

**E.B. 11/18/20 Agenda Item A-1**

**MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

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

**DRAFT: 11/10/20**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Minutes of September 9, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order**

The telephonic meeting was called to order by Chair Hymel on September 9, 2020, at 3:31 p.m.

**Board Members Present:**

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| County of Marin          | Matthew Hymel  |
| Marin County Sheriff     | Robert Doyle   |
| City of San Rafael       | Darin White    |
| City of Novato           | Matt McCaffrey |
| Fire Services            | Richard Pearce |
| Police Departments       | Mike Norton    |
| Ross Valley Cities/Towns | Todd Cusimano  |
| Special Districts        | Don Wick       |

**Board Member Absent:**

Southern Marin Cities/Towns

**Staff Present:**

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| MERA Executive Officer         | Maureen Cassingham |
| MERA Deputy Executive Officer  | Dave Jeffries      |
| MERA Acting Operations Officer | Betsy Swenerton    |
| Recording Secretary            | Lorena Barrera     |

**Guests:**

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Federal Engineering            | David Mortimer |
| County Public Works Department | Pat Echols     |

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 March 11, 2020 Executive Board Regular Meeting

- 2) Report No. 99 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Engagement of Maher Accountancy-FY2019-20 Measure A Parcel Tax Independent Compliance Audit
- 4) Confirmation of Executive Board Member Appointments:  
Effective September 12, 2020 – September 12, 2022
- 5) Final Report on MERA/County of Marin Mediation Expenditures
- 6) Bi-Monthly Report on MERA Reserve Fund Balances

Cassingham requested Item A-6 be removed from the Consent Calendar for presentation at the November meeting.

*M/S/P Norton/McCaffrey to approve the Consent Calendar Items 1-5 as presented.*

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Selection of Executive Board Chair and Vice Chair

Cassingham said current Board Chair Hymel is being replaced by Assistant County Administrator Dan Eilerman, representing County of Marin. The Executive Board's current Vice Chair Cusimano has been reappointed as the Ross Valley Cities and Towns representative.

*M/S/P Pearce/McCaffrey to elect Cusimano as Executive Board Chair.*

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

Cusimano nominated Doyle to serve as Vice Chair. Doyle agreed to serve.

*M/S/P Hymel/Cusimano to elect Doyle as Executive Board Vice Chair.*

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

Pearce expressed appreciation for Hymel's long service as Executive Board Chair, continuing service as Finance Committee Chair, Governing Board Member

and for all his assistance through the Next Gen Project transition.

2) Report No. 73 on Next Gen System Project and Budget – (Jeffries)

Jeffries said work is continuing on Customer Design Review (CDR) and getting the AECOM Team up to speed on the Project. Since the Executive Board last met, there have been many staff and Motorola Project calls. The new AECOM Team is reporting to him and AECOM has assigned Mark Chase as Program Manager. The Program Manager oversees Radio System Manager David Mortimer who is responsible for Motorola Contract management. James MacKenzie and Jonathan Sprague with AECOM are responsible for the development of bid packages through completion of Construction. David Bettin, MERA's RGS Implementation Coordinator, will be liaison with the member agencies coordinating radio, dispatch, Fire Station Alerting delivery and installations and radio Wi-Fi programming.

Jeffries reported on the CDR process, noting the Governing Board contracted with AECOM to conduct a third-party review of these documents. 135 issues were forwarded to Motorola for follow-up. The list of issues was reduced to 30 and a written Motorola response is awaited for the remainder. The most significant outstanding item is the Project Schedule which will be informed by the AECOM Construction Schedule.

A draft from AECOM has been reviewed and commented on and a final is expected for presentation to Motorola to integrate into the Project Schedule. It is hoped that the CDR will be presented to the Governing Board in October.

Jeffries noted Low-Income Senior Exemption to the Measure A parcel tax annual outreach process was completed prior to the June 1 deadline. Three media advisories are issued to remind eligible seniors to file their applications. Additionally, MERA initiated discussions with our Bay Area Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority (BayRICS) partners to develop regional radio aliases for dispatcher user identification. This will be part of MERA's initial programming for Next Gen.

Jeffries presented an update on other key projects including the Assistance for Firefighters Grant award to pay for tri-band fire radios upgrade. The radios have been received and installation will begin at the end of this year. AECOM has initiated their review of site construction cost estimates, which should be completed later this month. Construction bid packages drafted by the County before Project transition are being reviewed by AECOM for release as part of the public bid process.

