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MOFD's Wilson Resigns

By Lucy Amaral



MOFD

Community Room at Orinda City Hall, located at 22 Orinda Way.

During the previous Board meeting held February 2nd, Board member John Wyro was asked to start examining the estimates and statements made by the citizen group, Fire and Infrastructure Renewal (FAIR). FAIR had met with the Board to discuss the option of the City of Orinda breaking away from MOFD and contracting out fire services. This effort, according to FAIR, would free up property tax money thereby allowing Orinda to reallocate those funds to repair failing infrastructure. In an update to the Board, Wyro said the cost estimates FAIR presented could not be validated and did not include the full scope of work, EMS services would not be under the control of Orinda and estimated tax revenue projections were inaccurate.

The Board directed Wyro and Fire Chief Randall Bradley to continue this research, refine these items and discuss them at the Tri-Agency meeting with the City of Orinda and Town of Moraga, to be held March 3rd in the Garden Room of the Orinda Library.

Also during this meeting, MOFD Counsel presented the Board with information regarding the Board's options relative to terminal pay and calculation of final compensation. This presentation, stemming from concerns over potential 'spiking' of retirement pay, discussed what, if any, discretion the Board had with current employee's plans and what possible options they have for future employees.

Counsel stated that this presentation was for information only, not labor relations advice or recommendation. Most options cited were subject to contractual rights and collective bargaining rights, therefore must have the support of the unions.

"The Board had requested Counsel to provide an objective explanation of how all components of pay within the MOFD effect pension calculations," said Sperling. "This information is now a reference document for current and future Board members as well as members of the public to assist in understanding the currently arcane CCCERA pension system."

Vince Wells, president of MOFD union Local 1230, took issue with the document that accompanied the presentation and felt that it was a breach of contract.

"My opposition to such a document is that it appears that the Fire Board has requested that their attorney provide them with the steps necessary to minimize the fire fighters' compensation," he said.

Wells added that while the presentation itself was general, the document was specific in numbers and seemed to apply only to a few of the MOFD unions rather than the whole, and that Local 1230 had been actively working with MOFD to achieve an effective contractual compromise. "I believe (this document and presentation) misleads the public by leaving out the sacrifices made in order to come to agreement," said Wells. He added that the union is in consultation with its labor attorney regarding next steps.

"I'm sorry that Vince felt the way he did," responded Sperling. "However, I'm certain that it's just a misunderstanding. It was very clear in the presentation and in the document itself, no strategy nor any pro or con

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) met on February 17th in the apparatus bay at Station 41 to discuss agenda items ranging from accepting a resignation to reviewing assumptions to dissolve MOFD.

Board Member Pete Wilson again formally submitted his resignation to MOFD's Board of Directors. Wilson had submitted his resignation in November, then temporarily withdrew his request two weeks later as the family medical crisis of a fellow board member threatened Board quorum.

Wilson again cited health concerns which would hinder him from performing his duties as board member. His resignation was effective immediately following this Board meeting. On hand to honor Wilson's service was Orinda Mayor Thomas McCormick and Contra Costa County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema.

"Pete and (wife) Mimi have both been committed to the betterment of the community for years," said MOFD Board President Frank Sperling. "It was an honor to serve alongside Pete these past three years and I will continue to incorporate what I learned while working with him into everything I do."

On March 2, the MOFD announced that the Board will hold a special meeting on Saturday, March 6, at 9:00 a.m. to decide how to fill the vacancy created by Wilson's resignation. The meeting will be in the Sarge Littlehale

LAMORINDA WEEKLY | MOFD's Wilson Resigns | Board reviews final compensation options | receives update on FAIR's proposal regarding benefits were evaluated or discussed. I personally saw this document as equally beneficial to Local 1230, other represented employees, and the Board."

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