



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published June 18th, 2014

## Police Services Getting More Expensive

*By Cathy Tyson*

"This is my 15th budget and the 15th balanced budget I've brought to you," Tracy Robinson, administrative services director, said to the Lafayette City Council. "We're in very good financial shape this year." Squeaking by with a \$16,000 surplus, the final budget was adopted at the June 9 council meeting.

The General Fund expenditure budget for fiscal year 2014-15 is \$12.8 million, with \$6.2 million in reserves. Increases in police services account for the majority of the 6 percent increase in expenses.

Revenue numbers are better than last fiscal year with anticipated sales tax up 4 percent and property taxes up 3 percent. While more revenue is a good thing, it unfortunately isn't enough to cover ever more expensive police services costs. Police staffing is the city's largest single expense, representing 36 percent of the entire budget at \$5.2 million. "The rise in police costs is troubling, because Lafayette, as a contract city, has little opportunity to control them," said City Manager Steven Falk. Services are provided by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department.

Part of the increase in the cost of police services is a request by the police chief, Eric Christensen, for additional personnel to respond to property crimes in Lafayette, which are up by one-third over the last two years.

Costs will expand further in the future due to expected substantial increases to cover police pensions and retirement health care. City staff is already anticipating sticker shock - 8 percent for the next fiscal year, and 4.5 percent higher annually in the future. That translates to \$4.7 million for the current fiscal year, \$5.2 million in fiscal year 2014-15 and \$5.4 million in fiscal year 2015-16.

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA