

# **MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

c/o Town of Corte Madera  
300 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera, CA 94925  
PHONE: (415) 927-5050  
WWW.MERAONLINE.ORG

## **GOVERNING BOARD**

### **Minutes of May 13, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**DRAFT: 6/8/20**

#### **Call to Order and Introductions**

The teleconferenced meeting was called to order by President Pearce on May 13, 2020 at 3:31 p.m. Pearce reviewed the teleconferencing protocol, noting roll call votes on all action items.

Cassingham requested removal of Item C-7 from the Agenda, which will be rescheduled to a later Governing Board meeting. Hymel noted this will allow time to discuss the elimination and member use of retired Debt Service payments over the next two years.

Barerra called roll.

#### **Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:**

Town of Corte Madera	Todd Cusimano, R. J. Suokko (Alternate)
Town of Fairfax	Rico Tabaranza (Alternate)
City of Mill Valley	Jacqueline Graf (Alternate)
Town of Ross	Tom Gaffney
Town of San Anselmo	Doug Kelly
County of Marin	Matthew Hymel
City of Sausalito	Bill Fraass (Alternate)
Town of Tiburon	Michael Cronin, Holli Their (Alternate)
Bolinas Fire Protection District	George Krakauer
Inverness Fire Protection District	Jim Fox
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Community College District	Martin Langeveld (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick (Alternate)
Marinwood Community Services District	Jeff Naylor
Novato Fire Protection District	Steve Metcho, L. J. Silverman (Alternate)
Ross Valley Fire Department	Tim Grasser
Southern Marin Fire Protection District	Cathryn Hilliard
Stinson Beach Fire Protection District	Kenny Stevens
Tiburon Fire Protection District	Richard Pearce
Central Marin Police Authority	Michael Norton

**Governing Board Member Agencies Absent:**

City of Belvedere  
City of Larkspur  
City of Novato  
City of San Rafael

**Staff Present:**

MERA Executive Officer	Maureen Cassingham
MERA General Counsel	Trisha Ortiz
MERA Deputy Executive Officer – Next Gen Project	Dave Jeffries
MERA Administrative Assistant – Next Gen Project	Maura Griffin
MERA Acting Operations Officer Recording Secretary	Raul Rojas Lorena Barrera

**Guests Present:**

Federal Engineering	David Mortimer
Marin County Public Works	Betsy Swenerton, Capital Planning and Projects Manager
Marin County Public Works	Jason Wong, Capital Planning and Projects
California Highway Patrol	Capt. R. D. Mota
California Highway Patrol	Lt. Mark Firkins
California Highway Patrol	Brad Stumbaugh

A. **Election of Officers for MERA Governing Board (President and Vice President)**

Cassingham said due to cancellation of the May 6 Executive Board meeting, the regular nominating process for Governing Board Officers did not occur. She reached out to Pearce as President and Cusimano as Vice President to confirm their interest to serve another one-year term and they agreed.

*M/S/P Kelly/Gaffney to elect Pearce as President of the MERA Governing Board.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

*M/S/P Hilliard/Wick to elect Cusimano as Vice President of the MERA Governing Board.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

B. 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 separate action be taken on a specific item:

- 1) Minutes from April 22, 2020 Governing Board Regular Meeting
- 2) Report No. 95 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Proposed Agreement for FY19-20 Audit Services – Maher Accountancy
- 4) Confirmation of Regular Governing and Executive Board Meeting Dates: FY20-21
- 5) Proposed Resolution Confirming Biennial Review of the MERA  
Conflict of Interest Code

*M/S/P Pomi/Cusimano to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 through 5 as presented.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

C. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

- 1) Report No. 69 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries)

Jeffries noted efforts to close out Customer Design Review. MERA bi-weekly Project calls are ongoing along with weekly AECOM calls. Motorola Project team calls are on hold given the pending Construction Schedule. Annual Measure A Senior Exemption Application Media Advisories have been issued with the third and distributed on May 11.

- 2) Status Report on Transition of Next Gen System Project Implementation to MERA

Cassingham presented an update on transition discussions, noting the first call on April 23 between Pearce, Cusimano, Jeffries and her. Agenda items included MERA Organization Chart options for Project assumption along with position

responsibilities and agendas for Transition calls #2 and #3 with the County.

