



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, Feb. 13, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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letters@lamorinda-weekly.com

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MOFD to add firefighters in time for fire season

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board authorized Fire Chief Dave Winnacker to hire six new firefighters, which, barring any sudden departures, will boost to 58 the number of district fire suppression personnel by the beginning of the fire season in July.

Four of the firefighters were technically approved in 2017 as part of the district \$1.4 million Staffing for Adequate Firefighter and Emergency Response grant that MOFD accepted in September. The four were to begin the Alameda County Fire Department Academy in January but Winnacker said that one recruit dropped out. The district was able to replace the dropout from its 2017 hiring list.

The two additional MOFD hires will enter an academy put on by the city of Alameda in April.

Winnacker explained that the addition of a firefighter costs \$18,000 more per year than using an employee on overtime to perform the same work. But the chief said there are hidden costs to excessive overtime that contribute to the potential for injury and a potential decrease in

efficiency. "One single shift of overtime means an 80-hour work week," Winnacker said.

The firefighters union affirmed its position on MOFD staffing at the Jan. 17 district meeting. "Our expectation is that the board approves a move to a 19 daily staffing model and to fully staff the second district ambulance," Vince Wells, Local 1230 president, told the board.

The union complained in October about what it determined was the district misuse of the SAFER grant funds. "The grant was written for a reason, and should be accepted for that reason," Capt. Mark McCullah, MOFD union representative, said at the time. The grant was written by Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, who requested that the funds be used to fully staff Medic 145, but the acceptance of the award did not lock the district into how it uses the money.

Winnacker said that the hiring authorization had neither a positive nor a negative impact on the district staffing model, including the full-time staffing of a second district ambulance.

Down goes 16!

By Nick Marnell



Photo courtesy ConFire

Lafayette Fire Station 16 bit the dust Jan. 31, one step closer to the opening of the new Los Arabis Drive station, scheduled for March 2019.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District announced another facilities change at the end of January, as the company headquarters will move from Pleasant Hill to north Concord effective Feb. 20. The new central office will house

administration, operations and the emergency medical services division.

"It will be a much larger, more professional facility," said Assistant Chief Aaron McAlister. "We barely had enough room to walk around in the old building."

The ConFire dispatch center, which also serves the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, remains in Pleasant Hill.

Lamorinda mayors balk at proposed CPUC resolution

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Weisz and Trotter, an MCE board member, agree that the issues of expanding CCA communities and resource adequacy should be resolved transparently in a formal regulatory proceeding. "The draft is an inappropriate procedural pathway to solving a cost allocation issue," said Weisz. The commission's reliance solely on confidential data

supplied by PG&E also troubled Weisz, she said.

Tatzin, an MCE board member, said that had the proposed PUC resolution been in place when his city applied to MCE, customers would have waited 15 months longer to receive electricity from the company, costing customers more money for nonrenewable PG&E energy. If

Lafayette had joined a new CCA, Tatzin said the delay would have caused startup costs to go on for 15 more months, decreasing the financial viability of the new CCA and depriving consumers of a choice.

"Even if a subsidy exists, the PUC has other means to correct that situation without delaying growth and formation of CCAs,"

said Tatzin who presented his arguments to the commission in January.

The PUC has scheduled a Feb. 8 vote on the draft resolution.

Moraga will join MCE in April. Lafayette has been an MCE member since September 2016, while Orinda has declined to join a community choice aggregator.

Orinda library parcel tax increase

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Maintenance and repairs to the structure polled as very important. As a cost savings, some voters were OK with Sunday closures.

Everett reported that overall the poll showed that 66 percent of those polled support the proposed

increase, with women registering 81 percent support while men were less enthusiastic – 66 percent is just under the two-thirds requirement for a tax measure. The majority of Orinda voters are Democrats and they favored the increase by 75

percent, while Republicans polled at 50 percent support. People with children also recorded 75 percent approval.

When asked about the tax increase but without the inflation adjustment, the approval rate rose to 73 percent. Without the inflation adjustment, the increase in the parcel tax alone would fund the library only for the next four years. Staff estimates that a higher increase to \$71 annually, but without the inflation adjustment, would be sufficient until 2028, but the poll did not ask about the \$71 option.

A tax measure presented to the local voters must occur on the same ballot as a statewide General Election, which in 2018 would be either June 5, or Nov. 6. In order to meet

the June election date, the council needs to act on the measure by no later than March 9. Council members expressed support for the June ballot proposal, because if passed by the voters, revenue would begin to flow to the city on July 1, whereas if a November ballot measure were to pass, the city would not begin to receive funds for over a year, according to Council Member Dean Orr.

Having received a sense of the council, staff will return on Feb. 20 with the proposed resolutions defining the parcel tax and placing the measure on the ballot. This would still allow time for any adjustments and adoption of the final resolutions at the regular March 6 council meeting.



Photo Sora O'Doherty

First Orinda, now Lafayette considers LimeBike

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City Council Member Mike Andersen raised questions about how the system would work in Lafayette given the topography of the city and said he would like to see a pilot program in place first. Vice Mayor Cam Burks agreed and said he thought the city should also look at some of the other dockless programs before committing to LimeBike. Two residents spoke, saying

that they had great experiences with the program in other cities.

Unanimously, with Council Member Ivor Samson absent, the four council members instructed the city manager to look into a pilot program and to also have staff access other dockless bike-sharing programs.

These hard-to-miss green bikes may yet be seen all over Lamorinda.

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