

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

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**DRAFT: 6/18/14**

## **PROJECT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2014**

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Sinnott at 2:09 p.m. on May 28, 2014 in Marin Civic Center, CAO Room 315, San Rafael, CA.

#### Committee Members Present:

City of Larkspur	Robert Sinnott
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Novato Fire Protection District	Gerald McCarthy
City of Sausalito	Jennifer Tejada
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney

#### Committee Members Absent:

Central Marin Police Authority	Todd Cusimano
City of San Rafael	Diana Bishop
County Fire	Mark Brown
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle

#### Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Special Project Manager	Dave Jeffries
MERA Special Project Admin. Assistant	Alex Anderson
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery

#### Guests Present:

Indie Politics/Price Campaign Solutions	Dan Mullen
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Ron Naso

B. Approval of Project Oversight Committee Minutes – Meeting of March 7, 2014

*M/S/P Pearce/Tejada to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2013 meeting as presented.*

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

C. MERA Public Education Plan (PEP) Update and PEP Subcommittee Actions (Mullen)

- Cable TV Ads
- Direct Mail
- Digital Media
- PEP Timeline

Mullen introduced the updated Public Education Plan (PEP). He noted that most of the plan had not changed since presented to the Project Oversight Committee at the last meeting. He said that the production of the media spots, including television ads, had begun. He said that the media outreach would start just after the June 3 elections. Television spots would start around June 9 for six weeks, and digital advertising would begin around the same time. He concluded that the media outreach would finish by the July 22 Board of Supervisor meeting.

Pearce suggested producing a white paper to give to any MERA associates that may need to speak to the media after a police or fire event, so that they may have information on MERA system to provide to media. Mullen responded that the preparation of this document is a component of the PEP plan, and will be provided to both rank and file and management.

Sinnott suggested that the five points illustrating the need for replacement in the MERA Next Gen presentation would be good talking points for all management and rank and file to be familiar with for outreach purposes.

Cassingham noted that it was necessary for the MERA Executive Board to meet before the MERA Governing Board to review the draft resolution, ballot measure and ordinance. She said she will be looking to schedule the MERA Executive Board meeting before the next MERA Governing Board.

Gaffney asked if there will be any newspaper ads included with PEP plan. Mullen responded that newspaper ads are notoriously ineffective.

Cassingham asked about the effectiveness of radio ads. Mullen responded that online radio ads, including sites like Pandora, can be effective and will be included as part of the media outreach.

Mullen asked for clarification as to who would be included on the PEP sign off committee. Cassingham said that the sign off committee would include Pearce, Hymel, Cusimano, Ortiz, Cassingham, Tackabery, Jeffries, Anderson, Price and Mullen. Mullen said that there would be a television ad ready for review and signoff as soon as early next week.

Hymel suggested that, given the need for quick turnaround on signoff, a clear deadline should be included for any comments on PEP signoff materials. He added that if no comments were received by the deadline, this would constitute consent. All agreed, with Cassingham noting that General Counsel Ortiz would need to signoff on all materials.

Mullen asked for feedback on website domain name. He suggested MERAmattersfor911.com as a possibility. Tackabery noted that MERA is not included in the ballot language. Hymel asked if it was necessary to promote MERA, or if we could just use Marin County 911 communications system. He suggested using MarinCounty911.org for the website domain name.

Mullen said he was concerned about public's awareness of MERA, and that part of the goal of the Public Education Program was to raise the public awareness of the MERA system and its importance to the public. Mullen asked if all reference to MERA should be removed from the television ads.

Mullen read the draft language for the first television spot. Hymel suggested adding that every emergency responder in Marin County uses the MERA system to the television ad, so that people connect MERA to Marin County 911 system.

Sinnott asked if the consensus of the group was to use MarinCounty911.org. The group agreed that MarinCounty911.org would be better to use for the website domain name.

D. Draft Resolution Requesting County to Submit Parcel Tax to Voters and Proposed Text of Parcel Tax Ordinance

Cassingham introduced the document and noted that it was initiated and has been under development by MERA General Counsel Trisha Ortiz, with input from Tackabery and his Department of Public Works team, as well as Deputy County Counsel Ed Kiernan and Tim Suffert who aided in the NBS parcel tax study. She noted that the draft resolution includes the proposed ballot language and the ordinance that would go to the voters for consideration if placed on the ballot. Cassingham introduced Ortiz to review the document.

Ortiz explained that the document consisted of the resolution requesting the County to place the parcel tax measure on the ballot in November. She noted that the resolution was structured based on what it would look like if MERA was placing the measure on the ballot. She said that, because MERA does not have the authority to place the parcel tax measure on the ballot, one major distinction was that the resolution requests the County to

place the measure on the ballot. This process is important because it gives MERA the opportunity to approve the ballot language.

Ortiz said that the resolution includes an ordinance with the statutorily required elements for the County to levy and collect the parcel tax. She said the resolution also included language for exemptions for seniors and how expenditure reports would be reviewed.

