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#### MOFD Board Discusses Potential Budget Deficit

www.lamorindaweekly.com

By Lucy Amaral

ower property values and higher Association (CCCERA). pension obligations mean the Moraga- Orinda Fire District could face an almost \$900,000 deficit for the 2012-2013 budget year.

At the MOFD Board Meeting held May 30, Fire Chief Randy homes being reassessed this past year, Bradley presented the preliminary projections for the General Fund and the Capital Projects Fund budgets. Typically, this presentation would have occurred during a separate Finance Committee meeting, then a draft budget would be brought back to the full Board for review and approval in June. Because the vacant Board seats leave only three sitting Board members, they also now serve as the Finance Committee.

According to Bradley's report, property tax revenue growth is predicted to be flat at best, while expenses continue to rise, especially pension charges. Bradley said that MOFD's pension costs will increase by more than \$500,000 this next year due to higher pension obligation bond payments, as well as de-pooling and loss recovery actions taken by Contra

Last fiscal year, the Board approved pulling more than \$350,000 District's budget. Bradley also noted that because of the large volume of property tax revenue decreased an additional \$200,000 from the original estimate. This carry-over, along with the increased expenses for next year, created an estimated deficit of \$862,208.

Bradley discussed the cost-cutting measures the District has taken over the last several years. Eliminating several full-time positions, restructuring salaries, and freezing positions were some of the actions taken by the District to balance the budget without cutting service levels.

"This year is going to be very difficult," said Bradley. "We are running out of program elements and staffing elements to cut in order to maintain the same service levels."

Bradley offered several options to try and make up the short fall including dipping into reserves again, cross-

funding the reserves with revenue from the Fire Flow Tax.

The proposed budget does infrom reserves in order to balance the clude hiring three firefighter/paramedics. Bradley noted that these hires would replace three firefighters who retired in 2012 and therefore not represent an increase in staffing. Currently, those man-hours are being covered by overtime charges. Former Board member Brook Mancinelli, who was in the audience that night, cautioned Bradley about hiring new firefighters. Mancinelli said that while it's not a long-term solution, paying overtime to firefighters is more cost effective as there is no increase in benefits or retirement charges.

> Also in attendance was former Board member Dick Olsen, who expressed concern about CCCERA and the growing pension obligations. He cited a recent study where investment-interest claims by CCCERA were overestimated. Olsen advised the Board to act cautiously.

Bradley said that the Capital Projects fund preliminary draft shows Costa County Employee Retirement staffing one ambulance for a year, or that just over \$1 million of new rev-

enues are expected, with expenditures reaching just over \$2.5 million. The expenditures for the upcoming budget year include the reconstruction of Station 43 in Orinda and remodeling costs for Station 41 in Moraga.

The discussion from the Board primarily echoed Bradley's warnings of service cuts. Board members John Wyro, Frank Sperling and Fred Weil all expressed concern about changing the ambulance configuration and how that would affect response times. As well, any redirecting of funds, such as the Fire Flow Tax, would need to be a temporary fix only. Weil directed Bradley to look at where more cuts could be made without sacrificing service, and bring back a budget proposal to the June 20 meeting for review.



#### **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 at the Orinda City Hall, Sarge Littlehale Room, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda.

#### Next meeting:

Regular Board Meetings

June 6, 2012 6:00 PM Closed Session only June 20, 2012 7:00 PM Open Session (go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

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#### **MOFD Names Assistant Fire Marshal**

Board also votes to keep the Fire Flow Tax rate at last year's level **By Lucy Amaral** 

the position of Assistant Fire Marshal (MOFD). The announcement was on service levels. made at the MOFD Board of Direc-

tors Meeting held May 30. Bradley said that according to the health and safety code, the Fire Chief is technically the designated Fire now develop her skills as the Assis-Marshal for the District and at the last tant Fire Marshal," said Bradley. Board meeting, suggested that the and create a new position of Assistant position, MOFD will save approxi-

ire Protection Officer Kathy Fire Marshal. This new position, mately \$145,000 each year while still Leonard has been promoted to combined with Bradley as Fire Marshal, would help to produce a balfor the Moraga-Orinda Fire District anced financial plan with no impact position of Fire Protection Officer, and

Leonard was a firefighter with the Hayward Fire Department for 20 The position was created after years before joining MOFD as Fire former MOFD Fire Marshal Mike Protection Officer three years ago, and Mentink announced his retirement. has recently been certified as a Fire and eliminate the Assistant position." Marshal in the State of California.

Board eliminate the positions of Fire the Fire Marshal position and elimiparcels, is collected for capital expen-Marshal and Fire Prevention Officer nating the Fire Prevention Officers

offering the same level of service.

"For now, we have eliminated the frozen the position of Fire Marshal," said Bradley. "When the economy allows, we will reinstate the Fire Marshal position. Then, we will either hire or promote someone into that position

The Board also moved to keep the "Kathy has the training and can Fire Flow Tax rate for the 2012-2013 fiscal year the same as last year, \$0.06 for Moraga and \$0.06 for Orinda. The Bradley noted that by not filling Fire Flow tax, assessed to District ditures such as the upcoming rebuilding of Station 43 in Orinda.

## A Tearful Goodbye



Photo Andy Scheck

petua Church in Lafayette. More sionalism, hard work, intelligence, on May 19. W. Scheck

olice and Sheriff's officers than 600 mourners were in attensalute the casket of Contra dance including Lafayette City Costa County Supervisor Gayle Council member Don Tatzin, and Uilkema prior to her funeral service past District Attorney Gary Yancey of public service. Uilkema lost her held Thursday, May 24 at St. Per- who both cited Uilkema's profes-

preparedness and ability to listen as some of the key attributes she demonstrated during her many years two-year battle with ovarian cancer

### Moraga School District Entangled in **Decades-Old Scandal**

... continued from page A1

Second, the School Board should by the law and do not report suspected abuse to the authorities."

Burns said that there are several steps in place in the MSD to make sure the Mandated Reporting class this that all employees are aware of their responsibility for mandated reporting.

"[Mandated reporting] is indicated in the staff handbook, we talk

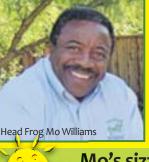
mandate a zero tolerance for teachers meeting," he said. While all MSD adand administrators who fail to abide ministrators were required to take the online training provided at mandatedreporterca.com this year, and they did, Burns said teachers did not take can find nothing prosecutable at this year, but added, "All teachers and administrators took an on-line sexual School District to answer their quesharassment class this year."

Parents asking for a continued in-

about it during the first or second staff vestigation with the possibility of prosecution of Walters, however, may have an uphill battle. "I know there is a great public outcry for prosecution," Priebe said in his e-mail, "but I time from our records."

Parents have asked the Moraga tions at the next public Board meeting on June 12.

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