

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Novato Fire Protection District  
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**DRAFT: 1/4/18**

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Minutes of November 8, 2017 Regular Meeting**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on November 8, 2017 at 3:30 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

#### **Board Members Present:**

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Mike Norton

#### **Board Members Absent:**

City of Novato  
Ross Valley Cities/Towns  
Southern Marin Cities/Towns  
Special Districts

#### **Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Deputy Executive Officer - Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Operations Officer	Pat Echols
Communications Engineering Services Manager - DPW	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Villa

#### **Guests:**

City of Novato	Adam McGill
Maher Accountancy	John Maher
Marin County DPW Engineering Services Manager	Ernest Klock
Federal Engineering	Denis Marin

A. Closed Session

Public Employee Performance: Executive Officer Evaluation  
Pursuant to Government Code – Section 54947

Hymel, upon consultation with the Executive Board, determined no Closed Session was needed.

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 separate action be taken on a specific item.

- 1) Report from Executive Officer Work Plan Committee (EOWP)
  - a) 2017 Executive Officer Work Plan Update
  - b) Proposed 2018 Executive Officer Work Plan
  - c) Recap of Executive Officer 2017 Work Hours
- 2) 2017 Annual Progress Report on Authority Operations and Activities
- 3) Minutes from July 12, 2017 Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 4) FY16-17 Draft Audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report –  
Maher Accountancy
- 5) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Funds Balances
- 6) Report No. 60 on Strategic Plan Implementation

Hymel requested that Consent Calendar Items 1 and 4 be removed for further discussion.  
*M/S/P Gray/Pearce to approve the Consent Calendar Items 2, 3, 5, and 6 as presented.*

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

Regarding Item 1, Hymel noted that the Work Plan Committee found that the 2017 Plan Recap and 2018 Proposed Plan were consistent with past presentations and largely focused on the delivery of the Next Gen Project. The Committee is recommending a cost-of-living adjustment for the Executive Officer, effective January 1.

*M/S/P Gray/Doyle to approve the 2017 Executive Officer Work Plan Update, Proposed 2018 Executive Officer Work Plan and recommended Cost of Living adjustment effective January 1, 2018, as presented. Gray and Hymel expressed thanks for the Executive Officer's work.*

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

Hymel introduced Maher who presented the FY16-17 Draft Audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report. Maher said he met with the Finance Committee on November 3 and reviewed the documents in detail. In summary, he has issued a clean opinion. Cassingham and Hom have been very responsive with information. Adjustments were classification type adjustments in the presentation.

Maher summarized the Audit beginning with Page 3, Management's Discussion and Analysis, noting MERA's net position increased by \$2.6M, which is net of about \$2M in depreciation. Much of this improvement is due to Measure A Funds, which are restricted. Depreciation was accelerated based on the timing of the delivery of the Next Gen Project. Once depreciation is gone, the picture will be in a break-even position.

Maher reviewed Page 8, noting the \$3.9M net position which includes a \$2.8M deficit and \$6.7M in restricted funds. Back on Page 3, he said the budgeting omitted previously approved items like debt service and interest payments. As a technical matter, this difference is being reported. Page 4 is a balance sheet summary noting the depreciation deficit in 2017 of \$2.8M. Page 9 Statement of Revenues and Expenses reflect an accrual basis. Payments to Motorola are capital items and not treated as expense.

Maher said, from an operational standpoint, everything is steady. Page 10 are Cash Flows representing funds in and out. Page 18 presents where funds are invested and their purpose. \$40M reflects cash and cash equivalents. Page 22 presents the restricted portion of net assets. \$4.8M reflects Measure A Funds not expended. Debt service or capital outlay of \$1.9M, which is freed up by a Surety, is available for either of these uses. Page 23 presents outstanding commitments, including \$36M under contract and lease obligations. Maher noted the budget to actual schedules for each fund and the debt service schedules for the Bonds and Note.

*M/S/P Gray/Doyle to recommend MERA Governing Board acceptance of the FY16-17 Audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report as presented.*

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

C. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Report No. 33 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries noted schedule challenges due to dealing with 700 MHz design issues posed by the Regional Planning Committee (RPC). With extensive input from MERA and DPW staff, an application has been submitted to the RPC which

reflects a proposal we believe will work. The RPC meets tomorrow, but due to their quorum issues, no action will be taken until their December 14 meeting. MERA will be represented, but a greater contingent is planned to attend in December. Letters of support from the Sheriff and County Fire Chief have been submitted for the Next Gen Project at the November 9 RPC meeting. He said RPC's informal feedback to date has been positive for our Project with no significant tweaks required at this point.

Jeffries provided a schedule update which will continue to be a work in progress until customer design review is completed next year. Once we get through RPC approval, it can be firmed and updated again. Hymel asked the reasons for the extended timeline to 2021. Jeffries said beyond the core Project, there have been challenges with other technical issues like the cutover plan and microwave paths, before RPC issues arose. Motorola also underestimated the schedule for the CEQA process.

Jeffries noted design review was originally scheduled for completion this year, which is now pushed into 2018 due to the RPC process. Hymel asked about the 2 additional sites under discussion. Jeffries said the RPC application includes 4 additional sites, 2 of which are new and 2 are currently in use, which are Mt. Burdell and Mill Valley. Including all of them in the application, whether or not they are ultimately used, eliminates the need to go back to the RPC.

In response to Hymel, Jeffries said the additional sites preclude the start of CEQA. Hymel asked if there was an option to implement the core Project and go back to those sites later if the added sites delay the schedule. Echols said all the sites would be analyzed concurrently during the CEQA process. Jeffries said because we have an existing Project, we would be amending the current CEQA information. New sites would have to be analyzed as green sites. He said we don't need to complete customer design review, but we need to be further along to lay out the Project for the CEQA consultants.

