

**C.O.C. 6/20/18 Agenda Item A**  
**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

**DRAFT: 4/23/18**

**Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee**  
**Minutes of March 21, 2018 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herrerias at 4:02 p.m. on March 21, 2018 at the Marin Civic Center CAO Conference Room 315, San Rafael, California 94903.

**Committee Members Present:**

District #1	Elizabeth Greenberg
District #2	Bill Levinson
District #4	Larry Luckham
District #5	Paul Herrerias

**Committee Members Absent:**

District #3	Chuck Reite
-------------	-------------

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries

A. **Minutes of December 20, 2017 Citizens Oversight Committee Regular Meeting**

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

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

Levinson asked to go on the record that the minutes are too detailed. Luckham and Greenberg noted the audiences for the minutes are MERA Boards and Committees beyond this one and deferred to Cassingham in this presentation

B. Review of Funds 70038 and 70039-Next Gen Project Revenues and Expenditures –  
FY17/18: December 16, 2017 – March 7, 2018

Cassingham presented the Balance Sheet, P&L Summary and Detail for Funds 70038 and 70039 and revenues and expenditures that occurred since December 15, 2017, through March 7, 2018. She also provided hard copies of the invoices paid during this period for Committee review. In response to Herrerias' request, the summary pages for the Legal Services invoices were also provided for review without service descriptions. Luckham confirmed capital outlay for Fund 39 including Federal Engineering Consulting Services are being capitalized. Cassingham noted some contract services in support of the Project like Legal Services are not capitalized but can be paid for with Parcel Taxes.

Cassingham provided additional definitional information on the Bond Premium with handouts from the 2016 Official Bond Statement. The Bond Premium is referenced as a long-term liability on the Fund 70039 Balance Sheet and is a component of the competitive bond sale bidding process, along with the principle amount of the Bonds. She said the Premium is amortized over the life of the Bonds and is decreased as the Bonds reach maturity. In response to Herrerias, Cassingham confirmed Bond interest expense was about \$800,000 for 2018. Herrerias noted this is a full year's interest accrued twice a year. Cassingham said the Bond proceeds are invested with Nataxis at a competitively bid interest rate of 1.19%.

Levinson asked if the County had access to the Nataxis investment. Cassingham noted that MERA investments are not County-controlled and that such investments are independent of the County. Jeffries added MERA has its own investment policies and procedures as a stand-alone JPA.

Herrerias, noting no further questions about Measure A expenditures, stated the Committee has reviewed and accepted them as presented.

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

Jeffries reported the change in Federal Engineering's Project Manager from Denis Marin to David Mortimer. This position is key to the Project and is assigned full-time. The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) approval process has been completed and the FCC has issued MERA's frequency licenses. Microwave licensing is pending through a different process. Project schedule is still in draft from Motorola but reflects a 3- to 4-month time savings. More time savings may be achieved with radio order and installation timing.

Jeffries said staff is working with the Project Oversight Committee in reviewing options to install dual band radios before cutover, which could reduce the Project schedule by 8 months. He further described the first radio order for agencies with immediate radio replacement needs. Motorola has offered discounts for taking delivery of all radios this summer, which the Project Oversight Committee (POC) has pushed back on. The Gen I

System radio order was taken early but had to be warehoused due to CEQA land use issues and related litigation. As a result, the POC is reluctant to recommend the offer, noting the likelihood of future discounts offers from Motorola.

Jeffries said each additional month of soft costs is estimated at \$100,000. Under discussion is the acquisition of technology to support the cutover process and reduce future reprogramming operating costs. Each month saved also reduces support time for the current System useful life. He described the two technologies being reviewed as Over-the-Air programming and a Wi-Fi option, the latter of which could dramatically reduce programming time to just a few hours.

Levinson commented on the System transition vulnerabilities. The interest in accelerating the Project schedule through cutover technology might be problematic to a smooth transition. Jeffries said expediting the cutover would pose fewer operational issues. The dual band radios will work on both the current and Next Gen Systems. If the Wi-Fi process is used, dual band radios could be reprogrammed in one day. Levinson suggested transitioning a fewer number to see how it works. Jeffries said the cutover only occurs after testing. Greenberg added that speed of cutovers is expected today.