Cassingham noted Transition Call #2 on April 29 with County representatives Hymel and Rojas included discussions about MERA assuming Project Oversight and Program and Construction Manager positions. The call also covered County support services through June 30 and post-June 30, 2020 termination for site permitting; completion of construction drawings and bid packages; bidding and award administration currently underway; and, various other DPW Project support services. Out of these discussions came a new option from the County for further MERA consideration to provide all Next Gen Construction Services through Project completion under a new contract beginning July 1, 2020.

Cassingham reviewed the agenda for Transition Call #3 with the County, which has yet to be scheduled. Items include Motorola Contract Assignment to MERA, County provision of all NGP Contractor information, cost accounting for each Contract, and other outstanding Contractor issues, and discussion of extension of Real Estate Leasing Services as well as Capital Project Services to permit completion of in-progress tasks. Also on the agenda is the transmittal of all County NGP documentation to MERA to complete the transition.

Pearce asked for Board consideration of a Special Meeting on June 10 to facilitate actions on NGP transition matters before June 30 termination, in addition to the Governing Board's Regular June 24 meeting. Cassingham said the Special June 10 meeting would permit MERA's transition actions to be presented to the Board of Supervisors by June 30. She will send a "Save the Date" Notice to Board members for the June 10 meeting. In response to Van Doren, Cassingham said the proposed MERA Organization Chart and position responsibilities for MERA's assumption of the Next Gen Project will be presented to the Board on June 10. Hilliard noted this response answered her question.

3) Update on AECOM Technology Solutions-Next Gen Project Third Party Customer Design Review Services

Cassingham said the first draft of AECOM's CDR analysis was delivered to MERA staff on May 11. She and Jeffries independently reviewed the draft and found no substantive issues or changes to it. A conference call followed with AECOM and the final draft will be presented for Joint Project Oversight and Finance Committee review on May 20. Jeffries added that the draft AECOM Report will be shared with Rojas and Mortimer for their comments before it is distributed. After Joint Committee review, the Report will be presented to the Governing Board on June 10.

4) Proposed FY20-21 Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement  
Between MERA and the County of Marin.

Cassingham presented the Proposed Agreement, which was reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee and Executive Board on March 11. Services provided are the same as prior year at a proposed cost of \$508,122, which reflects a 3% CPI increase over current year. This cost is included in MERA's proposed FY20-21 Operating Budget.

Pearce said he received a request from the Marin Managers group for a 10% Operating Budget cut which is being sought from all County JPAs. He asked if there is any discretion with the CPI, which is included in Agreement pricing. He also inquired about County Maintenance Staffing levels. Cassingham said she was aware of the Managers' request, noting the only flexibility in the Operating Budget to achieve this is the rollback of the three County Agreement CPIs and the RGS CPI for the Executive Officer, which will achieve \$34K. The two other MERA Budgets for Debt Service cannot be reduced. The remaining amount equal to the 10% cut could be funded from the MERA Emergency Fund balance, which is \$525,000.

Cassingham noted the Operating Budget has little to no other flexibility given locked-in Site Lease and Utility Costs. She can discuss in greater detail when the Governing Board reviews the Operating Budget later in the Agenda. The Board would have to consult with the County regarding their CPIs but she is willing to forego hers. Hymel noted potential Member savings from the 2010 Bonds retirement after August 2020 versus looking at FY20-21 Operating expenses.

Cassingham said, as to Agreement Staffing levels, she would ask the County for input on which staff positions are providing the services in this FY20-21 Agreement. Rojas said services are provided by the whole Communications Services Division and that support varies day-to-day based on System Maintenance needs. A 10% cost reduction could only be achieved if services were not provided when called for, which he would not recommend. Service levels vary from year to year based on System needs on a time and materials basis.

Cusimano said MERA is not an apples-to-apples comparison with the other JPAs. All, however, are being challenged with trying to help other public agencies in flattening their budgets this fiscal year and next with 2% to 10% cuts along with identifying affected services. He said MERA has an opportunity with its last 2010 Bond Debt Service payment to achieve some relief going forward. Pearce asked Hymel about the County Agreements' CPIs. Hymel said these adjustments are reflective of the County's bargaining Agreements.

*M/S/P Cusimano/Van Doren to approve the Proposed FY20-21 Emergency Communications System Maintenance Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin at a cost of 508,122 as presented. Roll call vote followed.*

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

5) Proposed FY20-21 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA  
and the County of Marin

Cassingham noted the proposed Agreement was reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee and Executive Board on March 11, 2020. She said the Agreement includes the provision of Training and Technical Services costs “not-to-exceed” and “as needed” as well as Administrative Services, the latter of which is increased by a 3% CPI. Proposed costs for FY20-21 is \$255,746.

*M/S/P Hilliard/Pomi to approve the Proposed FY20-21 Technical Services Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin in the amount of \$255,746 as presented.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

6) Proposed FY20-21 Communications System Services Agreement Between  
MERA and the County of Marin

Cassingham reported the current one-year Agreement expiring on June 30, 2020. Services include provision of a 10% FTE Communications Services Manager and 90% FTE Senior Communications Technician. Proposed cost is \$232,377 including a 3% CPI. Pearce noted there has been dynamic movement in these positions and added the Agreement approval was recommended by the Finance Committee and Executive Board on March 11, 2020.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Cusimano to approve the Proposed FY20-21 Communication System Services Agreement in the amount of \$232,377 as presented.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

- 7) Update on Future Funding Options for Gen 3 and/or Increased Next Gen Operating Costs (Cusimano)

Note: Item removed from Agenda – to be rescheduled to a later meeting.

- 8) Proposed Assignment and Assumption Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin for Federal Engineering (FE) Next Gen Project Professional Services

Cassingham presented the proposed Agreement which is in response to the County's Notice of Termination of the Next Gen Implementation Agreement and MERA's assumption of the Project effective July 1. She noted the current FE Contract extension is through December 31, 2020, with no cost changes to MERA. MERA's oversight and supervision of FE is being reviewed and a recommended option will be presented to the Governing Board in June. MERA General Counsel and County Counsel have worked together in the development of the proposed Agreement.

*M/S/P Pomi/Kelly to approve the Proposed Assignment and Assumption Agreement Between MERA and the County of Marin for Federal Engineering Next Gen Project Professional Services as presented.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

- 9) Other Information Items

None.

D. Public Hearings

- 1) Proposed FY20-21 MERA Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users

Pearce opened the Public Hearing on this matter. Cassingham presented the FY20-21 Operating Budget as recommended by the Finance Committee and Executive Board on March 11, noting the proposed total is \$2,093,592, which is a 5.1% increase over current year. Also recommended was continuation of the Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member System Users. She noted County and RGS Agreements include a 3% CPI. Site rentals, utilities and maintenance are established by prior Agreements and Licenses.

Pomi inquired about the Auditing Services line item which differs from the proposal for FY19-20 auditing services for \$36,750. Cassingham noted that only the Auditing Costs for the Operating Fund are included in this Budget while the balance of proposed costs are assessed to other MERA Funds.

Hilliard asked if contingencies could be used mid-year if Members had challenges to making their Annual Agency Contributions.. Cassingham said this would be agendized for review at mid-year, if use of the Emergency Fund was needed. Hilliard asked if CPIs could be delayed. Cassingham said the CPI impact on the Budget was \$33,680. If more relief is needed, this can be done at mid-year.

*M/S/P Gaffney/Pomi to approve the Proposed MERA FY20-21 Operating Budget and Zero-Rate Fee Schedule for Non-Member Users as presented.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

Pearce closed the Public Hearing on this matter.

2) Proposed FY20-21 MERA New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets

Pearce opened the Public Hearing on this matter. Cassingham presented the Budgets as recommended by the Finance Committee and Executive Board on March 11. She said there was little to no discretion over these Budgets. She added that the August 2020 Bonds payment was the last, given early retirement of them for interest savings. The FY20-21 Loan Note payment established by previous Governing Board action is \$225,000. Annual Debt Service Budget for FY20-21 is \$2,121,600.

*M/S/P Van Doren/Hilliard to approve the Proposed FY20-21 New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets as presented.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

Pearce closed the Public Hearing on this matter.

3) Proposed Resolution Adopting the FY20-21 Operating, New Project Financing  
2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets

Pearce opened the Public Hearing on this matter. Cassingham presented the Resolution adopting the three FY20-21 Budgets as previously presented.

*M/S/P Kelly/Gaffney to approve Resolution No. 2020-02 Adopting the FY20-21 Operating, New Project Financing 2007 Bank Note and 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds Debt Service Budgets.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

Pearce closed the Public Hearings.

E. Operations Reports (Rojas)

- 1) California Highway Patrol (CHP) Request for Access to MERA Radio Channels  
Rojas summarized the CHP's request to program certain MERA frequencies into 103 of their existing portable and mobile radios. CHP would do their own programming. This request is for mutual aid assistance, not day-to-day operations. This request was vetted and supported by the Operations Working Group. The Sheriff's Office also supports this request and confirmed it would not negatively impact Dispatcher Operations or System loading. Only a few of the CHP radios would use the MERA system during mutual aid events in Marin. Approval of this request is recommended. Fitch and Mota with the CHP were present to answer questions.

Kelly inquired why this request was not made earlier. Jeffries said CHP has had a few portables in the past along with their helicopter. With the additional tri-bands, they do not have to share this small number of radios. Approval of their request will simplify operations going forward for mutual aid events. He added this is mutually beneficial to MERA as well.

*M/S/P Metcho/Kelly to approve the California Highway Patrol's Request for Access to MERA Radio Channels as presented.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

2) Proposed Sonoma Bay-Hill Microwave Link Relinquishment

Rojas presented Sonoma County's request of MERA to relinquish and transfer ownership of our Sonoma-Bay Hill microwave link. If relinquished, Sonoma County would repair and maintain this link and continue to provide T-1 Circuits to MERA and our existing T-Band System. This would immediately improve our microwave loop and relieve some of MERA's maintenance activities. This request has been vetted over time with the Operations Working Group.

Pearce noted MERA's pending Site License Amendment for Sonoma County's Sonoma Mountain Site and asked if this matter could be approved in tandem with this request. Cassingham added that the Sonoma Mountain License Amendment provides for installation of Next Gen equipment and term extension. MERA is awaiting Sonoma County's response. She added affirmative action on both requests is mutually beneficial to MERA and Sonoma County. Jeffries said the motion should provide direction to the Operations Officer to work on both matters. Cassingham clarified that site licensing is a MERA administrative matter, while link relinquishment was operations.

Ortiz clarified that direction to the Operations Officer to work on Link ownership transfer and approval of the Site License Amendment was an additional business matter. Rojas said his link negotiations would not be completed without the Sonoma Mountain Site License Amendment. Ortiz added that final negotiations would be presented for Governing Board approval.

*M/S/P Langeveld/Hymel to direct the Operations Officer to work with Sonoma County to transfer ownership and operation of the Sonoma-Bay Hill Microwave Link contingent on the outcome of Sonoma Mountain Site License Amendment with MERA, subject to Governing Board approval.  
Roll call vote followed.*

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

3) Proposed HVAC Projects – Civic Center and Mill Valley City Hall

Rojas presented the Civic Center A/C Replacement Project which replaces the current unit which is beyond its useful life. Portables have been used during summer months to provide the required cooling of the UPS room. Cost is \$24,927, which includes a 10% contingency.

Rojas noted similar issues with the A/C unit at Mill Valley City Hall. Added issue is an environmental issue with coolant leakage. Decommissioning of this Site for

Next Gen is still several years away but replacement is needed now. This unit can be removed and used elsewhere when the site is no longer in use. Estimated cost is \$15,478, including a 15% contingency. Cassingham said the source of funds for these requests is MERA's Replacement Fund.

*M/S/P Hilliard/Gaffney to authorize DPW to undertake the A/C Replacement Equipment Projects at the Civic Center Prime Site and Mill Valley City Hall as presented.*

*Roll call vote followed.*

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

4) MERA System Operations Reports – April

Rojas reported no busies in April and one-tenth busy time year-to-date. All required maintenance was completed, noting the simulcast switching issue in the West is being documented and monitored with Motorola. The Bolinas dehydrator was replaced.

5) Other Information Items

None.

F. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Gaffney requested revisions to the Teleconferencing Protocol to include definitions of \*4 and \*5 for members wishing to unmute and speak, respectively.

G. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

---

Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary