



Published June 12th, 2019

## Council approves pay raise for town manager

*By Jennifer Wake*

At its May 22 meeting, the Moraga Town Council approved by a 3-1 vote a salary increase of 8.5 percent for Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg to be retroactively effective March 12. Battenberg was hired March 12, 2018 at a salary of \$197,000, which was amended to \$206,020 on June 1, 2018 due to the town no longer paying a portion of Battenberg's employee contribution to CalPERS, in an amount equal to 5 percent of the manager's salary. The most recent salary adjustment was to bring the manager's salary in line with other city managers in the Bay Area, to \$229,176, according to the staff report.

A letter sent to the council from Moraga resident Jeff LaBarge expressed his concern about the optics of such a salary increase, and asked the council to vote no on the increase to regain the town's confidence about how the council spends money.

"From my perspective, it looks like Cynthia is asking for the salary of someone who manages hundreds of staff and a nine figure budget, even though she manages approximately 5 direct reports and a modest budget," LaBarge wrote. "She is holding a metaphorical gun to our head saying that she will leave to another town who will pay her more if we don't concede to her demands. All this is happening in the context of baseline performance. During her short tenure there is nothing notable that would imply she somehow will revolutionize the town to justify a premium compensation. Nothing about the above situation should lead us to cave to the initial proposal and concede the full 8.5% raise without pushback."

Orinda City Manager Steve Salomon's contract, which runs to the end of June, includes a base salary of \$224,640 per year, with 90 percent health benefits, \$800 a month for a car, and other benefits. At the time of Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk's resignation in September 2018, his salary was \$253,683 plus benefits.

The council approved the salary increase with Mayor Roger Wykle and council members Kymberleigh Korpus and Renata Sos voting yes, and Council Member Steve Woehleke voting no. "Cynthia has only been here a year," Woehleke said. "I am used to using sustained performance as one of the main criteria for setting a salary. I would have expected to bring her up to a competitive objective maybe in two years."

Council Member Mike McCluer was absent.

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[back](#)

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