

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: 1/14/16

GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of December 9, 2015 Regular Meeting

Call to Order and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order by President Pearce on December 9, 2015 at 3:32 p.m. at the Novato Fire Protection District's Administration Office, Heritage Conference Room, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. Self-introductions followed. Pearce welcomed Echols as MERA's new Operations Officer.

Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

Town of Corte Madera	Kenny Prete (Alternate)
Town of Fairfax	David Cron (Alternate)
City of Larkspur	Scott Shurtz
City of Mill Valley	Angel Bernut
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Debra Stutsman (Alternate)
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	John Rohrbacher (Alternate)
Bolinas Fire Protection District	Anita Tyrrell-Brown
Inverness Public Utility District	James Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Paul Smith, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Novato Fire Protection District	L. J. Silverman
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Todd Cusimano

Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:

City of Belvedere
City of Novato
City of San Rafael
Town of Tiburon
Marin Community College District
Marin Municipal Water District
Marinwood Community Services District
Ross Valley Fire Service
Southern Marin 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 Admin. Assistant – Next Gen Project	Alex Anderson
MERA Operations Officer	Pat Echols
Communications Services Mgr. (DPW)	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
Recording Secretary	Jennifer Schwarz

Guests Present:

Raul Rojas	County Public Works Director
Dan Hom	Novato Fire Protection District Finance Director
Rajit Jhaver	Federal Engineering
David Muniz	Federal Engineering
Bob Simmons	Federal Engineering
Steve Metcho	Novato Fire Protection District

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 a separate action be taken on a specific item.

1. Resolution of Commendation – Retired Director of Emergency Services Roger Sprehn
Town of Corte Madera Fire Department
MERA Governing Board Member
2. Resolution of Commendation – Outgoing Mayor and Councilmember Jeanne MacLeamy
City of Novato
MERA Governing Board Member
3. Minutes from August 26, 2015 Governing Board Regular Meeting
4. Proposed CY2016 Agreement for Management and Administrative Services with
Regional Government Services (RGS) for MERA Executive Officer and
Proposed 2016 Executive Officer Work Plan
5. 2015 Annual Progress Report on Authority Operations and Activities
6. MERA 2015 Auditor Communication with Governing Board and
FY14-15 Audited Financial Statements and Auditors’ Report – Maher Accountancy
7. Report No 33 on Strategic Plan Implementation
8. Report on Next Gen System Project Costs Replenishment
9. Update on Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report RE: Meraonline.org

Pearce noted requests to remove Items 4 and 6 for further discussion.

M/S/P Cusimano/Fox to approve Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 as presented.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
ABSTENTIONS: NONE
Motion carried.

Regarding Item 4, Cassingham expressed her great appreciation for all the hard work the Governing Board has done over the eight years she has been with MERA. She thanked the Board for increasing her compensated hours and cost of living adjustment. She also noted it has been a great opportunity working for MERA as we have gone from Maintenance to a Next Gen operation. Measure A was an incredible accomplishment for 911 communications in Marin County and it has been an honor to serve MERA.

Cassingham noted that Item 6 once again reflected the outstanding efforts of Hom. His level of expertise has been a gift for MERA's accounting and auditing needs. She expressed her deep appreciation for all he does for MERA ongoing. Pearce said his contributions continue to be affirmed by the Auditors.

M/S/P Hymel/Cusimano to approve Consent Calendar Items 4 and 6 as presented.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
ABSTENTIONS: NONE
Motion carried.

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1) Engagement of Bond and Disclosure Counsels and Bond Trustee for Future Bond Financing

Cassingham presented the staff report and recommendation from the Finance Committee and Executive Board to approve the engagement of Bond and Disclosure Counsels and Bond Trustee to prepare for the issuance of bonds. The intention is to have the Financing Team in place to advise the Governing Board during the financial planning period and be ready to issue bonds upon authorization.

With Governing Board approval today, Cassingham, Gaffney and Sperry Capital will solicit fee proposals from Bond and Disclosure Counsels, due on December 23. Fees for assisting with a construction line of credit with a bank and phased bond issuance will be reviewed and selection recommendations will be made thereafter. Gaffney added that MERA's current Bond Counsel, Nossaman LLP and Disclosure Counsel, Hawkins, Delafield and Wood were originally engaged through an RFP process. Fee proposals will be solicited from both firms and, if reasonable, we can proceed with them. Given their extensive prior work with MERA's various financings, continuity with the same advisors would be beneficial to the Next Gen Project. If fees become an issue, an RFP process will be undertaken.

Pearce said the intention is to assemble the Team as promptly as possible to be prepared to enter the market in a timely manner to minimize interest rate risk. He complimented the efforts to move all this forward.

M/S/P Hymel/Gaffney to approve the engagement of Bond and Disclosure Counsels and Bond Trustee to prepare for the issuance of bonds for the Next Gen Project.

AYES: ALL

NAYS: NONE

ABSTENTIONS: NONE

Motion carried.

2) Report on Measure A Parcel Tax Administration

Cassingham presented her information report on the first year experience with implementing the Measure A Parcel Tax. She said once we are past the December 10 deadline for payment of the first installment of the tax, debriefing with NBS and NFPD staff will be scheduled to determine what else can be done to improve communications with taxpayers relative to the administration of the Tax Ordinance. The staff report identifies several issues that arose with the application of the tax to various types of properties including requests for other exemptions.

Ortiz provided background on the tax in that it is the County's tax implemented on behalf of MERA for the Next Gen System. There were complaints regarding the application of the tax on floating homes and mobile homes on commercial property. The Ordinance defines parcels as real property and floating homes have not been treated by the County as real property. We have worked with County Counsel to analyze the classification of these homes relative to the application of the ad valorem tax. With respect to mobile homes, MERA did not intend to tax them twice; however, the leased land on which the mobile homes sit is being taxed as a commercial use versus multi-family residential. After reviewing these types of properties, County Counsel has decided to impose the tax as it has in the past. The County will not impose the Measure A tax on floating homes or mobile homes on commercial property. Gaffney confirmed with Cassingham that the cost of the determination is under \$20,000 per year.

Cassingham noted that the only exemption in the Measure A Ordinance is for low-income seniors. MERA received 118 applications by the June 1 deadline of which 117 were approved; 11 were denied due to late filing. She noted this is an annual application process which allows seniors whose income may change to apply each year. Staff will review again how to better reach out to seniors. For the FY15-16 tax year, Jeffries and Anderson issued five media advisories and worked with member agencies to notify residents of the exemption.

Cassingham said of the 90,400 tax bills issued, over 200 calls and contacts were received, mostly seeking information about the tax or exemption from it. She thanked NFPD Staff members Schwarz and Pallas for their professionalism in handling calls and walk-ins.

She said all parcels receive police and fire services without regard to their unique characteristics. Application of the tax has been handled fairly and according to the Ordinance. MERA has, based on the County's recent approval of combining APNs, recognized those combined parcels effective with the FY16-17 tax bills.

Pearce applauded Cassingham, Ortiz, NBS and especially NFPD staff for their support in responding to these inquiries, no matter how challenging. He asked if anyone from the public wished to comment. There were no comments.

M/S/P Smith/Gaffney to receive and file the Report on Measure A Parcel Tax Administration as presented.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
ABSTENTIONS: NONE
Motion carried.

3) Report on Coverage Analyses Workshop (Jeffries)

Jeffries said the Report on the January 26 Workshop is a plea to all the members to send representatives, at least one of whom is familiar with day-to-day MERA radio operations and local coverage issues. Input will drive the vendor RFP process. The tight Project timeline will not permit doubling back for input. The Project Oversight Committee will meet on January 27 to receive the results of the Workshop. He asked for RSVPs to Anderson, noting the meeting location would be determined based on the number attending but likely a Civic Center venue.

