

MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Novato Fire Protection District
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DRAFT: 8/14/14

Executive Board

Minutes of July 14, 2014 Rescheduled Meeting

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on July 14, 2014, at 2:33 p.m. in the Heritage Conference Room, Novato Fire Protection District Administration Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945.

Board Members Present:

County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
Marin County Sheriff	Robert Doyle
City of Novato	Jim Berg
Fire Services	Richard Pearce
Police Departments	Todd Cusimano
Ross Valley Cities/Towns	Debra Stutsman
Southern Marin Cities/Towns	Jim McCann

Board Members Absent:

City of San Rafael	Chris Gray
Special Districts	Bill Hogan

Staff Present:

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA Operations Officer	Craig Tackabery
MERA Special Project Manager	Dave Jeffries
DPW Communications Services Manager	Shelly Nelson
County Communications Engineer	Richard Chuck
MERA Special Project Admin Asst	Alex Anderson
Recording Secretary	Gretchen Felciano

Guests Present:

County Director of Public Works	Raul Rojas
Indie Politics	Dan Mullen
Price Campaign Solutions	Terry Price

A. 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 a separate action be taken on a specific item.

- 1) Minutes from May 7, 2014, Executive Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report #20 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Report on Bay Hill Site Lease Cost Reimbursement Project
- 4) MERA FY13-14 Budgets – Line Item Adjustments (**distributed at Meeting**)
- 5) Bi-monthly Reserve Funds Update (**distributed at Meeting**)

Cassingham distributed the replacement report for Item A-3.

M/S/P Cusimano Stutsman to approve Consent Calendar Items 1-3 as presented.

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

Cassingham distributed Items 4 and 5 as noted on the Agenda. She briefly summarized both, noting Item 4 is an action item requiring approval of FY13-14 certain line item adjustments. Minor Operating Budget adjustments for Contract, Auditing and Legal Services do not affect the Budget total.

The previously approved adjustments for Strategic Plan, Legal Services, Feasibility Study Revisions and Outreach and Parcel Tax Study balance forward do not affect the Fund Budget total. Executive Board approval of these adjustments is required for audit purposes. Item 5 is the regular update of Reserve Funds Balances.

M/S/P Doyle/Berg to approve Consent Calendar Items 4 and 5 as presented.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report (Cassingham)

1. Member Outreach Update - Jeffries

Jeffries said MERA has 24 Resolutions of Support for the Gen II System and proposed parcel tax following Round Two presentations. Hymel asked for the number of Council or Board members supporting the Resolution. Jeffries said there were 112 votes in favor, 5 nos and 1 abstention. Stutsman clarified that some elected officials voted twice because they serve on more than one Board.

In response to Pearce, there were 24 publicly noticed meetings in Round One and 24 in Round Two. Cassingham said since the strategic planning effort was launched in December 2009, there has been an estimated 127 MERA public to-date wherein strategic planning and implementation were discussed and/or acted on. She noted the centerpiece of the Strategic Plan has been System Replacement.

- Public Education Plan (PEP) – Mullen and Price

Mullen provided an update on the Public Education Plan stating it was completed. TV and Digital Spots were done as of July 13 and the mailer went out July 10 - 11. He noted emails and calls in response to the Spots. He cited the Second Poll at the end of January 2014, with findings after positive arguments at 64%, falling short of the 2/3 needed for passage. Strongest arguments were the need for reliable communications in a disaster and improvements in response times with a new system. Criticisms came from the last bonds still not paid off and recent other tax measures on ballots. The Pollster advised that passage of the parcel tax has been increased with a reduction in the proposed tax and other changes like the Citizens Oversight Committee and Low-Income Senior Exemption but not to the required 2/3 vote. He recommended an active public education program focusing on the need for communications in a disaster and reliable and improved emergency communications going forward. Without public education, which was subsequently approved by the Executive and Governing Boards, the Pollster advised the measure would not pass.

With public education, MERA's profile has been significantly increased. The majority of voters now know what MERA is and what it does. If we were to poll now, our numbers would significantly improve based on greater awareness of MERA. We are now positioned to move forward successfully.