Echols said, assuming RPC approval in December, we should be able to craft a Project description in sufficient detail by early next year, so CEQA can commence. Hymel said we then need Motorola's commitment to support the current System through 2021. Echols said we are awaiting their informal response to this request. They have been aware of this since before their Vice President appeared at the Governing Board meeting on September 27, 2017. He reiterated the need for Motorola to make this commitment and we are seeking their formal assurances at the November 29 meeting. Klock added that Applewhite, Motorola's Vice President, said there is no reason not to assure current System viability.

Jeffries said we will be asking Motorola at the November 29 Project Oversight Committee meeting to go over Contract coverage and existing coverage, for

mobiles and portables on the hip and in-building coverage. We have also asked them to cover fiscal issues including with additional sites, Motorola's responsibility in matching the Contract coverage in terms of equipment, along with the overall Project cost implications. This needs to be in writing. The other 2 fiscal issues relate to their multi-band upgrade and \$.5M subscriber equipment discount if we took delivery on December 31, 2017. Motorola is looking at extending the discount. The multi-band upgrade was tied to a September 30, 2017, delivery and will now be extended to a date to be determined.

Jeffries said the multi-band upgrade was presented as free for portables if we went to tri-band by 12/31/17 and mobile upgrades with a cost differential if delivered by New Years. Dual band would be covered to June 30, 2018. Jeffries informed them that the required approvals would not be possible by 12/31/17. Motorola's offer was predicated on use of these radios now, which would ease the transition process. He added that some agencies, like Novato, are needing to replace radios now, which adds another consideration.

Jeffries recommended that the timing of upgrades and discounts be tied to Project schedule milestones versus dates certain to preclude further negotiations. Hymel said the greater equipment discount cannot be achieved by year-ending. Jeffries said extending the discount to the end of 2018 still leaves radios sitting until 2021. In response to Hymel, Echols said these are 2 different discounts which have morphed and the tri-band is an additional offer. Hymel said these offers have to be considered in light of the delay caused by Motorola. He confirmed that DPW and MERA are reviewing Contract matters with County and MERA General Counsels.

Pearce expressed concerns over the calendar pushout and loss of momentum with our Ops Group and their thinking that this is not going to happen. Jeffries said the schedule will be revisited with Motorola after RPC approval along with clarification of the timeline required for CEQA. Jeffries noted the Finance Committee has been provided a Project update and extension of Project payment milestones and related cash flow impacts. Delayed payments will increase interest income.

2) Other Information Items

None.

D. Operations Reports – (Echols)

1) Report on MERA Antenna Site Security Enhancement Presentation

Echols summarized the presentation to the Ops Group in August from V5 Systems of Fremont, which provides tower security systems. Cassingham had

referred this company for further review and requested them to present their findings to the Executive Board. He noted current site security is primarily door alarms at our facilities, which are monitored 24/7 by on-call duty Techs. The Techs are paged when alarms occur. If they cannot confirm who has triggered them, local law enforcement is contacted to respond.

Echols said there are pilot video installations at three sites which are being tested. V5 is proposing video detection at all MERA sites with more enhanced capabilities. Options include 24/7 monitoring which is being done already by DPW based on triggered door alarms after gates and fencing might be breached. The V5 system would provide further protection for towers, microwave dishes and fuel tanks. Historically, we have not experienced any problems.

Echols said this was being presented to see if there was interest in getting more specific costs and more proposals. Adjustable video surveillance of all equipment would be an informational and protective enhancement along with identification of who is entering, especially if they are legitimate at shared sites. V5 suggested equipment costs of \$1,000 per site times 16 sites plus data storage systems versus a County server. V5 will work on wi-fi and cell technology, but existing microwave capacity should be sufficient for data transmission. He suggested \$20-\$25K in site equipment, not including replacement as needed, with minimal operating expense.

Doyle expressed interest in exploring this, including any ongoing operational costs. Gray concurred this is worthwhile in protecting critical infrastructure. Jeffries urged review of related microwave impacts. In response to Pearce, Echols said remote monitoring would be the same under DPW or this scenario, which is triggered by entry or motion and alerting staff to respond.

In response to Hymel, Echols said with the Board's concurrence, staff would seek proposals and quotes from firms to provide site security systems. Pearce asked if this might be funded by UASI or Homeland Security. Doyle said Marin is now part of a 4-County region, for which funding is diminished with each allocation. Funded projects tend to serve all 4 Counties. Echols said as part of Next Gen, Motorola would have to design racks to assure space for future security equipment. In response to Doyle, Echols said these companies tend to make their money from monitoring, storage, and upgraded system options.

2) MERA System Operations Update – (Chuck)

Chuck recited October monthly system maintenance and prevention activities, Next Gen Project calls and meetings, Federal Engineering support, Civic Center Channel 10 receiver replacement, microwave transmitter replacement at Big Rock, battery replacements at Mt. Tamalpais and a LOMI recording card replacement at Civic Center, which provides recording interface.

Chuck reported 805 hours of call time in October with 17 seconds of busies. System year-to-date was 7,849 airtime hours with 8 minutes of busies. This is well within System design specs.

3) Other Information Items

Gray noted this is Echols' last Executive Board meeting and thanked him on behalf of the Executive Board for his service and steady and helping hand to MERA. Echols said his last official day would be December 31, but Klock would begin his service on December 1. Pearce wished Echols all the best.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary