



Published May 17th, 2017

Orinda to raise fees in some city departments

By Sora O'Doherty

In a budget cycle filled with uncertainty about costs as repairs begin to the Miner Road sinkhole, there are two positive financial developments for Orinda: two general obligations bonds were successfully brought to market and an increase in fees will keep pace with increased costs of providing services.

Stifel, the city's underwriter, has confirmed that the bonds were sold April 5 to a mix of individuals, financial institutions and professional asset managers. The "all-in" costs of funds (akin to the "APR" on a home loan) is 3.17 percent, lower than the 3.8 percent estimated borrowing costs used for the Measure J and Measure L elections in 2014 and 2016. Thus Stifel estimates that the total tax levy will be at least \$5.4 million lower than the levels presented to the voters.

To offset rising costs of providing services, Orinda is increasing some development impact fees and fees for services provided by a number of city departments: planning, public works and engineering services, parks and recreation, police and administrative services. Fee increases require a public hearing, and they passed unanimously at a recent Orinda City Council meeting. The fees, which take effect in July, include a new recreational facility charge and a 10 percent general plan update fee; the general plan has not been updated since 2007. Fees are being added for the new Wilder Art and Garden Center, scheduled to open in 2018. The recreation facility preservation fee will be a three percent charge added to each parks and recreation transaction, except for sports facilities rentals and sports league registration. The funds raised, expected to be about \$40,000 annually, will be used exclusively for the maintenance and preservation of non-sports related recreation facilities.

City staff have also recommended that the city invest \$40,000 for a fee study, which the city council supported.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA