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MOFD Approves Preliminary 2010/2011 Budget, Sets Election Gears in Motion

By Lucy Amaral



At its June 16th meeting, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors approved next year's preliminary budgets and adopted a resolution for an "even-year election" for Board positions currently held by members whose terms are ending.

Considered a 'work in progress,' the preliminary 2010/2011 General and Special Revenue budgets will be put into action by July 1, but adjustments may be made up until the final approval deadline of September 30. MOFD's General Fund budget stated revenues of \$18.5 million with expenses coming in just under that figure. This budget stands in contrast with budgets from the last two fiscal years, where deficits ranged from \$800,000 to more than \$1 million dollars.

Also approved during the meeting was the Special Revenue Fund budget, which is funded by the Fire Flow Tax and grant awards. The projected revenue for this fund is \$1.2 million with expected expenses at \$1.19 million. The Special Revenue budget funds such items as station retrofitting and fire fighting equipment upgrades. The Fire Flow tax rate, which was renewed at the board meeting as well, remains unchanged from last year with .06 cents in Moraga and .06 cents in Orinda.

Board president Frank Sperling said that several factors went into obtaining a balanced budget, including a new staffing model to reduce overtime expenses, a reduced lag-time between hiring new

firefighters and their starting dates; renegotiating existing contracts; and, adjusting nonresident ambulance fees.

"I am extremely pleased with the work that the Chief and his staff have done to close the deficit gap, reduce costs, and concurrently maintain the high level of service that the District has been able to provide the community since its inception," said Sperling.

The Board also approved a resolution to consolidate the District Board election with the November 2010 General Election. The terms of office for three members of the Board - Frank Sperling, John Wyro and Richard Olsen - will conclude in December of 2010. Olsen, the newest Board member, was appointed in March after former Board president Pete Wilson resigned for health reasons. At press time, only Frank Sperling had confirmed that he will run for re-election.

The resolution allows the Registrar of Voters to conduct the election process. Going forward, the County Elections Official will publish a Notice of Election press release, to be sent out July 12-16, outlining all required information and all seats up for election. Interested candidates will be able to pick up and file papers with the County Elections Official between July 12 and August 6. Voting for this election will be held November 2.

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