



**Joint Powers Authority Oversight Committee**  
3501 Civic Center Dr. – Room 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Paul Albritton  
Chair  
Sausalito

June 5, 2008

Larry Chu  
Vice Chair  
Larkspur

Paul Berlant  
Marin General Services Authority  
27 Commercial Blvd. - Suite C  
Novato, CA 94949

Judy Arnold  
Marin County  
Board of Supervisors

Dear Mr. Berlant,

Bill Cahill  
Ross

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the JPA Oversight Committee back on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The Committee did not have a quorum at our last meeting, so I apologize for the delay in our follow-up.

Damon Connolly  
San Rafael

Enclosed is a copy of our report which is compiled from your responses to our questionnaire and from your presentation.

John Dupar  
Corte Madera

If you have any questions regarding this report or have an issue you would like to discuss with the Committee, don't hesitate to contact Paul Albritton or me. Otherwise we look forward to meeting with you again about the same time next year.

Pat Eklund  
Novato

Sincerely,

Judy House  
San Anselmo

Jeff Slavitz  
Tiburon

Larry Chu  
Vice Chair  
MCCMC JPA Oversight Committee

John Telischak  
Belvedere

Lew Tremaine  
Fairfax

CC: George Rodericks  
Chairman, MGSA

Ken Wachtel  
Mill Valley

**Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers**



# Joint Powers Authority Oversight Committee

3501 Civic Center Dr. – Room 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903

## Report on Marin General Services Authority

Interviewed on March 6, 2008

Approved June 5, 2008

Paul Albritton  
Chair  
Sausalito

**Survey Answered:** All of the questions for the Marin General Services Authority (MGSA) were reviewed and updated by Executive Officer Paul Berlant.

Larry Chu  
Vice Chair  
Larkspur

- **Governing Structure** – Seven-member board as established in JPA agreement comprised of the County Administrator, City Managers of San Rafael and Novato, two managers appointed by the Marin Managers Association, and two public works directors appointed by the Marin Public Works Association.

Judy Arnold  
Marin County  
Board of Supervisors

- **Purpose of JPA** – Own and manage street lights, oversee taxicab regulations, provide advice on non-point discharge pollution prevention systems, manage the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program, and provide oversight on engineering issues for member agencies.

Bill Cahill  
Ross

- **Terms and Scope of Authority** – Originally created under a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (October 1990) for the Marin Street Light and Acquisition JPA. A Joint Powers Agreement creating the MSGA was finalized in March 2005 and approved by members at various dates thereafter.

Damon Connolly  
San Rafael

- **Financial Statements, Budget, and Audit** – Last audit was performed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007 was reviewed in March 2008. Budget of \$370,000 for the JPA and \$267,000 for Abandoned Vehicle Abatement in 2007-08. Debt service of \$2,104,118.75 in 2005-06.

John Dupar  
Corte Madera

- **Compliance with Brown Act** – yes

Pat Eklund  
Novato

- **Interactions with Other JPAs and/or Agencies** – none reported (overlap of responsibilities with MTA and MERA, see recommendations)

Judy House  
San Anselmo

Jeff Slavitz  
Tiburon

### Current Issues and Risks:

John Telischak  
Belvedere

The MGSA has completed a feasibility study and Request for Information for wireless Internet throughout the County. The next phase is to test the concept on a limited basis. One consideration is to partner with the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District on their pilot project to put wi-fi technology on a limited number of busses to see if it increases ridership and reduces the number

Lew Tremaine  
Fairfax

Ken Wachtel  
Mill Valley

**Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers**

of vehicle miles traveled. Approximately \$26,000 was spent on the RFI and about the same amount is estimated for participation in a pilot project.

The cost and effort for taxi cab companies to comply with the requirement for performing criminal background checks, drug and alcohol testing, and permitting for their drivers continues to be an issue. The cost for a new driver is \$381 and the annual recurring cost is \$210 to \$310 depending on whether a 5-year permit needs to be renewed or not. Cab companies contend they already do background checks and regular testing for drugs and alcohol, but doubts have been raised as to the quality and regularity. In addition, cab companies continue to request restrictions on the number of permits issued.

The MGSA is now participating in the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership. This is a \$300,000 program over three years. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) provided a \$75,000 grant which will be used to hire a Climate Action Director to plan and implement the scope of work associated to each jurisdiction's responsibility in meeting the reduction of greenhouse gasses. The cities/towns and the County have each contributed \$2,000. It is uncertain how the second and third years will be funded.

The MGSA owns and operates the street lights. The standard is a Type 15 SL pole with a cobra head fixture. Maintenance and repairs are contracted out to Republic ITS. The terms cover burned out bulbs and replacement of poles due to knock-downs or vandalism, but not for deterioration. Changing out a light pole for a new design or technology would be an additional expense to the requesting member. Any associated ADA issues will also have to be addressed with local jurisdiction as well. Republic (at its cost) is currently testing some LED street lights in Mill Valley to determine the savings in cost and energy.

Metricom was providing a wireless service from infrastructure on street lights. As a result of its bankruptcy, Metricom wireless access points were abandoned on streetlights. About half of the units have been removed. After three years, PG&E will begin charging for the power consumption of remaining units and that deadline is approaching. Cost of removal of each unit is estimated to be about \$45.

### **Recommendations:**

All recommendations from the Committee's last review in November 2006 have been implemented or addressed. In particular, the MGSA has smoothly made the transition of Executive Officer from Marty Nichols to Paul Berlant with the interim assistance provided by Mike Garvey. Upon review by their

respective boards, it was determined that an individual Executive Officer for the MGSA and MERA was preferred over both JPAs sharing the same person.

For the County wireless project, the MGSA should continue to work with the MTA on the pilot, but let the MTA formalize policy direction on the IT issues. The joint committee with the MTA, MERA, and the JPAOC should not be disbanded and should meet regularly. For example, use of funds for MGSA participation in on-board surveys of the broadband usage and needs of transit riders may be of limited value and should be reviewed by the joint committee before resources are committed.

For the protection of the public, the MGSA should continue to have taxi cab companies submit all drivers to an initial criminal background check and annual testing for drug and alcohol use. Since local taxi cab ordinances are silent on the issue of restricting the number of permits, cab companies should address this issue with the individual cities/towns and the County. The Committee would also like to get a report back on the outcome of the Taxi Regulation Program.

The Committee has some concerns with participation in the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership, especially given that no funding has been identified for the second and third years. There is already a lot of information available from organizations like International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the BAAQMD. The Climate Action Director should use as much existing materials as possible and not "reinvent the wheel". Information is also available at the Institute for Local Government and League of CA Cities

MGSA is encouraged to put its Bylaws on the MGSA web site to help the public to have a better idea how the JPA fits into the cities/towns and county government.

MGSA was responsible for the agreement permitting Metricom access points on light standards in Marin. MGSA should take the lead and make arrangements, with the cooperation of its member agencies, for the removal of this equipment before PG&E begins to charge the MGSA for providing power to these units.

MGSA should proactively advise member agencies regarding policies and procedures related to the acquisition of new street lights in member agency jurisdictions through the preparation of materials and outreach.

Marin General Services Authority

March 6, 2008

Page 4 of 4

MGSA should proactively disseminate the progress and results of its LED streetlight study.

**Contact Information:**

Paul Berlant  
Executive Officer  
Marin General Services Authority  
371 Bel Marin Keys Blvd. - Suite 100  
Novato, CA 94949  
Phone: 415-883-9100  
Fax: 415-883-9155  
E-Mail: [pvberlant@comcast.net](mailto:pvberlant@comcast.net)  
Website: [www.maringsa.org/](http://www.maringsa.org/)