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Published September 1st, 2010

Two Candidates on Ballot for MOFD Division 4 Board Seat

By Lucy Amaral

Two candidates will vie for Division 4's seat on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) Board of Directors. Challenger Bob Jungbluth and incumbent John Wyro's names will appear on the November 2 election ballot. Residents of Division 4 in Orinda will cast their votes for one of these two contenders. (Go to www.mofd.org to view a map of Division 4.)

The candidates were asked several questions regarding challenges and goals for MOFD. While each has his own ideas as to achieving these goals, both agree that fiscal responsibility and public involvement are vital components of a successful District.

Jungbluth is the owner of Strategic Concepts and Communications, a marketing and public relations consulting business, and has been a resident of Orinda for more than ten years. He is currently serving his second term on Orinda's Planning Commission; his goal there, he said, is to respect both the applicant and the community, and to be fair in his decisions. He said that in his work with the commission he has helped shape a clearer, simplified, and effective planning process.

MOFD's biggest challenge, Jungbluth said, is integrating the Board's activities - meeting the needs of the District, and balancing those needs with the desires of the community. "Specifically," he said, "justifying the existence of the District and the services provided as well as the budgeting process." He added that while there may have been some mistakes made by the Board, and some of those items have been addressed, the lack of clear and credible communication has been the issue.

Jungbluth said he would address this issue by developing an outreach program with the goal of informing the media in order to reach the general public, "(Also) meeting directly with other community leaders and elected officials in both Orinda and Moraga to justify the difficult and sensitive decisions that have to be made by the District."

Jungbluth added that while all people may never agree with every decision made by the Board, awareness of that fact does have the effect on a Board member to justify the rationale for a decision, which helps contribute to the perception of thoughtful leadership.

His goal, if elected, would be to increase the frequency of interaction so that many groups, elected officials and individuals are heard before, not after, a decision is made. "(I will) approach each agenda item with an open mind, hearing from all interested parties and be able to address those concerns from an informed position," Jungbluth said.

"I am willing to address the tough issues that face the Board," said Jungbluth. "Everything is on the table, especially fiscal responsibility. I have never backed down from a challenge, and I look forward to dealing with those that face the District."

Incumbent Wyro holds a master's degree in public administration and has been involved in the community for 30 years. His previous civic involvement includes: Orinda Union School District Board member; Acalanes District Education Fund Board member; Orinda Fire District Board; past member of the Orinda Infrastructure Committee; involved with the formation of the MOFD; and, has served for 13 years with the MOFD including his years as MOFD's first Board President.

Wyro said MOFD's biggest challenge in the next four years will be to ensure the financial sustainability of the District. "Achieving pension reform and health care plan changes is critical if we are to maintain the fire district's current high level of emergency medical and fire protection services, which are second to none," said Wyro.

Along with currently implemented cost controls and working to achieve a balanced budget, Wyro said that working with District employee unions to manage and control costs would be key to addressing this challenge. "If the voters in Division 4 re-elect me, I am next in line to serve as President of the MOFD Board of Directors," said Wyro. "I would then intend to lead the MOFD's efforts to collaboratively achieve long-term financial sustainability for our fire districts with full participation of our district's citizens and all of our district's stakeholders."

Wyro added that if elected, his goal is to lead the district in fulfillment of the District's Mission Statement of providing the highest level of emergency and public service in response to the needs of the community. "Our challenge is to sustain that standard in the face of today's economic environment," said Wyro. "I intend to continue working diligently with all of our fire district's stakeholders; foster increased community involvement; and, most importantly, to sustain the fire district's present high level of fire and emergency medical services."

"I have the capability to lead our Moraga-Orinda Fire District through this critical time in a fiscally responsible way," said Wyro. "And to ensure that the fire and emergency medical services we all depend upon will continue to be there for us when we need them."



Bob Jungbluth



John Wyro

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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