



Published July 11th , 2018

Letters to the Editor

MOFD Funding

Regarding your June 27 article "MOFD projects a strong fiscal year ahead." Kudos to the MOFD Board for finally making the tough call to start funding the District's under-funded employee retirement plans. We cannot pass on this debt to our children and grandchildren. How a little district with 70 employees can get tens of millions of dollars in debt is mind boggling. If it was correctly reported, and I do not doubt that it was, that the decision to start significantly funding the retirement plans was "vilified by the firefighters and Director Kathleen Famulener," then shame on them. Since MOFD was founded 21 years ago, its (tax) revenues have increased to almost three times 1997 levels. Yet costs, reflected by inflation, should have less than doubled. Revenues adjusted by inflation have increased 60 percent. Yet our service has remained unchanged. We are served by the same five stations and 17 responders per shift as we were in 1997. All of the increase has gone to the employees, and then some (the underfunded retirement plans). Our firefighters are great people. They serve us well. They deserve to be well compensated. And according to a 2016 survey (before the 10 percent increase since then), an average salary excluding benefits of \$150,000 would be considered by most to be well compensated. That the firefighters and Director Famulener fight the full funding of the retirement plans so that more money is available for higher salaries is disturbing. The thought of more service to the taxpayers and residents of Orinda and Moraga apparently is not even under consideration. Maybe after another 20 years.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Lafayette City Hall

The City Council of Lafayette has been using General Fund monies to purchase property and then selling the property with all the proceeds of the sale being placed in a special fund for a new city hall. As an example, the Council approved the purchase of the old library for \$1.97 million then sold the library to the Lafayette School District for \$1.995 million with all the proceeds being placed in the special account for a city hall. The GF was not reimbursed the \$1.9 million used to purchase the property. The use of GF monies by the council to further its desire for a city hall is a disservice to the residents of Lafayette. General Fund money should only be used only to service the needs/requirements of the residents of Lafayette, such as road repair, etc.

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