

June 23, 2021

Agenda Item B-6

---

 Governing Board Communication

**TO: MERA Governing Board**

**FROM: Mary Morris-Mayorga, Interim Executive Officer**

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED REVISION TO MEETING AGENDA POLICY**

---

Recommended Action

Review, discuss, and approve proposed revision to the *Meeting Agenda Policy*.

Background

The existing MERA Meeting Agenda Policy and Procedure was revised and approved by the Governing Board on June 27, 2018. Minutes are currently prepared in a detailed verbatim format and are time consuming to prepare which significantly adds to the cost of this function. A variety of activities and functions are being evaluated to determine whether a change is recommended for purposes of best practices, efficiency, and/or cost. An estimate of the annual cost for preparation of minutes in the current format is provided below:

Number of Meetings per Year	24
Annual Time Estimate to Prepare Minutes	40 hours
Cost	\$5,400

Minutes in a verbatim format do not serve the intent of the Government Code:

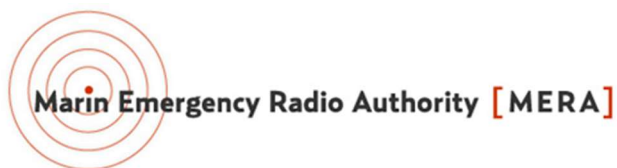
*Government Code 54953(c)(2): The legislative body of a local agency shall publicly report any action taken and the vote or abstention on that action of each member present for the action.*

In addition, best practices as contained within the City Clerks Association of California Guidelines for Preparing Minutes for Governmental Agencies state that minutes should be prepared in the action or brief summary format. Action minutes record final decisions made, while brief summary minutes may also summarize main points which arose in discussion if relevant to the final decision.

Given the part-time status and funding of the Interim Executive Officer, estimated annual cost of minutes preparation, and consideration of best practices, it is recommended that MERA prepares minutes in the action or brief summary format, as warranted. This is reflected in the proposed update to the *Meeting Agenda Policy*. With the information on voting provided by the Town of Corte Madera as part of MERA's contract, action minutes can be prepared quite easily. For those members that would like to listen to all or parts of the meeting, the Zoom video/audio can be made accessible.

Fiscal Impact

Preparing action minutes is estimated to save approximately \$3,800 per year.



Revised: June 23, 2021 GB

---

**Policy Manual****Meeting Agenda Policy**Purpose:

To provide meeting agendas, minutes, staff reports, and related documents within established timelines that meet public information needs and legal requirements, and facilitate effective decision-making by the MERA Executive Board and Governing Board.

Policy:

MERA's meetings are called in accordance with its Bylaws and open meeting requirements of the California Government Code. MERA, as a public agency, is committed to timely creation, posting, and distribution of its meeting agendas, minutes, staff reports and related documents for member and public information, to facilitate and record member official actions and historical meeting records. This Governing Board approved policy establishes standards for public meeting documentation.

Process:

1. Written staff reports will be developed and addressed to the Executive Board and Governing Board in a memorandum format containing the date of the meeting, identifies the subject of the report as it appears on the agenda, provides a recommended action, summarizes background on the subject, and attaches related documentation (e.g., contracts, resolutions, studies, agreements, change orders, etc.). Proposed contracts or agreements should, whenever possible, be executed by the other party prior to the Executive Board or Governing Board taking action on them.
2. The Executive Officer will prepare meeting agendas. All reports, communications, resolutions, contracts, and other documents cited on the meeting agenda shall be delivered to the Executive Officer preceding the meeting in accordance with established deadlines. The agenda and related reports and documents shall be made available to the Executive Board and Governing Board no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the meeting. Any separate distribution of agenda reports necessitated by special circumstances must be approved by the Executive Officer. The agenda shall be available to the public no later than 10:00 a.m. on the Thursday prior to the meeting.
3. Agendas and related documents will be transmitted electronically to Executive Board and Governing Board Members and Alternates unless otherwise requested.
4. Meeting agendas will be physically posted at the Novato Fire Protection District, the County of Marin and the Town of Corte Madera, no later than 10:00 a.m. the Thursday before the meeting. Meeting agendas and packets will be posted on MERA's website (meraonline.org) by this same deadline.
5. Minutes of MERA meetings shall be prepared in the form of action or brief summary minutes, as warranted, which record the: date, time, location, members/attendees present, items considered, action taken including vote, and any follow-up action. Minutes will be provided electronically to MERA Governing Board Members and Alternates, Executive Board Members and designated staff, with the next meeting agenda packet