



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
 Wednesday, April 6, 7 p.m.
New Meeting Room:
 Moraga Library Community Room
 1500 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga
 For meeting times and agendas,
 visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
 Tuesday, April 12, 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

MOFD Unveils Station 43 Construction Costs

By Nick Marnell



Rendering courtesy MOFD

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District last week presented a detailed estimate of the \$4.5 million cost to reconstruct fire station 43 in north Orinda.

The district divided the estimate into two sections: the preconstruction phase, including "soft" costs, of nearly \$1 million; and the construction phase, including costs for the temporary facility, demolition and site work, of \$3.5 million.

"We are hearing construction costs that are pushing \$750 a square foot," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy. "We have to build to a higher standard than a house, and we have to pay prevailing wages on a public project." In 2005, the district built fire station 44 in Orinda for \$2.3 million.

The two largest components of the preconstruction phase include more than \$400,000 for Shaw

Kawasaki Architects, and nearly \$200,000 for a project manager. "I've received four proposals, and I will recommend a project manager at the April 6 board meeting," said Healy. MOFD paid over \$100,000 in construction management costs prior to the cessation of the station 43 project during the station 46 negotiations.

For the construction phase, Healy warned that the \$200,000 estimate for

temporary living facilities for the station 43 crew may rise. The district purchased a double-wide mobile home from the Monterey Regional Fire District, which used the home as temporary quarters during station construction in the Carmel Valley. "They want it out of there now, because their construction is complete," said the chief. "It will require two moves. One from Carmel, and then another from temporary storage at station 41, which will increase the moving charge."

The district will separate the contracts for site demolition and station construction. "If we have a contract that says demolition in August and September with construction to start in October, and they find a problem during demolition, we'd be bound by that October contract," said Healy. "A delay in construction could turn into a claim, which would be the worst that could happen."

The chief, while conceding the stress of juggling such concurrent timelines, estimated the station construction will be completed by September 2017.

Lafayette Fire Station Construction Tops ConFire Capital Plan

By Nick Marnell

The remodel of Lafayette's fire station 16 is front and center as the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District unveiled its five-year, \$36 million capital improvement plan earlier this month.

The plan, unveiled on March 8, includes fire station construction, infrastructure upgrades and additions to the apparatus fleet. The district also plans to acquire, in partnership with the Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff, the 85-acre site of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station, which will house an emergency responders complex, a regional training center and the ConFire administrative campus.

Project No. 1 in the report is the remodel of Lafayette fire station 16, severely damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The county added temporary living quarters in 1992 but by 2012 the living conditions were untenable and the county de-staffed the station. ConFire plans to reopen station 16 in January, but deputy chief Lewis Broschard cautioned the district board that the original \$1 million project estimate could rise due to the

high increase in construction costs. Similarly, fire chief Stephen Healy of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, planning to rebuild Orinda fire station 43, recently warned his board of a 33 percent rise in construction costs since an estimate three years ago.

While the ConFire capital plan identifies the needed district improvements, it identifies only \$27 million from the general fund with which to accomplish them. The district plans to bridge the gap via grants and alternative revenue sources. For example, fire chief Jeff Carman said that the district has hired a consultant to figure out a way to increase development impact fees for the district, and will seek board approval to have all nine cities under the ConFire jurisdiction adopt these fees.

"We keep adding homes and

adding companies," said Carman. "What does the public think is going to happen to their fire service? If you're going to add 1,500 homes, that is an impact, and that has got to come with some sort of impact fee." Lafayette does not pay the district a development impact fee.

The capital plan includes fire apparatus acquisition, which the district initiated last year with the purchase of nine fire engines, three ladder trucks and one rescue truck under a 10-year, \$10 million lease-purchase agreement.

"This year, our oldest apparatus will be 10 years old. And there will be only one of them," Carman told his advisory fire commission in February. ConFire has not decided if any of the new engines will be deployed at stations 15 and 17 in Lafayette.



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Gas Leak Response

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"The problem was not with the technicians; they were great," continued Weil. "The problem was with PG&E management. If their process for evaluating how they responded is anything like their reports to the media, don't trust it."

The company declined to directly respond to Weil's comments. "Our customers want reassurance that they're being kept safe every day," said Nick Stimmel, PG&E spokesman. "That's why we responded immediately with first responders to restore gas service to 2,500 customers in Moraga after a sink hole damaged one of our gas lines. We share the community's intense focus on public safety. That's why we brought in our gas service teams from all over Northern and Central California to go door-to-door

restoring service and conducting safety checks on appliances. We're making sure our customers know that we're here to help."

"If we ever have a bigger disaster, given PG&E performance on this one, it would be much worse," said Weil. "PG&E will not be organized enough to restore the service. In their current state, they do not know how to do it."

"It was a huge undertaking," said MOFD public information officer Dennis Rein, who assisted the town in its emergency operations center. "PG&E's top priority was maintaining safety and restoring service to their customers."

"I am very pleased with the district's response and I am proud of the job that we did," added MOFD Fire Chief Stephen Healy.



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