

**A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
MARIN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTHORITY**

**Revised and Updated – February 1, 2012**

- June 15, 1995 County of Marin retained C.S.I. Telecommunications to conduct a countywide “needs assessment”. The County agreed to “front” the study fee of \$34,500.
- February 12, 1996 The Draft County-wide Communication Feasibility Study was prepared and sent to all police and fire agencies, as well as other major non-safety operations.
- April 23, 1996 The Final County-wide Communication Feasibility Study was prepared and distributed.
- May 8, 1996 All City Managers/Police and Fire Chiefs were invited to a joint meeting to discuss public safety communications (35 people attended the meeting).
- May 15, 1996 Letters were sent to:
- a. Motorola
  - b. E.F. John
  - c. Ericson – G.E.
- Letters asked them to clarify their company’s intent to continue supplying low-band equipment.
- May 17, 1996 The first County-wide Communications Oversight Committee was formed, representing City Managers, Police and Fire Chiefs and Special Districts.
- The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee hosted a seminar. The panelists represented Sacramento County, the City of Sacramento, Alameda County, the City of Oakland and the California Highway Patrol. The purpose of the meeting was to see how others have recently tackled this problem.
- June 18, 1996 The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee met and discussed the next phase work program for the consultant and how the cost should be distributed.
- August and September 1998 Research was conducted to determine the best consultant(s) to continue studying the options.

- October 10, 1996      The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee met and selected “The Warner Group” to prepare the performance specifications and formation of the County-wide Operations Subcommittee. The Subcommittee was to involve line police officers, firefighters and dispatchers so they can provide input into the process and equipment selection.
- October 22, 1996      Marin County Board of Supervisors contracted with “The Warner Group” and agreed to advance \$60,000 on behalf of the participating agencies.
- November 13, 1996    The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee met and discussed the FCC's freeze on frequencies and the new TV digital proposal and how it affects Marin County.
- November 25, 1996    The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee hosted a half-day seminar. About 40 Marin officials attended and discussed various options, technology and related issues.
- December 1996        The Draft Performance Specifications were sent to all Marin agencies and comments were requested.
- January 6, 1997        The County-wide Communications Oversight Committee met and discussed the status of the Draft County-wide Performance Specifications document. The Committee also reviewed and approved the revised pre-system budget and the financing options for the County-wide system, including retention of a Communications Engineer to perform field tests for interference with our proposed system.
- January 17, 1997      County staff filed an application with the FCC requesting a Special Temporary Authority (STA) to test TV Channels 16 and 17 for public safety use.
- May 30, 1997         An executive report to Marin elected officials on a County-wide radio system was distributed.
- July 16, 1997         The Marin County Board of Supervisors authorized an application to the Federal Communications Commission for frequencies to build a state-of-the-art emergency communications system.
- September 16, 1997    The Marin County Board of Supervisors applied for federal licenses for new radio frequencies. The agencies who were not participating at that time were Town of Fairfax, Town of San Anselmo and Ross Valley Fire Service.

- February 28, 1998      The Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) was formed to "...plan, finance, implement, manage, own and operate a multi-jurisdictional County-wide public safety, public service and emergency radio system".
- March 2, 1998      The first meeting of MERA was held.
- The following local agencies adopted the agreement to form the Authority: City of San Rafael, City of Belvedere, City of Sausalito, Novato Fire Protection District, Marin Municipal Water District, County of Marin, Marin County Transit District, Town of Corte Madera, City of Larkspur, Town of Tiburon, Tiburon Fire Protection District, Kentfield Fire Protection District, Tamalpais Fire Protection District, Alto-Richardson Fire Protection District, Southern Marin Ambulance Authority, Bolinas Fire Protection District, Inverness Public Utility District and Stinson Beach Fire Protection District. The first agency to adopt was the Marinwood Community Services District in January. The Skywalker Ranch Fire District, which was organized as a private company, opted to enter into a contract rather than joining the JPA.
- March 24, 1998      The FCC approved the frequency for 18 channels.
- October 27, 1998      MERA Project Engineer Richard Chuck was retained.
- September 14, 1998      The MERA Board approved the agency cost allocation methodology.
- September 17, 1998      The MERA Board adopted a Resolution of Intent to begin the debt financing of the new system.
- October 5, 1998      The MERA Technical Advisory Committee had a public informational meeting on the Motorola proposal.
- December 17, 1998      The MERA Board approved an agreement with Motorola for the new system.
- The MERA Board approved the Project Operating Agreement and the issuance of revenue bonds to finance the project.
- January 14, 1999      Linda Christman was appointed as acting Executive Officer. The MERA Board adopted a resolution authorizing the sale of MERA revenue bonds.
- February 11, 1999      The MERA Board authorized the sale of bonds in the amount of \$26,940,000 to finance the project.
- February 25, 1999      Motorola was issued the notice to proceed.

March 11, 1999	The MERA Board was given a project schedule showing project completion on November 8, 2001.
May 6, 1999	John Roberto and Scott Davidson were hired as planning consultants.
July 1, 1999	Tamalpais Valley and Alto-Richardson Bay Fire Protection Districts consolidated (newly named Southern Marin Fire Protection District) and MERA membership dropped to 25 agencies.
September 2, 1999	Notice of Intent to issue a project EIR approved by MERA Board.
September 20, 1999	Notice of Preparation for project EIR was adopted by MERA Board.
December 9, 1999	Public hearing was held to accept comments on Draft Project EIR.
February 24, 2000	MERA adopted a resolution certifying MERA Project EIR and a resolution approving MERA project plans and detailed design document.  MERA Bylaws were adopted.
May 25, 2000	MERA approved placement of the prime site in Marin County Civic Center.
June 5, 2000	MERA Executive Officer reports that 14 MERA sites are behind schedule in receiving the necessary permits.
June 14, 2000	Tiburon Planning Commission meeting was held on the Mt. Tiburon proposed site.
June 19, 2000	Community meeting was held in Bolinas on proposed fire station site.
July 27, 2000	Brock Arner was appointed as MERA Executive Officer.
August 2, 2000	Lease agreements for San Pedro Ridge, Big Rock Ridge, Pt. Reyes and Mill Valley were approved.
August 16, 2000	Tiburon Planning Commission denial of Mt. Tiburon permit was withdrawn from consideration by the Tiburon Town Council by MERA Executive Officer.
August 24, 2000	Sonoma Mountain and Bay Hill lease agreements were approved.
September 13, 2000	Lease agreement for Mt. Burdell was approved.
October 27, 2000	Lease for Mill Valley site was approved.

- February 5, 2001 Mountain Park Reservation lease with San Rafael was approved.
- March 5, 2001 Litigation on San Rafael Mountain Park Reservation site commenced.
- March 17, 2001 Forbes Reservoir MERA site became effective.
- May 17, 2001 MERA approved lease for Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. Burdell sites.
- August 28, 2001 Martin Nichols appointed MERA Executive Officer, effective November 1, 2001.
- December 19, 2001 MERA and Tiburon met with State Parks Director Areias on creating a site on Angel Island.
- February 6, 2002 Tiburon Town Council began consideration of alternate site on the Gilmartin open space and at the Sugarloaf MMWD water tank site.
- March 7, 2002 At Tiburon's request, MERA applied for a permit to build a site at Sugarloaf tank site.
- April 11, 2002 MERA Board adopted resolution to acquire property at Mt. Tiburon tank site by process of eminent domain.
- May 13, 2002 JPA Amendments 1 and 2 were approved modifying Article 10 Indemnification and Article 9 Funding.
- June 13, 2002 MERA approved lease for Bay Hill site.
- July 31, 2002 Tiburon Town Council approved permits for MERA site at Sugarloaf tank site.
- September 6, 2002 Judge Duffey invalidated Tiburon's approval of building permits for MERA site at Sugarloaf tank site.
- January 22, 2003 San Rafael Police radio system experienced a major failure.
- February 20, 2003 MERA authorized temporary operation of MERA system without the Mt. Tiburon site.
- March 14, 2003 MERA appealed Judge Duffey's denial of MERA suit against Tiburon for the stop-work order to build Mt. Tiburon without permit from the Town.
- June 12, 2003 MERA Board considered environmental impact of moving Bolinas site to Martinelli Ranch.

September 30, 2003	MERA appealed Judge Duffey's ruling against MERA's lawsuit against Tiburon.
October 7, 2003	MERA Board received the report of Southern Marin Site Committee.
November 20, 2003	MERA lease of warehouse for radio installations approved.
January 24, 2004	Installation of San Rafael Police radios began (first agency).
February 12, 2004	Greg Stepanicich became MERA's General Counsel.
April 14, 2004	Appeals Court overturned Superior Court decision on Tiburon stop-work order and allowed MERA to proceed to build at the Mt. Tiburon site without permits.
August 17, 2004	Supreme Court refused to hear appeal of Appellate Court decision in favor of MERA.
August 26, 2004	MERA directed Motorola to begin construction of the Mt. Tiburon site.
September 30, 2004	MERA again authorized Motorola to begin construction of Mt. Tiburon site.
November 4,, 2004	MERA approved cooperation agreement with Tiburon concerning feasibility analysis of Wolfback Ridge site.
February 10, 2005	MERA received Wolfback Ridge feasibility study, which concluded that the site cannot provide coverage as well as the Mt. Tiburon site.
August 18, 2005	Executive Officer was authorized to begin negotiations for a site at the Martinelli Ranch in Bolinas.
December 31, 2005	MERA experienced a system-wide failure during a flood event.
January 17, 2006	MERA approved a revised project description for the Martinelli Ranch site in Bolinas.
May 11, 2006	Zoning permit application for Martinelli Ranch site was submitted to County Community Development Agency.

- May 17, 2006            Application for Martinelli Ranch site building permit was submitted to County Community Development Agency.
- MERA approved CHP Interoperability Equipment and Operating Agreement, and authorized Executive Officer and Project Engineer to represent MERA on Bay Area Regional Tactical Emergency Communications System.
- May 31, 2006            MERA approved increase in New Project Financing to \$2.3M to cover increase in Bolinas site costs.
- MERA approved \$25,000 for independent study to increase system capacity.
- Replacement of Mt. Tiburon site antenna was authorized.
- Lease with Martinelli family was approved.
- June 29, 2006            Motorola Change Order for Bolinas Site was approved.
- August 31, 2006           MERA authorized New Project Financing Bank Loan.
- Formation of the Operations Advisory Committee was approved contingent on Fire and Police Chiefs' Associations review.
- November 16, 2006       Plan was adopted for Interim Executive Officer Services with Michael Garvey.
- January 18, 2007        Michael Garvey was introduced to Board as Interim Executive Officer.
- Transfer of day-to-day MERA Operations to Marin County was approved including retention of training personnel and authorization of Motorola technical work audit.
- Maher Accountancy was authorized to audit Motorola performance and billing.
- Project Loan Note for 2007 was authorized.
- March 20, 2007            MERA approved County/MERA contract for technical and training services on completion of system construction.
- May 21, 2007            Garvey issued White Paper on Future of MERA including transition plan for permanent Executive Officer.
- May 24, 2007            MERA approved implementation of White Paper Transition plan.

- December 5, 2007 MERA approved contract with Regional Government Services for MERA Executive Officer Maureen Cassingham.
- Approved \$50,000 for new Logging Recorder System.
- Efforts began to relocate MERA office from County IST facility.
- January 4, 2008 MERA experienced a four-hour system overload due to storm-related events.
- February 13, 2008 MERA's training manual is completed with 2,000+ users trained.
- May 27, 2008 MERA responds to Grand Jury 07-08 Findings and Recommendations re: Emergency Communications at Marin Schools.
- June 5, 2008 JPA Amendment No. 3 approved allowing annual budget adoption in a single meeting.
- MERA Logging Recorder System approved with decentralization of recording network.
- October 2, 2008 Radio Frequency Use Agreement with GGNRA License Agreement with KWMR for Use of MERA Bolinas Facility was approved.
- December 17, 2008 Forbes Reservoir County Facilities Abatement and Site Cleanup Project were approved to be administered by Executive Officer.
- Moratorium was approved on programming new radios along with direction to develop MERA policy to review future requests.
- February 11, 2009 Exceptions to the new radio moratorium will be approved by the Executive Committee.
- March 11, 2009 Amendment No. 4 to the JPA was approved to expand and increase expenditure authority of the Executive Committee and Executive Officer.
- Jim Karpiak was appointed as MERA General Counsel.
- Ross Valley and Las Gallinas Sanitary Districts subleases of the Forbes Site were approved.
- Purchase of five new frequencies to enhance system capacity was authorized.

- May 20, 2009                      New three-year County DPW Technical Services Agreement with County of Marin was approved.
- Office and Staff Services Agreement with Novato Fire Protection District was approved.
- MERA Finance Committee was appointed.
- July 15, 2009                      Allocation of \$1.6M for system capacity project was approved.
- Allocation of \$600,000 for Tomales coverage analysis was approved including \$75,000 for environmental and permitting consultant costs.
- Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was approved to be appointed by Executive Committee.
- September 9, 2009                Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee was appointed and CBG Communications, Inc., was selected to facilitate the SP process.
- September 30, 2009                DPW Technical Services Proposal was approved for strategic planning process.
- Motorola Contract to install new frequencies and finalize current Motorola Trunk System Contract was approved.
- November 12, 2009                MERA Subcommittee was appointed to meet with County re: possible MERA prime site relocation to new County EOF.
- December 9, 2009                Refunding of MERA 1999 Revenue Bonds was approved.
- January 14, 2010                  Issuance of 2010 Refunding Revenue Bonds was approved for interest savings and curatives.
- May 19, 2010                      New five-year DPW System Maintenance Agreement was approved.
- New three-year Agreement with County for Communications Engineer Services was approved.
- Change Order No. 1 for MERA Frequencies Installation Project was approved.
- September 22, 2010                MERA 2010 Strategic Plan was accepted without commitment to financial estimates or projections in it.
- November 10, 2010                MERA conducted an Educational Workshop on the Strategic Plan for all members and interested parties with 21 agencies represented.

- December 8, 2010 MERA 2010 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board along with implementation actions.
- Additional five frequencies installation project was completed.
- January 12, 2011 MERA Executive Committee approved the Amended and Restated Shared Use Agreement between MERA and the County of Marin for Radio Frequencies.
- MERA confirmed appointments to the Strategic Plan Sustainability Subcommittee, Governance Work Group and Outreach Subcommittee and engaged CBG Communications, Inc. to facilitate Governance meetings.
- March 9, 2011 MERA supported the County of Marin's \$1.2M UASI grant application for 700MHz conventional interoperable system equipment and services.
- May 18, 2011 Reports #1 and #2 are presented to the MERA Board on the status of Strategic Plan Implementation by the Governance Work Group, Finance/Sustainability Committee and Outreach Subcommittee.
- September 14, 2011 The MCCMC Joint Powers Authority Oversight Committee 2010/11 Report on MERA is taken under advisement by the Executive Committee noting its recommendations are consistent with MERA's direction and actions with next generation planning.
- Replacement of MERA's critical amplifier at the County Jail is approved by the Executive Committee as part of the Frequencies Expansion Project.
- MERA Operations Officer Farhad Mansourian announced his resignation as County DPW Director and the assignment of Craig Tackabery, Assistant County Public Works Director by the County to the role of MERA Operations Officer.
- Tomales Coverage Project permitting and environmental review is authorized by the Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee received a presentation from County DPW on the proposed grant funded BayWEB public safety subsystem which will operate on 700 MHz frequencies to provide mobile broadband service to first responders.

December 14, 2011      MERA Additional Radios Policy and Procedures are approved.

Reports #3, #4 and #5 on Strategic Plan Implementation are presented to the MERA Board.

MERA's Vision Statement and Core Values are approved.

A new Governance Structure of a 9-member Executive Board with revised Principles of Governance, while continuing the full 25-member MERA Board with final authority, is given approval in concept.

A process for Strategic Plan Revision on an annual basis is approved.

Revisions to the Outreach Sections of MERA's Strategic Plan are approved.

A MERA System User Policy Statement for System Mutual-Aid and Automatic Back-Up Aid Agencies and Zero Fee Schedule is approved.