Nelson added that the Ops Group will be an integral part of the vendor RFP review process. She urged great participation by each member's Ops staff in the Ops meetings. There will be many issues to address with Federal Engineering and with vendor review, and every member's input from the various disciplines is critical throughout the process. Ops meetings are the first Wednesdays of the month at the EOF at 9:30 a.m. Please contact her with names or requests for more information. Jeffries added Ops participation will be educational about Next Gen and representatives will become their agency's subject matter experts for the new System.

Pearce echoed the importance of the Coverage Analysis Workshop on evaluating existing sites as well as new ones, especially on what each can or can't offer and where work-arounds may be necessary.

M/S/P Van Doren/Fox to receive and file the Report on Coverage Analysis Workshop as presented and discussed.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
ABSTENTIONS: NONE
Motion carried.

4) Report No. 8 from Next Gen Project Oversight Committee (NGPOC) (Jeffries)

Jeffries updated his report, noting Federal Engineering (FE) and DPW have completed their site visits of tower and cell sites and begun review of the additional sites. Simmons and Jhaver added that new site evaluation will include value-added pros as well as development challenges. Jhaver said, while coverage is critical to first responders, environmental challenges and feasibility will be

a parallel assessment for feasibility. FE hopes all 7 sites will be feasible, but there may be trade-offs identified at the Workshop that may arise as sites are added or deleted.

Jeffries clarified that some time ago, these new sites were reviewed and ranked based on CAD data. 4 were included in the Project and the other 3 remain on the list if funding is available or if others are not feasible. On December 10, an FCC Frequency Review will be undertaken by FE and DPW staff. He noted the final draft of the High Level User and System Requirements Review attached to the staff report. He distributed copies of the Land Mobile Radio Network Project Communications Plan, including a draft monthly report format. Information from the monthly reports will be incorporated into the Next Gen Project Newsletter, the first of which will be issued in December/January.

Jeffries referenced the Project milestones timeline and all the tasks and subtasks to help track the progress of the Project. It shows completion of the Project in October 2018. Dates will be revisited when the System vendor comes aboard. Lifecycle Recommendations will be issued soon by FE, which will address ways for extending System useful life. This issue came up frequently during our member outreach efforts. All these pieces will be incorporated in the vendor RFP.

Nelson added that the Ops Group will be reviewing the High Level Users Document, Communications Plan and Lifecycle Recommendations on January 6 and asked Governing Board members to share these documents with their Ops representatives ahead of 1/6/16.. Jeffries and Nelson offered to assist those representatives in getting up to speed.

M/S/P Stutsman/Cusimano to receive and file Report No 8 from Next Gen Project Oversight Committee as presented.

AYES: ALL
NAYS: NONE
ABSTENTIONS: NONE
Motion carried.

5) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Report (Echols)

1) Status/Work Statistics Reports (Chuck)

Chuck presented MERA System Usage Charts for September, October and November 2015. System usage has been consistent. The number of transmissions in September were affected by a System upgrade. The 3 top users are consistently the same.

2) Other Information Items

Echols said an environmental review of all 7 new sites will be conducted before the Coverage Workshop. He will be issuing an RFP for the work. The review will occur in two phases, the first a cursory initial CEQA checklist screening of the sites followed by rigorous analyses. Cusimano

asked how quickly we can move forward after the Workshop to address site viability. Jhaver said the recommended sites along with backups will go into the draft vendor RFP for more extensive review. Vendors can begin System construction around candidate sites and their coverages. The draft vendor RFPF will be delivered the first week in March. The Workshop should result in the “aha” findings we are seeking and narrow down the candidate site list for the RFP. Echols said there is a Governing Board meeting on January 27, preceded by a meeting wherein a Coverage Analysis Update will be presented. He said there could be subsequent “ahas” presented.

In response to Smith, Jhaver said FE’s Senior Consultant will prepare maps coming out of the Workshop in a PDF presentation disseminated before the January 27 meeting. Cusimano said this reinforces the huge importance of attending the Workshop, NGPOC and Governing Board meetings. Pearce said review of the use of current sites and other sites where we can partner are likewise very important options for Next Gen.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham
Executive Officer and Secretary

NEXT: **MERA GOVERNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday January 27, 2016 3:30pm NFPD