



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information and training:
Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
www.lamorindacert.org

Please submit Letters and Opinions:
letters@lamorinda-weekly.com

Opposing Forces Unite Against MOFD Station 43

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District took the first official step in the reconstruction of station 43 Oct. 21 by authorizing Fire Chief Stephen Healy to spend over \$200,000 on document reviews and updates and to purchase and install a mobile home to serve as a temporary fire station. Director Steve Anderson voted against the authorization, and he was joined by an unlikely ally in the firefighters union.

"I don't want the district to start and then stop," said Healy. "If we're going forward with the rebuilding of the fire station and the purchase of a mobile home, authorize me to do it now. I will not purchase anything until the board has seen a total cost estimate."

The chief said that the district will require a double-wide mobile home as the temporary station, which has to be purchased and cannot be rented. The home will have some salvage value, said Healy, "Something more than worthless, but less than \$95,000." Tentative plans call for the placement of the temporary station in the St. Stephen's Church parking lot.



Rendering of proposed fire station at Honey Hill Road and Via Las Cruces intersection Shah Kawasaki Architects

"For the taxpayers and residents of MOFD, station 46 was an outstanding opportunity," said Anderson. The joint venture with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to build and operate a station in western Lafayette was estimated to save each district more than \$1 million annually in expenses.

"Once we go down the 43 road, it removes any opportunity for MOFD and ConFire to collaborate on a joint station," continued Anderson. "And it removes leverage for ConFire to do what they say they're going to do." ConFire Chief Jeff Carman presented a plan to his board to rebuild station 16 in Lafayette but he has not yet received official approval. If station 16 remains closed, emergency calls

in that area will most likely continue to be handled through an automatic aid agreement with MOFD.

"I received unanimous support from our board for reopening station 16 and to report back when we have received a final proposal," said Carman. "We are forging ahead with those same plans we presented to our board."

Mark DeWeese, the district union representative, asked the board to put the station 43 reconstruction temporarily on hold. He appealed from a different perspective than Anderson, the only board member to vote against the current labor contract, fearful of the automatic wage increases it earmarked. "The financial challenges in recent years have been addressed

through salary and benefit restrictions and reductions on current Local 1230 employees," said DeWeese. "Now that the financial picture is looking positive, restoring these salaries and benefits should be the first thing this board addresses, not excessive capital spending on rebuilding station 43.

"It's not expensive buildings that put out the fires and deliver the high quality emergency medical response that MOFD is known for, it's high quality people."

The motion to authorize Healy to commence the station 43 project passed 3-1, with director Kathleen Famulener absent. Representatives of investment bank Brandis Tallman plan to address the board Nov. 18 on financing options for the primary building construction.

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No Drought in EBMUD Employee Compensation

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"Our salaries and benefit packages are fair and appropriate," said Coate. "This compensation effectively recruits staff with the skill level and expertise necessary to operate a Bay Area water and wastewater district of our size and scope. We are in a competitive job market and while we face ongoing drought and the

challenges of aging infrastructure, we need to retain our staff and managers now more than ever."

Few will disagree that it is wise to protect and conserve natural resources. Keeping property maintained by controlling unruly vegetation helps the fire district protect natural resources, and limiting water usage dur-

ing a drought helps EBMUD conserve that natural resource.

But the sacrifices of the conservation efforts have not always been shared equitably between the employees of public agencies and their customers.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.
Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

 **Letters** to the Editor

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570 

Editor:

We are seniors at Miramonte High School. We are writing to you to address the rising cost of higher education. As seniors, we are participating in the college application and financial aid process. This issue is not only affecting us, but our nation as a whole. We're burdening young adults with student debt for years to come. This is an issue that we need to address. Financial aid is necessary for almost every student due to the rising costs of higher education in America. In a society that requires a strong post-high school experience to get a good job, obtaining that education on a small budget is nearly impossible. Thus, we need to take action.

Alison Ingrey and Elizabeth Dunne
Orinda

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.



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