

.MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY

c/o Town of Corte Madera
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GOVERNING BOARD

Minutes of January 27, 2021 Regular Meeting

DRAFT: 2/19/21

Call to Order and Introductions

The teleconferenced regular meeting was called to order by President Pearce on January 27, 2021, at 3:3 p.m. He noted Item B-6 was removed from the Agenda. Barrera called roll.

Governing Board Members & Alternates Present:

Town of Corte Madera	R. J. Suokko (Alternate)
Town of Fairfax	Rico Tabaranza
City of Mill Valley	Alan Piombo, Jacqueline Graf (Alternate)
Town of San Anselmo	Steve Burdo
City of San Rafael	Bob Sinnott (Alternate)
County of Marin	Dan Eilerman (Alternate)
Bolinas Fire Protection District	George Krakauer
Inverness Public Utility District	Jim Fox, Shelly Redding (Alternate)
Kentfield Fire Protection District	Mark Pomi, Ron Naso (Alternate)
Marin Transit	Amy Van Doren
Marin Municipal Water District	Don Wick (Alternate)
Marinwood Community Services District	Eric Dreikosen (Alternate)
Novato Fire Protection District	L. J. Silverman, Steve Metcho (Alternate)
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
Town of Ross
City of Sausalito
Town of Tiburon
Marin Community College District
Ross Valley Fire Department

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 Operations Officer	Andrew LeBlanc
Recording Secretary	Lorena Barrera

Guests Present:

Public Member	Doug Kelly
Federal Engineering	David Mortimer
County of Marin, Acting DPW Director	Pat Echols

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 separate action be taken on a specific item:

- 1) Minutes from December 9, 2020, Governing Board Regular Meeting [*Pulled from Consent Calendar*]
- 2) Report No. 105 on Strategic Plan Implementation
- 3) Report on Next Gen Project Skyview Terrace Communications Site License – Approval by MERA Executive Board
- 4) Report on Rescission of AECOM Office Space Amendment to Office and Support Services Agreement between MERA and Town of Corte Madera

Item #1: Cassingham corrected the list of Members Present at the December 9, 2020, meeting, adding Ron Naso who attended as Alternate for the Kentfield Fire Protection District.

M/S/P Sinnott/Eilerman to approve Consent Calendar Items 1 through 4 as amended. Roll call vote followed.

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

B. Executive Officer's Report – (Cassingham)

1) Report No. 79 on Next Gen System Project – (Jeffries-Discussion)

Jeffries noted that one of reasons for replacing the system and moving to 700/800 MHz band was the Federal legislation requirement to move off the UHF-T Band. In December, Congress repealed the UHF-T Band requirement which is no longer a reason to move to the 700/800 MHz Band. Jeffries pointed out that there were many other reasons for replacing the MERA System including age and added we are so far along with the Next Gen Project at this point this repeal won't change anything. In an earlier study, even before the UHF-T Band option was in place, AECOM had recommended going to 700/800 MHz band. He noted there had been a vague reference to providing reimbursement for agencies who made the transition, but MERA never relied on it and, as it turns out, it will not be happening.

Jeffries reported that earlier today there was a second joint meeting of the Training Committee. There are tentatively two co-chairs, one from Law and one from Fire. They will begin with monthly meetings. Members have been learning some of the Next Gen technological background to be followed by radio aliases and talk group templates. In a few months, members will be working on Motorola training materials.

Jeffries reminded members that if any questions are received from Digital Marin regarding MERA, they should be referred to him.

Jeffries shared an overview of site activity. He noted that the two MALT easements are still in discussion. Bid Package #1 is out and there will be a pre-bid conference tomorrow and site walks next week. The plan is to bring award of bid recommendations to the next Governing Board meeting.

Jeffries said a member briefing was conducted on January 26 and there will be another on January 28, 2021. Briefings include updates on MERA, the Project, timeline and next steps. Tomorrow's session will be recorded for those who wish to view it later.