Greenberg asked about the CEQA schedule. Jeffries said the final Project Description is scheduled for April, based on where Motorola is with the design drawings. He also clarified this is not a new EIR, but a Supplemental to the existing Project, which affects the process timeline. The SEIR will include sites being re-purposed and will have old and new equipment, with old being removed after cutover. Some sites will be decommissioned, which may be in our favor, and some new sites will be added. A new site like Wolfback Ridge has existing equipment there which should be less problematic with CEQA.

Jeffries discussed the Muir Beach site where we will be located at the new Fire Station. There are microwave dishes at the existing water tank there, along with nearby neighbors. In response to Levinson, Jeffries said the Bolinas site will not be continued. Given all this, the CEQA process timeline is estimated at 14 months. This includes 3 public meetings along with an initial scoping period, draft EIR and final approval. MERA's Governing Board, as it is the lead agency, will certify the EIR. The environmental consultants contracted by the County on MERA's staff, have begun some initial work. MERA's General Counsel will inform staff and Motorola regarding the Project work they can continue with while CEQA is underway, like fleet mapping.

Herrerias asked about a Project flowchart for Committee review. Jeffries said he will share an updated Project schedule at the next Committee meeting, with the caveat that CEQA presents an unknown milestone. Greenberg asked about a critical path timeline. Jeffries said the site development part affects cutover timing. Tasks like Fire Station Alerting (FSA) can be done in parallel with system design review. Other tasks like volunteer paging and training can also be put into place. In response to Herrerias, Jeffries said the CEQA process can be launched with the Project Description, which should be

available next month.

Levinson asked about the siting of towers based on information from last Summer's fires. Jeffries said site locations are based on coverage needs. MERA's sites can also be affected by earthquakes, man-made events, Electro Magnetic Pulses (EMP) and more. Risks and resources require a balancing act. He said system design is based on the possibility of parts failure. Loss of mountaintop sites can be addressed with conventional channels. Also, VHF can be used on the fire side and these redundancies are trained on. Finally, microwave loops can still move data around if a site is lost.

Jeffries reported on upcoming Media Releases for the Measure A Low-Income Senior Exemption. Reapplication is required each year due to income and age eligibility. Application deadline is June 1. In response to Levinson, he confirmed property tax bills provide a MERA contact number. He concluded his report by summarizing the Project regular conference call and meeting schedules and topic-specific ad hoc meetings. In response to Levinson, Jeffries confirmed the next big project hurdle is CEQA, which can be unpredictable. Another concern is the continued Motorola support for the Legacy System throughout the Next Gen Project.

Herrerias asked if the early deployed new dual band radios were covered by the Project. Jeffries confirmed they were, even though issued now, and they will accept Next Gen programming. Tri-band would permit Fire VHF usage. In response to the request of Luckham and Greenberg, Jeffries will bring a new Motorola radio as an example to the next meeting. A brief discussion about radio battery life and recharging followed, with Levinson noting a WSJ article on greater, more powerful batteries currently under development.

In response to Herrerias, Jeffries confirmed the implementation delay in the construction of current System was due to a 2-year CEQA litigation. Regarding Next Gen schedule delays, Motorola did not factor in adequate time for the RPC and CEQA processes. Herrerias asked if Motorola could help pay for additional costs due to these delays. Jeffries responded that Motorola has offered in writing to pay for the equipment associated with the two new sites. He added we are seeking their written commitment to support the Legacy System through cutover and pick up the microwave hop cost at Sonoma Mountain.

Herrerias, with Committee Members' concurrence, accepted Jeffries' report.

D. Other Informational Items

Cassingham suggested Committee meeting frequency be reconsidered at the June meeting due to the reduction in Project expenditures during the 12- to 14-month CEQA process. She will present a resolution that will permit quarterly versus monthly regular meetings. Meeting frequency will be further discussed then.

E. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

---

Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary