital Project Budgets and Expenditures for Funds 70032, 70036, 70038 and 70039.*

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

D. Operations Reports – (Echols)

1) Report on Next Gen Project and Project Schedule

Echols said his report is in addition to Jeffries' Project Update and noted, since the Governing Board's last meeting the Board of Supervisors approved the FSA Change Order and Project Contingency. The kickoff meeting with Mach Alert for FSA was conducted yesterday and vendor tours of the fire stations followed. The County will be submitting broadband requirements for remote dispatch centers and fire stations relative to FSA.

Echols said Intergraph will be engaged to provide API support for Mach Alert FSA integration with CAD. County IST is providing support for the FSA networking infrastructure. The Equipment Fair was held on August 10. Vendor surveys of microwave paths are underway to identify any blockages – in particular, a survey of the microwave path from the Tomales Site to Sonoma Mountain to confirm it is an effective alternative to the OTA to Tomales path. A report on any proposed changes to microwave paths and backhaul design is due by early next week. This will have a significant effect on the Project schedule.

Echols noted the selection of WRA through an RFQ process. The County is currently negotiating a scope of work with them. They cannot commence work until there is a final design and a firm Project description as required for CEQA. They are trying to structure the contract for work to begin on biological surveys, cultural assessments and more on verified antenna sites to jumpstart some of the legwork.

Echols said Motorola will be submitting a no-cost change order for power system modifications at the new MERA Master Site at 1600 Los Gamos. It will be vetted through the Governing Board approved Change Order review process.

2) MERA System Operations Update – (Chuck)

Echols presented this report in Chuck's absence. Weekly and quarterly preventive maintenance tasks were completed. DPW staff has provided excellent support on the Next Gen Project. They have provided preventive maintenance on additional fire station alerting systems. Technicians repaired the alarm at Pt. Reyes and worked on Channel One interference at Stewart Point. The microwave receiver was replaced at Sonoma Mountain and almost 5,000 System events were addressed.

Echols noted the July usage statistics and 836+ hours of call time with only 5 seconds of busies. Year-to-date, there have been nearly 5,500 hours of call time with under 8 minutes of busy time.

3) Other Information Items

None.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

---

Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary