



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, July 20, 7 p.m.
Go to website for meeting location
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, July 19, 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 to Consider Prefunding Retirement Costs

By Nick Marnell

In order to mitigate the oftentimes wild fluctuations of the required payment to fund its retirement plan, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board July 6 agreed to consider establishing a pension stabilization program, an irrevocable trust fund designed to prefund pension costs and offset net pension liability. The district entered into a similar program in 2015 to prefund its other post-employment benefits and to offset its OPEB liability.

MOFD is required to contribute an actuarially determined payment each year to the Contra Costa

County Employees' Retirement Association, the manager of the MOFD pension plan. That payment funds the retirement benefits earned during the year, plus any unfunded district pension liability.

But the payment required by CCCERA can be volatile, based largely on its investment rate of return. Roughly speaking, the lower the discount rate, the higher the payment. The district contribution to CCCERA in 2014 was \$3.1 million; last year, the payment rose to \$4.5 million. By entering into a pension stabilization program, the

district hopes to avoid — or even eliminate — these large CCCERA payment fluctuations.

"You will maintain complete local control of your assets, and the account can be accessed at any time as long as funds are used to pay your pension obligation," said Mitch Barker, executive vice president of Public Agency Retirement Services, a consulting firm that also set up the district health care trust.

PARS representatives will recommend how much the district should prefund into the pension stabilization trust at a future board

meeting. By comparison, in 2015 the district reported a net OPEB obligation of \$6.5 million; MOFD prefunded \$84,000 that year into its health care trust fund.

"In principle, I think this is the right way to go," director Brad Barber said, as director Fred Weil cautioned the board not to get carried away with prefunding because of the district's improved financial situation.

"We still have a district to run," Weil said. "We have responsibilities to the community and to our employees."

Politics is Music to Supervisor Andersen's Ears

By Nick Marnell



Candace Anderson stands in front of her Lafayette office.

Had Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen pursued her mother's wishes with the same zeal that she has devoted to her civic career, Andersen might have become the concertmaster with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

"My mother wanted me to be a musician," said Andersen, whose District 2 includes Lamorinda. She started playing the piano, then the violin in her high school string quartet. She attended Brigham Young University as a music major and joined the university orchestra.

"But I found out there were a lot better musicians out there than I was," Andersen said. Seduced by a political science course, and with the guidance of her father — a lawyer who taught Andersen how to craft an argument, even against topics like the imposition of her

own curfew — she switched her major to public policy and enrolled at the BYU law school.

She began her law career in Hawaii writing appellate briefs for the prosecutor's office and arguing them before the Hawaii Supreme Court. Andersen put her career on hold after she started a family and moved to California. "The kids needed a mom more than a lawyer," she said. "Then maybe they wouldn't need a lawyer later."

In 1991, as she rocked a colicky baby to sleep, Andersen flipped through the cable channels and noticed a posting on the Morgan Hill government station for openings in the parks commission and the rent stabilization commission.

"I can do that," she said. "And I can give back to the community."

She secured both appointments, and her career as a public servant rocketed from there: Morgan Hill city council, Danville city council, Danville mayor. Just as Andersen was about to begin her second term as Danville mayor in 2011, Gayle Uilkema announced her retirement from the Board of Supervisors and she urged Andersen to run for the District 2 seat.

"Why would I want to do that?" she said. "My goal was to have Gayle reelected."

But the two met for a three-hour lunch, at which Uilkema walked Andersen through the job description, lecturing her about the

time and intensity the job of supervisor demanded. "And she warned me against taking this job if I was in it for the money," Andersen said. In December 2011, she decided to run, and Uilkema's endorsement helped Andersen win a close, intense race.

Her most rewarding moment as a public official came when the county voted to implement Laura's Law, permitting courts to order treatment for those who have been hospitalized or jailed because of mental illness or have exhibited violence toward themselves or others. Her toughest call was her recent vote as a board member of the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association to lower its target investment rate to 7 percent, forcing government employees and agencies to contribute more toward their retirement funds.

"It was the right thing to do, but with a serious cost to the county," she said.

Andersen was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Honolulu. She attended the same private school that produced another famous public servant. "You mean Barry?" she said. "When he came on the political scene they announced this senator from Hawaii, Barack Obama, from Punahou School. I called my sister in Boston. Who is Barack Obama?" That's Barry, confirmed her sister, who was in Obama's class, one year

behind Andersen. "Barry? Chubby Barry?" Andersen said. "I would have never thought he'd grow up to be president. He was busy on the stoner bench. I was this nice Mormon girl, stuck in the uncool orchestra schedule." They later met at the White House at a Conference of Mayors and acknowledged their high school history.

Andersen, a Republican, has nothing positive to say about her party's presumptive presidential nominee, Donald Trump. "The rhetoric is not acceptable," Andersen said. "He should be articulating messages that will resonate with voters across the aisle that offer true steps to make America great. I have yet to see that. I've only heard unprofessional and mean-spirited discourse. I am undecided as to whom I will vote for."

Andersen loves to cook, with a weakness for rich desserts. "By the time I graduated high school, I could cook anything," she said. And dark chocolate gets her through tedious civic meetings. Asked what she was reading, she pulled up "The Nine," a book about the Supreme Court by Jeffrey Toobin, on her electronic device.

Andersen does sport a few blemishes on her resume. She landed in big trouble when she rolled the family jeep in Molokai. "Right to the edge of the guardrail. One broken arm." And she was busted in high school when she snuck out for ice cream after a church function. Andersen even dated the occasional boy her mother did not approve of. Chubby Barry would have been impressed.

Despite her oftentimes lone wolf approach to county issues — such as voting against allocating funds for the struggling East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and voting against her own pay raise — Andersen was elected board chair in January. In June she ran unopposed and was reelected as District 2 supervisor. She said she vows to continue to focus on issues that affect her cities.

"As your county supervisor, what can I do for you?" she said.

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Moraga Crossley

Crossley says he was asked by a few friends to run for council. "It is important to have responsible community members on the council," he says, referring to the fact that Metcalf and Arth will not run again. He believes that he will bring a high level of community interest and knowledge to the job. Since he was on the council over

20 years ago Crossley has kept up his involvement with the city's affairs, following major issues, volunteering on committees and with local foundations, and is not shy in giving his opinion and sometimes proposing new things.

Crossley was not a supporter of the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) when it was passed, but he reflects today that it had a positive outcome.

"When I look at our hills and I don't see homes, I think it was probably a good thing" he says, adding that the rights of the property owners have to be taken into consideration, and that if the town wants public purpose on private land, owners should be compensated.

Protecting the character of the town will be one of his objectives. He says that seeing the deep scars on the hill off Camino Ricardo — site of the Harvest Court development — is not what people want to see, and that having allowed massive two-story homes uphill next to

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the street was probably not the best choice. "A single story on that first house would have been a way to deal with the visual impact," he says.

Regarding the Moraga Center Specific Plan, he rejoices that planning staff is working on a precise zoning that will ultimately create the look and feel people want to see.

"I hope people get involved in this process," he adds.

Crossley defines himself as fiscally conservative and knows that Moraga's income has been restricted since the passage of Proposition 13. He believes that if funds were to come to the town, such as developer's fees, the first use should be addressing issues that have to do with safety.

Crossley says he wants to listen to the people. His web site, www.graigcrossley.com, will be up and running in a few weeks. His team is already forming with John Haffner as his campaign manager and Ed Beatson as treasurer.

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