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# Orinda

**Public Meetings**

**City Council** Tuesday, February 3, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way


**Planning Commission** Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way

**Traffic Safety Advisory Committee** Monday, January 25, 7:00 pm  
Community Room, City Hall, 22 Orinda Way

**Mayor's Community Liaison Meeting** Monday, February 1, 8:15 am  
Community Room, City Hall, 22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements  
City of Orinda: www.cityoforinda.org  
Chamber of Commerce: www.orindachamber.org

**• Police Report •**



**Stolen I.D., 1/07/10** An unknown suspect used the Wells Fargo Visa Check Card of an older Alta Vista resident to make over \$2,000 worth of charges. Most of the transactions were online – including a hotel reservation in Southern California. The gentleman had no idea how his card was obtained.

**Indecent exposure, 1/13/10** A 30-year-old white male parked his Chevy Blazer in front of the Starbucks at Theater Square with his private parts exposed. Not only did he use his anatomy in a criminal manner, but burglary tools were found in his vehicle.

**D.U.I., 1/07/10** A 78-year-old local man was stopped at the Shell station for driving an unsafe vehicle – his right front tire was flat. Due to his slurred speech and watery eyes, the officer gave him a blood alcohol test – which he flunked. He claimed he only had two glasses of wine, but apparently that was enough.

**Frequent flyer locked in Safeway bathroom, 1/11/10** Orinda's favorite fifty-ish tippler locked herself in the Orinda Safeway bathroom. She eventually voluntarily exited the restroom and was placed under arrest for being drunk in public, again, and a probation violation, again.



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**Letters and Opinions:**  
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## F.A.I.R. Proposes to Dissolve MOFD and Contract with ConFire

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Art Haigh of F.A.I.R.

Photo by A. Firth

**Who is FAIR?** "FAIR cares deeply about this community and the safety of all our residents," stated Resnick of the group comprised of 80-plus residents from Orinda and Moraga. "We are not a group of disgruntled malcontents... We are active community volunteers," he

added. The organizers of FAIR are not new to the infrastructure challenge facing Orinda—a decaying road and water pipe system that will require \$120 million to bring up to optimal condition. Several FAIR members worked on the infrastructure bond Measures Q and E

that narrowly failed passing in 2006 and 2007. Subsequently, FAIR leaders Resnick, Haigh, and the team's number-crunching analyst Steve Cohn were all part of Orinda's Revenue Enhancement Task Force which first raised the idea of tapping the MOFD tax revenues for Orinda's roads.

**What's the Issue?** FAIR questioned the appropriateness of the MOFD's \$19 million budget, which they pointed out totals more than the budgets for the City of Orinda and Town of Moraga combined. "We do need to pay an appropriate amount for good [fire] service," noted Haigh, "but do we need to pay that much? Lafayette pays half of what we pay," he added.

**How will it Work?** The new arrangement will provide the same fire protection, staffing levels, and engine and ambulance response times, stated Haigh. Contracting for these services will yield lower overhead costs through the economies of scale associated with a larger regional fire district like ConFire, he explained. One key difference in FAIR's proposal is that the district's two full-time ambulances will be staffed with AMR paramedics, not firefighters. The MOFD currently has firefighters who are dual-certified as paramedics

covering the ambulances, a practice which FAIR contends is expensive and unnecessary. [See sidebar for FAIR proposal specifics.]

FAIR projects \$2.5 million in cost savings during the first year and this includes covering the existing MOFD pension bond obligation. FAIR says it based the fire service cost on conversations with ConFire staff who estimated the contract costs at \$2.5 million per station per year plus the cost of a fire chief. FAIR believes the savings will increase over time to generate an overall cost savings of \$77 million by 2022, of which \$65 million would be reallocated to Orinda and \$12 million to Moraga.

**The Inequity Issue.** Orinda receives the lion's share of the projected savings because Orinda pays more, according to the FAIR proposal. "Times and facts have changed," stated Haigh. While he acknowledged that property tax revenues have greatly outpaced inflation over the past several years due to the rapid rise in assessed values in both Orinda and Moraga, he stated, "There is an unfair balance between what Orinda and Moraga contribute, because Orinda's taxes have grown at a faster rate."

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## MOFD Chief Bradley's Rebuttal

"I never thought I would be standing before the Orinda City Council regarding a proposal to dissolve the MOFD. I'm shocked," said MOFD Chief Randy Bradley when he stepped up to the podium to respond to the FAIR presentation. He then moved point by point through his rationale of why he does not believe that the dissolution of the MOFD and contracting with ConFire and AMR is the appropriate course of action.

"I have been through this before," said Bradley, explaining that he had been part of similar size fire department in the past; one in which he had recommended consolidating with a larger fire district as the best option. However, Bradley was emphatic that this was not the best option for MOFD.

"I believe that we have a very viable fire district. There are unique challenges, but I don't believe in anyway that you should risk the quality of your fire service to fix your roads," said Bradley.

"This District was created for a reason. You expect a high level of service, and that is what you are getting."

During his preliminary analysis of the FAIR proposal, Bradley found some flaws and reasons for concern. According to Bradley:

- The costs of contracting for fire service with ConFire are understated. FAIR's assumption that the cost of the ConFire contract would be \$2.5 mil per station annually. He noted that the MOFD operates at a lower per-engine-company cost than ConFire.
- ConFire is a quality department, but ConFire is a special district and does not have experience contracting services.
- ConFire faces difficult financial times ahead and may need to close the least busy stations (brown outs) and reduce companies from three to two persons which could negatively impact coverage in small communities like Orinda and Moraga.

• FAIR's assumption that contract rates with ConFire and AMR will rise by only 3.5% per year is highly questionable.

• Replacing MOFD's firefighter-paramedics with AMR paramedic-only staff on ambulances would reduce the number of firefighters initially arriving at the scene of a fire.

• Bradley indicated that he had spoken with AMR management last week, and that he did not think the AMR contract was feasible as outlined. "There is no money in a [geographically] peripheral district like ours. We don't run enough EMS calls to support two ambulances [from a private agency]."

• Regarding LAFCO, Bradley noted that the agency has the authority to dissolve districts and to assign fire tax dollars. Petitioning for dissolution runs the risk that LAFCO might alternatively elect to merge the MOFD into ConFire.

• "I believe that this [the MOFD] is the best model for these communities," Bradley concluded.

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