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MOFD board approves change to new auditor

By Nick Marnell

District residents may have reason for concern over what the headline of this article portends, considering the troubled history the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has had with its auditors. But the change this time is an absorption of the current auditor by a larger financial company, Eide Bailly, LLC.

The district fired its auditing firm, Cropper Accountancy, in 2013 after the company failed to recognize \$2 million that should have been allocated to a special district fund. Cropper's successor, JJACPA, signed off on 2015 and 2016 district financial reports that included a \$23 million incorrectly recorded prepaid item. The district did not renew its contract with JJACPA in 2017 and signed on with new auditor Vavrinek, Trine, Day and Company. VTD has not only audited the district financial reports but also, on a limited basis, audited additional schedules included in the MOFD comprehensive annual financial reports.

In July, VTD joined Eide Bailly, a Fargo, North Dakota-based certified public accounting and business advisory firm. The MOFD board approved the agreement with the new auditor at its Sept. 18 meeting, with the \$17,687 cost for the 2019 audit remaining the same as with VTD. The district contract with the new company expires with the completion of the 2019 audit.

Eide Bailly, a national firm with offices in 50 states, was named one of the Top 10 construction accounting firms by an industry publication in 2019. "A strong accounting function can provide valuable information about a construction company and can help minimize risk," Bryce Wisan, an Eide Bailly partner, says on the company website.

The company's heralded construction reputation comes as undoubtedly good news for a fire district that has planned \$13 million in capital projects over the next three years, including rebuilds of two fire stations and its administrative offices.

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