Jeffries presented the Project Summary Table. Tasks completed include the release of Bid Package #1, Bid Package #1 as ready for GB approval, completion of five of six PG&E agreements, achievement of a Tomales Power Trench Agreement, initiation of training committee meetings, release of a newsletter in December and member briefings being held this week. Upcoming Tasks include bid awards for Dollar Hill, Mt. Tiburon and Stewart Point Sites (Bid Package #1a), start of civil work for EOF, Civic Center, Mt. Barnabe, Dollar Hill, and the next newsletter. Tasks in progress include completion of MALT Easements, completion of PG&E Agreements, completion of Site Lease Agreements,

development of Talkgroup Templates and Radio Aliases, development of the Project Plan with AECOM, bid awards (EOF, Civic Center, Mt. Barnabe) and mobile installation/portable distribution from the AFG Grant. Next six months tasks include bid awards for Wolfback Ridge, Mt. Tamalpais, Pt. Reyes, Sonoma Mt, OTA, Coyote Peak #1 and #2, San Pedro, Big Rock and Tomales Sites, the start of civil work for Dollar, Mt. Tiburon and Stewart Point and customer witness tests of Nokia Microwave and Motorola Fixed Network Equipment.

Sinnott complimented Jeffries on yesterday's MERA Member Briefing. He said it was very informative and was very well presented. He encouraged anyone who did not attend yesterday to attend tomorrow's briefing.

Hilliard thanked Jeffries for the clear and easy to follow briefing packet material.

2) Proposed Cost-Sharing Agreement between MERA and AT&T for Trench at Next Gen Tomales Site – (Jeffries – Board Action)

Jeffries explained that AT&T was building a tower near MERA's tower at Tomales. Although MERA went through CEQA with full approval to dig its own trench, MALT reached out and asked if we could consider sharing a trench with AT&T to avoid having to trench twice. The AT&T proposal is attached to the report. They are asking for materials and labor only and not the cost of the trench itself, which will save MERA in excess of \$60K.

Jeffries requested approval for a \$13,633 payment to JFC Construction for materials and labor to provide conduit and pull boxes to support MERA's needs.

M/S/P Wick/Stevens to Accept Proposal from JFC Construction as presented. Roll call vote followed.

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

3) Proposed Bid Package No. 1A (Dollar Hill, Mt. Tiburon and Stewart Point) and Notice Inviting Bids – (Board Action)

Jeffries presented proposed Project Initiation Bid Package 1A with a Project Budget of \$441,761 for Dollar Hill, Mt. Tiburon, and Stewart Point. Bidding is expected to start in mid-February 2021 with a contract award date of April 28, 2021, with construction to begin in July 2021.

M/S/P Eilerman/Hilliard to approve the Proposed Bid Package No. 1A, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

Doug Kelly, who was attending a member of the public, welcomed Steve Burdo from San Anselmo as his replacement and said goodbye to everyone on the Board. He said it's been great serving and Mr. Burdo will do a fantastic job.

4) Proposed Confirmation and Ratification of Next Gen Project Big Rock Ridge and San Pedro Ridge Site Licenses First Amendments between MERA and C&C Equipment Company – (Board Action)

Cassingham presented the proposed Site License First Amendments to Big Rock Ridge and San Pedro Ridge for confirmation and ratification. She explained that the Executive Officer, on MERA's behalf, has the authority to initially approve No-Cost Site License Amendments. She added the site licenses reflect no changes in rent except for the original provisions for annual adjustments of 3% per year. She noted the the Amendments address the Owner's new requirement of execution by any Next Gen Project Contractor or Subcontractor of a Right-of-Entry Agreement and provision of associated documentation. The amendments were reviewed by MERA General Counsel before execution.

M/S/P Eilerman/Sinnott moved to Confirm and Ratify the Next Gen Project Big Rock Ridge and San Pedro Ridge Site Licenses First Amendments between MERA and C&C Equipment Company, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

5) Proposed Next Gen Project Muir Beach Site Lease Agreement between MERA and Muir Beach Community Services District – (Board Action)

Cassingham requested approval of the proposed Site Lease Agreement between MERA and Muir Beach Community Services District and authorization to make changes, if any, as deemed necessary by the Executive Officer given this matter is going before the District Board tonight.

Cassingham said the lease has been reviewed by MERA General Counsel. The term is 10 years, with two (2) additional 10-year extensions thereafter. The District's original rent request was for fair market value. They used MERA's rent paid for the BayHill Site, approximately \$72,000 per year, as a benchmark fair market rent.

MERA countered with zero rent given the benefits the District is already enjoying as a non-member user, along with being a direct beneficiary of expanded Next Gen System coverage.

The District Board countered with a reduced monthly rent proposal of \$2,500 of which Governing Board approval is recommended by the Executive Officer. Van Doren confirmed that the BayHill monthly fair market rent was \$6,000.

M/S/P Stevens/Silverman moved to Approve the Proposed Next Gen Project Muir Beach Site Lease Agreement between MERA and Muir Beach Community Services District, as presented. Roll call vote followed.

AYES: All
NAYS: None
ABSTENTIONS: None
Motion carried

Pearce thanked everyone for the tremendous body of work that went into the staff reports.

- 6) Proposed Next Gen Project Sonoma Mt. Site License Agreement between MERA and Sonoma County – (Board Action)

Removed from Agenda.

- 7) Other Information Items

Cassingham noted that effective February 1 the Low-Income Senior Exemption from the Measure A Tax information will be posted on meraonline.org. It will provide FAQs to potential applicants filling out the form. Pearce asked the Members to distribute the update to their Agencies.

C. Operations Reports – (LeBlanc)

LeBlanc noted that three sites rolled over to generator power – Bolinas, Barnabe and BayHill. All three generators were prepped prior to the storm and there was no network degradation or outage. He said BayHill has been without power for 24 hours and a technician is en route now. Tomorrow morning the vendor will deliver additional fuel.

- 1) Report on Gen 1 Risk Mitigation Initiatives (Discussion)

LeBlanc said one of the biggest challenges faced with the Legacy System is that the technology is 20 years old. He noted while the County of Marin's Telecom Team has been able to quickly respond to issues, additional failures may be possible due to the age of the System. In order to mitigate the risk, MERA has been securing

additional network spares. As part of the recommendation at the Governing Board meetings of September 23, 2020, and October 28, 2020, the County is in the process of procuring additional channel bank equipment. They anticipate receiving the equipment before March 2021.

LeBlanc said DPW is working with Motorola to complete an audit of the Prime Site, with the last audit being conducted in 2018. This will provide assurances that everything is operating to specifications.

LeBlanc said DPW staff is working with Sacramento County to obtain some of their spare equipment, which has been slightly delayed due to many people working from home. It is anticipated this equipment will be received before the end of 2021. Having this extra equipment will provide even more assurance that there will be enough spare parts to get through the next three years. He pointed out that most of the equipment in the Gen 1 System is redundant so if there is a failure, it only loses redundancy and will not typically affect call processing.

Van Doren said since it will be three years before the new system is online, she appreciated the procurement of the used equipment for spares. She asked what financial planning has been done in anticipation of potential needs to provide greater maintenance of the Gen 1 System, particularly in light of the timeline now being faced. LeBlanc said the value of the equipment they procured is just under \$100,000 and they feel comfortable this will provide the necessary parts. He said the City of Sacramento equipment is being donated at no cost.

2) MERA System Operations Update – December (Discussion)

LeBlanc reported on the December completion of all of the quarterly preventative maintenance at EOF, Mount Tam, Woodacre, Bolinas, Sonoma Mountain, Civic Center (Prime Site and Microwave) and Big Rock. At the Prime Site, they had an SD card failure and a hard disk drive failure on the VMS server but no data was lost. There was also an issue with the channel bank lockout at Sonoma Mountain which was corrected. Finally, there was a microwave link failure from Mt. Tam to the Barnabe link due to a failed receiver which was corrected using network spares. Because the entire network is built on redundancy, these issues caused no problems to users.

December usage was 196,000 radio calls, 549 hours of talk time, with no busy time. Total cumulative usage for the year was 2.3M radio calls, with 6,566 hours of call time equivalent to 274 days, and a total of 39 seconds of busy time. LeBlanc said the network is well-dimensioned to support the amount of traffic. He said that given the overall age and health of the network, he is confident we will make it through the next three years.

3) Other Information Items – Miscellaneous DPW Updates (Discussion)

LeBlanc said the Big Rock HVAC system replacement was completed last week. When the weather clears, they will begin the Advanced Transfer Switch as part of the electrical work, which will be installed at all of the existing Next Gen Sites. He said they will be rolling out a lot of new tools and processes in order to better support the MERA members, including ticketing and asset management systems.

LeBlanc said they are recruiting for a supervisor who will be managing their Communications Technicians, with interviews starting tomorrow. He anticipates having a candidate onboard by early April.

D. Open Time for Items Not on Agenda

Pearce said the next Governing Board meeting will be February 24, 2021.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maureen Cassingham
MERA Executive Officer
and Secretary