Jeffries noted a potential Project cost-saving option at Tomales which involves joint power trenching with AT&T. This will require a minor amendment to the

Project SEIR but is environmentally beneficial for the site. He reminded the members to refer any questions about the Project and the transition to him as Project PIO. Gen 1 questions should be referred to Swenerton as MERA's new Acting Operations Officer. Finally, he recapped the latest Project Budget Summary which reflects expenditures through April 30, 2020, and updated Revenue Sources which increase the Unappropriated Project Reserve. Motorola milestones were also revised to reflect the latest estimated dates of completion. The final Project Schedule may result in further updated dates.

3) Proposed Professional Service Contracts – Site Borings, Soils Testing and Fiber Pulls

Jeffries presented three priority Next-Gen Project-related action items within the Executive Board's spending authority to advance work at the EOF, Civic Center and Radio Shop. The first is for installation of a second fiberoptic cable at the EOF with an estimated construction cost of \$12,673. The second is for installation of fiber optic cables at the Civic Center/Radio Shop at an estimated cost of \$18,922.76. The third is for acquisition of AC inverters for the EOF at an estimated cost of \$10,000 plus \$1,500 for installation.

*M/S/P Doyle/Wick to approve Items 1 through 3 as presented.*

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

4) Discussion/Confirmation of November Executive Board Meeting Date

Cassingham said the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting date is Wednesday, November 11, which is the Veteran's Day Holiday. It was the consensus of the Board to reschedule to Wednesday, November 18, 2020.

5) Other Information Items

None.

C. Operations Reports – (Swenerton)

1) Report on MERA Operations Officer Replacement and DPW Current System Staffing

Swenerton introduced herself as MERA's new Acting Operations Officer. She noted she was previously involved with planning for Next Gen. She said with Rojas' retirement in December, the County is proceeding with the recruitment

process for the next DPW Director. Once the new Director is on board, a permanent Operations Officer appointment will be made in January 2021. Ten applications have been received for the Communications Manager position. This position oversees the Radio Shop and maintenance of the current MERA System. After applications are reviewed interviews will be scheduled.

Regarding the Network Systems Analyst recruitment, Swenerton reported this is on hold pending the Communications Manager's selection. Tucker Evans and Mark Bleeker are serving as Interim Supervising Communications Technician. Evans will resume his Network Systems Analyst position once the Communications Manager is appointed. Thereafter, the recruitment will begin for the Supervising Communications Technician position.

2) Request for Additional Radio – Office of The District Attorney, Marin County

Swenerton reported on the District Attorney's Office request for an additional radio ID for a mass casualty advocate radio funded by a Cal OES Grant. The Ops Group reviewed the request on September 2 and recommended approval.

*M/S/P Doyle/Pearce to approve the County District Attorney's Office's request for an additional radio ID on the MERA System.*

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

3) MERA Operations System Update – July and August

Swenerton highlighted some of the Radio Shop's activities this summer. In July, DPW staff worked with Sheriff's Dispatch to troubleshoot some phone audio issues with their dispatch consoles. Recently installed AT&T Vesta equipment caused the issues. Vesta is known as the Next Gen 911 dispatch equipment. Staff with AT&T resolved the problems.

Swenerton noted the MOSCAD issues at Mt. Barnabe in August. This resulted in no communication between the Radio Shop and Mt. Barnabe Site. MOSCAD helps staff track each site, alarm monitoring and antenna remote control. After two weeks of work, Mt. Barnabe was restored. She also reported that the Channel Bank Wide Area Network card failed at the Prime Site, which caused communications to go down at the San Pedro Site. Communications were restored in a few days but this highlights the aging of the Microwave System which could affect multiple sites. DPW staff is preparing a report for the Governing Board on repair solutions in September.

Pearce expressed concerns about the overall performance of the existing System based on current reporting, which is inconsistent with prior reporting on System health. Swenerton said she is not aware of any unrecoverable issues; however, some of the Microwave equipment is of an age that components need to be replaced. Some components are now hard to find. In the event of outages, users need to refresh their training with site trunking and fail soft. Swenerton added she will be presenting some System investment options to proactively deal with future outages.

Pearce asked about the compatibility of current System investments with Next Gen. Jeffries said with the final Project Schedule, there may be some opportunities to begin integration of the new system with the current System prior to completion. He added the importance of user training in the meantime to deal with outages.

4) Other Information Items

Swenerton reported on the intent to enter into an extended warranty agreement with Aviat Networks, the current Microwave System vendor. The Ops Group has resumed its monthly meetings via Zoom, the most recent being September 2. As previously discussed, a report on Channel Bank Network cards will be presented on September 23.

Swenerton reported on HVAC replacements at Big Rock and selection of a contractor to perform the work. A heat load analysis is being conducted by a consultant for the equipment in the shelter for current and Next Gen systems that will be operating at the same time. Work should be completed by the end of October.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

None.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

---

Maureen Cassingham  
MERA Executive Officer  
and Secretary