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Moraga Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors Meetings
Meetings of the MOFD Board of Directors are open to the public and take place on the third Wednesday of each month in the Board Room, Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

Next meeting(s):

May 18th, 7:00pm
Regular Board of Directors Meeting, Station 41 (1280 Moraga Way, Moraga), (go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

MOFD Moves Forward

Begins Station 43 construction project; creates Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position

By Lucy Amaral

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) Board of Directors moved to begin the interviewing process for securing an architect and project manager for the replacement of MOFD Fire Station 43, located on Via Las Cruces in Orinda. The motion was approved at the meeting held April 20. On the same evening, the Board approved the creation of a new position – Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

The action on Station 43 comes as a response to research conducted by the Board regarding the District's aging facilities. The Board formed an ad hoc committee, made up of Board members Brook Mancinelli and Richard Olsen, charged with evaluating the condition of MOFD facilities and what, if any, potential changes they might make.

Olsen and Mancinelli presented their findings and recommendations to the Board in March. The Board formally approved the replacement of Station 43 at its April 9 meeting.

According to the report, Station 43 is over 60 years old. Facility issues include: housing three to four firefighters of both genders when it was designed to house two male firefighters; not being up to earthquake code; the garage that houses the engine was originally designed for smaller apparatus; and, the structure does not meet current building standards. The report cited the estimated cost would be \$2.9 million. Financing of the structure would come from MOFD's current and future Fire Flow tax, which is separate from its general fund.

MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley was charged to review information from interested project managers and architects who are experienced in fire station construction and bring a final list back to the Board for approval. Bradley said that the time frame for construction would not begin until after June 30, and will not affect this year's budget.

Additional renovation/relocation projects include upgrading Station 41 in Moraga to national standards for firefighter health, safety and gender issues, as well as centralizing or relocating administrative offices. Bradley said MOFD is in negotiations to purchase a building located next to Station 41.

The Board also approved the creation of an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator position. The candidate hired for this position would be re-

sponsible for developing relationships with local agencies, business and associations as well as assist in coordinating emergency plans and exercises. He added that this will be a part time position and will report to MOFD's Fire Marshal.

"The creation of this position will allow the Fire District to provide leadership and emergency preparedness management resources to the City of Orinda, Town of Moraga, Canyon and the other unincorporated areas of the District. This is a great opportunity for the District, City and Town to form a partnership that will ultimately serve to improve the overall safety of the citizens of our jurisdictions," said Bradley.

Bradley added that he would like to form a similar partnership with the City of Lafayette. "I believe we could realize some efficiencies by developing standardized programs in each community. I also believe that the person in this position will be able to identify grant opportunities that could help fund plan-development, training, drills and exercises."

Bradley said that Lafayette has expressed interest in the Lamorinda emergency-planning concept, however a formal agreement will have to be negotiated to bring it into the program. And, he added that because Lafayette is served by the Contra Costa Consolidated Fire District it would also have to be involved in program management if Lafayette were to join.

During the meeting, the Board and Chief Bradley also agreed to meet with executive management consultant Larry Bienati to review the Board Governance Model. Bienati, a principal in the firm Consultants To Management, worked with the Board last year in the development of its Strategic Plan. According to Board President John Wyro, there is a range of perception of what the roles of the Board and Chief are in the administration of the District.

"Our Chief has a set of experiences that inform him as to what his role should be. Each board member brings a different perspective and approach to their perception of what their role should be," said Wyro. "We see a need to better clarify and agree on our respective roles to most effectively carry out the mission of the District. Having a document that better defines those roles will not only help this Board and Chief but those who follow."

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Final Meeting of Ad Hoc Tri-Agency Committee

The Tri-Agency Ad Hoc Committee for Fire and Emergency Medical Services, composed of representatives from the Orinda City Council, Moraga Town Council and Moraga Orinda Fire District Board, convened on April 11 and heard presentations from two citizens' groups with opposing points of view, FAIR (Fire and Infrastructure Renewal) and OrindaCARES (Orinda Citizens Against Reducing Emergency Services). Though the Committee acknowledged the necessity of improvements to area roads and water infrastructure, further meetings will not be held, and Committee members will report back to their respective jurisdictions with recommendations. Orinda City Council member Amy Worth asked MOFD representatives to prepare further recommendations on water delivery infrastructure needs. *A. Auwers*

Lynn's Top Five - Income Tax: Get a Refund or Plan to Owe? The Great Debate!

By Lynn Ballou, Certified Financial Planner™

When it comes to income tax refunds, most pundits say that getting a refund is similar to getting a bad sunburn – to be avoided! But clients often feel otherwise finding that receiving a meaningful refund is a great cash flow tool for them and an integral part of their cash management techniques.

I thought it would be fun to share some of the things I've heard from clients over the years about this topic and offer some other options.

1) I LIKE GETTING REFUNDS, BIG ONES, BECAUSE I'LL DO SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT THAT I WOULDN'T OTHERWISE BE ABLE TO AFFORD! For many this big check --- often times many thousands of dollars --- is the money they might use for something such as a family vacation. Their thinking: if they don't see that extra cash in their paychecks every month, and get a big check annually from the government instead, it's like a Christmas Club account. Better idea: move money automatically each paycheck to a savings account. That way you have access if needed and you don't need to wait for tax season to get your own money back! You can still let it accumulate for that Disney Cruise and take it whenever YOU want!

2) I LIKE GETTING A REFUND THAT'S THE SAME AMOUNT AS WHAT I OWE FOR MY SPRING PROPERTY TAX BILL! Property taxes, that unfortunately timed spring bill, seem to loom large for many. If you depend on your refund consistently every year to pay your income taxes, you might want to call your mortgage lender and set up a monthly impound account instead. Again, you are in control, not the government.

3) I USE MY TAX REFUND TO PAY OFF MY CREDIT CARD BILL EACH YEAR. Ouch. So, if the amount of the refund is the same as the credit card bill, then wouldn't it make more sense to adjust your withholding each month so as NOT to incur any credit card debt? Rates on credit cards are awful! Don't incur them if you can avoid it! Adjusting your withholding is a simple step toward getting that accomplished and use your debit card to buy only what you can afford that month.

4) I WANT TO OWE!!! WHY GIVE THE GOVERNMENT AN INTEREST FREE LOAN? These folks tend to WANT and LIKE to owe the government as much tax as they can get away with. And, okay, this had way more teeth as an argument when we actually earned a decent interest rate on our money, right? But point well taken: your hard earned money is just that---hard earned. And who does a better job of managing it, you or the government? Cautionary tale: The government has cash flow problems and is on to you! Pay systematically what you owe during the year or face BIG penalties come April.

5) I OWED SO MUCH INCOME TAX THIS YEAR --- I REALLY GOT CAUGHT OFF GUARD AND THIS IS A REAL MESS FOR ME AND MY FAMILY. I find these statements come mostly from those who are paid irregularly throughout the months, are self-employed with erratic income, or had an unusual transaction during the year such as a profitable investment sale AND they didn't make time to pay up and get caught up with taxes due during the year in real time. What's the lesson: If any of these situations resemble your life, you should schedule a mid-year tax tune-up and get on top of things! April comes around again faster than we'd like to think!

The power of great financial planning is not just math based solutions, but solutions that inspire us, match our psychological profiles, and give us positive results. And as in most things in life, one size does NOT fit all! So, go ahead --- color outside the lines --- if it works for you! The real lesson is to be in control, look at the real numbers, and PLAN AHEAD!



2011 MORAGA COMMUNITY FAIRE
May 14 11am - 5pm






Join us for a day of fun at the **Rheem Valley Shopping Center**

Entertainment Schedule

- 11:00am–Faire Opens
- 11:00am–Campo Chorus
- 11:45am–JM Ensemble
- 12:30pm–Littledog 2 Band
- 1:45pm–Chalk Art Prizes (Awarded)
- 1:45pm–Oak Grove Bluegrass Family
- 3:00pm–Peter Pan Foundations Kids
- 3:30pm–Car Show Trophies (Awarded)
- 4:00 - 5pm–Happy Hour with East Bay Banjo Club (Raffle prizes given)

www.moragachamber.org/faire

Ongoing Activities:

- Wine Tasting
- Classic Car Show
- Art Show
- Climbing Wall
- Bounce Houses
- Chalk Drawing
- Raffle


















Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, and a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). As such, she is required by securities regulations to add the following information to this column: The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.