Jeffries provided an update on emails and calls to-date in response to MERA's public education efforts. He has responded to inaccuracies, provided clarification and additional information about MERA and the Next Gen System, along with an offer to provide community presentations. He added that he has responded to assertions MERA has not publicly vetted the Next Gen Project by referencing the 48 public presentations to the MERA members throughout Marin. There was some discussion about the information and inaccuracies in editorials and news articles to-date and opportunities to go back to clarify with Editorial Boards and reporters as needed.

Hymel said more background will be necessary on the use of public funds for public education along with the necessity of the Project and how it has been vetted publicly for some years now. He suggested a public safety response to this, possibly from Pearce on MERA's behalf. We should clarify, why if the Project is so important, that it isn't being undertaken within Member budgets. Hymel said we should highlight the importance of all 25 Public Safety members staying together for cost effectiveness and efficiency. All the members have experienced significant budget cuts and are not in the position to cut deeper to provide for construction of the 911 replacement system. MERA Agencies will continue to support system operating costs, including the increase expected with the Next Gen System, with its additional sites.

Mullen noted press acknowledgement of public agencies funding crises while expecting those agencies to set aside replacement funds. Hymel said someone needs to speak to this on MERA's behalf. Stutsman commented on local deferred maintenance needs in general, which is why agencies cannot afford to build the Next Gen System; Hymel said it would be good to have a City Manager's voice to speak to this before the Board of Supervisors July 22 meeting.

Doyle suggested, in addition to Pearce and a City Manager representative, Presidents of the Police and Fire Associations, Bishop and Gray respectively, should also address the BOS on July 22. Hymel said that this should be presented as a measure from 24 MERA members, not from the County, for the Board to act on. Mullen added that members bearing the capital costs of the Next Gen System may force them to cut core services, which addresses the idea that funds do exist for this Project, but members aren't using them. This needs to be corrected. Pearce disagreed with this approach and supported a purely factual response based on all the information we have developed to date.

Cusimano said there is agreement on Pearce as MERA's spokesperson and asked about the structure of the presentation to the BOS and who the speakers will be and whether there would be any competing measures. Hymel asked that this be discussed with the next agenda item.

2. Proposed Resolution of the Governing Board of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority Requesting the County of Marin to Submit a Measure Authorizing the County to Levy a Special Parcel Tax to the County's Voters At the Election to Be held on November 4, 2014.

Cassingham summarized her staff report and the earlier action by the Executive Board to recommend the Resolution for Governing Board adoption. She said the Governing and Executive Boards, as fiduciaries of the County public safety emergency communications system, began work on the MERA Strategic Plan in December 2009, the centerpiece of which was system replacement before the end of its useful life. During an estimated 127 public meetings wherein strategic planning and system replacement were discussed and approved, MERA Members have expended great time, effort and resources to advance the Next Gen System Project. As part of this, MERA and the County entered into an

MOU in support of the Next Gen System in early 2014. Since then, MERA's 25 members have received presentations on the Project resulting in 24 Resolutions of Support for it, along with a parcel tax to construct it.

The proposed Resolution includes ballot measure language and a Tax Ordinance to be considered by voters. Subsequent to measure passage, MERA would enter into a post-election agreement with the County relative to the transfer of tax proceeds to the Authority along with assumption of annual tax administration responsibilities. Upon Governing Board adoption, the Resolution will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on July 22.

M/S/P Pearce/Berg, based on the Resolutions of the MERA Member agencies, recommend Governing Board adoption of the Proposed Resolution of the Governing Board of the Marin Emergency Radio Authority Requesting the County of Marin to Submit a Measure Authorizing the County to Levy a Special Parcel Tax to the County's Voters at the Election to be held on November 4, 2014.

AYES: All

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion carried.

Cassingham reviewed the draft presentation outline to the BOS. Tackabery's comprehensive staff report will go first, followed by questions, remarks by President Pearce on MERA's behalf, remarks by the Presidents of the Police and Fire Chiefs Associations or their representatives and representation of as many MERA members as possible in the audience. She and Jeffries would attend to answer questions as needed. MERA General Counsel would also be present. The draft outline reflects input from BOS President Sears and Supervisor Kinsey for keeping to 10 minutes without any PowerPoint or video. Hymel said Kinsey has subsequently asked for a representative of the City Managers to speak on why member agencies need the parcel tax to fund the Project versus their own budgets, which could affect other community services given so many years of cuts. He invited McCann or Stutsman to do this on MMA's behalf. He further noted member agencies will bear the increased operating costs of the Next Gen System, which should be addressed by the MMA. Stutsman stressed the importance of member agency attendance in support of the Project. Jeffries offered to provide each member's budget impacts without a parcel tax. For example, the impact on the County would be an estimated \$26M over 20 years, which would divert resources from other services and addressing liabilities. Stutsman said areas where members are just now making progress, like infrastructure, buildings and parks, could be affected since staffing is now at or below the minimum, including police and fire.

McCann agreed to attend. He said it comes down to the question of choices. Hymel said for public safety purposes, it is cost effective and efficient to keep the members together in the System. The parcel tax fills the capital need while the members provide for the operational need of the Next Gen System.

Price added that we need to stress why we can't put the Project off. Hymel said this is most important given alternative ballot measures. Jeffries said San Rafael schools have put off their measure given MERA's measure. Hymel mentioned the Marin Kids Initiative that has come to the Board for a ¼¢ sales tax. This and MERA's request, are two different revenue streams for two non-competing projects. Marin Kids recent polling found it would be better if only one measure was on the November ballot and that theirs should be the one. The BOS is aware of the importance of MERA's Project and how long it took to get to this point with 24 Boards and Councils' support. He said Marin Kids will come to the BOS on July 29 seeking support for their sales tax. He said both measures are close to passage and each is seeking a way to assure success. Mullen said the Marin Kids poll was conducted before MERA's Public Education efforts, so this needs to be considered.

Stutsman said many cities have newsletters and it would help to share with them MERA's talking points about the Project. Jeffries said talking points are under development and we have a community presentation nearly ready. Pearce said all this needs to continue to be educational. Mullen said, based on all our efforts to-date, people are realizing the urgency and are now seeking more on the financing, so the talking points are evolving. He noted the MERA Newsletters are being continuously informative. Hymel said it is important to highlight that members will be absorbing the increased operating costs for the new system.

McCann said further clarification may be needed on the use of MERA funds for public education. Mullen said this was important to do in light of similar actions by other public agencies, including cities and school districts, to raise awareness of what they do and what their needs are. Measures of those agencies that do not do this, often fail.

Hymel said once MERA's measure is on the ballot, we would go to the Editorial Boards to discuss public education efforts and all the public meetings held so far on the Project. Public education was about making people aware of MERA, what it does and what its responsibilities are for the 911 system.

3. Midyear Review of Executive Officer Work Plan and Hours – Executive Officer Work Plan Committee (EOWP)

Cassingham said, in the interest of time, with Executive Board approval, she will suspend Item 3 of the Executive Officer's Report. Pearce noted the extent of the Executive Officer's hours reported in Item B-3 and asked for this to be addressed at the September meeting.

4. Status of MERA Executive Board Appointments

Cassingham summarized her staff report noting Gray's and Berg's appointments are scheduled for Council consideration on July 21 and August 18 respectively. Pearce's appointment will be considered by the Association on July 17. Cusimano said his likely

appointment will be considered by the Police Chiefs at their next meeting. She confirmed Hymel, Doyle, Stutsman, McCann and Hogan will be continuing.

5. Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports (Tackabery)

1. Review of FY14-15 Operating Budget Training Line Item
2. Request for Review of Additional Radios Policy and Procedures
3. MERA Operational Issues Working Group
4. Other Information Items

Tackabery said in the interest of time, with Executive Board approval, he will suspend Items 1-4 of the Operations Reports and carry them forward to the September meeting.

D. Open Time for Items Not On Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Cassingham, Executive Officer

NEXT: MERA Executive Board Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 10, 2014 – 3:30 p.m.