Ortiz noted that the proposed ballot language refers to medical first responders. She said that because MERA is using a statute that allows the county to only spend funds on police and fire services, it may be inappropriate to state in the ballot language that the parcel tax will help maintain reliable communications among police, fire, and medical first responders.

Hymel said there was both a legal and political implication when considering including medical first responders in the ballot language. Hymel said that he understood that it was MERA's intention to support fire services with the parcel tax, and that paramedic services are a part of that service.

Sinnott suggested changing "medical" to "paramedic" in ballot language to make it more clear who the parcel tax will be supporting. Ortiz said she did not believe that it would be a problem to include paramedic in the ballot language, given the language does not explicitly state that funds will be used to pay for these services.

Berg suggested changing "modernize" to "replace" in the ballot language. Pearce suggested changing "maintain" to "ensure" in the ballot language. All agreed to these changes in ballot language.

Cassingham noted that there will need to be an agreement between MERA and the County as to how funds will be transferred. Ortiz said that this agreement can be adopted after the election.

Gaffney suggested adding MERA, and every other member agency to resolution language. Ortiz said it may be better to list every agency individually that supported the resolution. All agreed to include each MERA agency that supported the resolution in the resolution language.

Gaffney asked about language in the resolution referring to MERA's limited taxing authority. Ortiz said that, while MERA does not have the authority to levy a parcel tax, she is not sure if the MERA member agencies have the authority to impose different types of taxes. Hymel suggested changing language in resolution to state that MERA does not have the authority to levy a parcel tax. All agreed with this change to the resolution language.

Tackabery suggested changing the title of the ordinance to Marin County Emergency Communications and 911 Response Measure, so that it appeared as the title of the exhibit in the ballot. All agreed with this change to the ordinance title.

Tackabery suggested including senior exemptions as a stand alone paragraph in the exhibit so that it stood out more. Ortiz said she could add Senior Exemptions to the title of the Exemptions paragraph so that it was more pronounced. She also said she could add the word sunset to the Term of Provisions title. All agreed with these changes to the ballot exhibit.

Mullen inquired when the document becomes final. Cassingham responded that the document will be final once approved by the MERA Governing Board.

E. Member Outreach Update – Jeffries, Price and Mullen

- 1) Report on Round Two Presentations – Jeffries
- 2) POC, Police/Fire Chiefs and Rank and File Briefing Information
  - Attendance at County Board of Supervisors Meeting – July 22
- 3) Report on MERA Newsletters – Jeffries
- 4) Update on Potentially Competing Ballot Measures (Price and Mullen)
- 5) Discussion of Tentative Master Calendar Before November 2014 Election

Jeffries gave a report on the progress of the Round Two presentations. He noted that Inverness Public Utility District voted that morning to support the resolution to ask the Board of Supervisor to place the parcel tax measure on the ballot. He said there were eight presentations remaining, and so far all sixteen agencies that had seen the presentation had voted to support the resolution.

Jeffries introduced the Police/Fire Chiefs and Rank and File briefing document prepared by MERA staff. He noted that the FCC had suspended the narrow banding requirement, thus negating the out of compliance requirement that was one of the five main reasons for the need for the replacement system. He said that Tackabery was continuing to research the change in the narrow banding requirement. He also noted that the FCC has not changed the frequency give back date of 2021. Jeffries said he was looking for feedback on the document and asked for any changes by the end of the week.

Jeffries discussed attendance at County Board of Supervisors meeting scheduled for July 22. Naso suggested MERA members should come out in uniform. Hymel noted that not everyone needed to speak at the meeting, but that it was important to have a strong presence in the audience at the meeting. Jeffries said that MERA staff would send out an email to police and fire chiefs to encourage attendance at the meeting. Sinnott suggested having the presidents of both police and fire associations speak at the meeting.

Gaffney suggested removing the language referring to budget impact on member agencies if the parcel tax fails. All agreed to remove language from briefing document.

Jeffries introduced the report on MERA newsletters. He shared the open and click rates of the newsletters, and noted that interest in the newsletter has declined since the first newsletter was sent out.

Mullen discussed potentially competing ballot measures. Hymel said that there will probably be a Marin Kids initiative on the ballot, and that the group is looking at a sales tax and will be coming to the Board of Supervisors in July to discuss. He said that the board does not see the sales tax for kids as competing with MERA's parcel tax measure.

Cassingham noted three changes to the Tentative Master Calendar Before November 2014 Election. One change was completion of Round Two presentations to June 23, 2014. Another change was the notice of public hearing on the resolution to levy a parcel tax that has moved to July 1, 2014 predicated on the July 22, 2014 county public hearing and adoption of the resolution. Final change was MERA Governing Board meeting to discuss resolution on July 9, 2014. Cassingham noted that the calendar was a work in progress and asked that anyone provide any feedback or other details as needed.

E. Other Information Items

None.

F. Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting is to be determined.

G. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:



Alex Anderson,  
MERA Special Project Administrative Assistant