



MORAGA

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COMPASS

Moraga looks ahead to 2020-21 Capital Improvement Program

By Vera Kochan

Trying to remain optimistic in fiscally uncertain times due to coronavirus economic setbacks, Moraga is forging ahead with a Capital Improvement Program budget aimed at strengthening the town's infrastructure needs.

Public Works Director Shawn Knapp, in conjunction with Administrative Services Director Norm Veloso and Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg, began the 2020-21 Fiscal Year budget plan by streamlining the project tracking system for assigning individual projects separate CIP numbers as opposed to using the same number over numerous years as had been

done in the past.

The buildings and facilities projects, which involve minor capital improvement along with improvements to government facilities such as funding for construction or upgrades, include continuing upgrades to facilities requiring Americans with Disabilities Act enhancements. The project will also replace the flat roofs located at the town offices and Hacienda de las Flores. Budget costs are expected to come to \$111,000.

Creeks and drainage projects include the Laguna Creek restoration at the Hacienda, which is expected to involve removing the undersized culvert and restoring the natural stream channel in order to prevent another

flood like the one that occurred over six years ago. The anticipated cost is \$693,000.

Parks and open space projects will run about \$215,000 and are all directed at the Moraga Commons Park, with plans to renovate two picnic areas in addition to replacing the existing irrigation system with minimal valve control to help conserve water and decrease maintenance and utility costs. The bandshell's composite roof will also need replacing.

The transportation category carries a hefty expected cost of nearly \$11.5 million and involves many projects which are either in final phases or still under construction. These include making curbs ADA compliant;

creating a Livable Moraga Road-Corridor Plan (looks at ways to improve the function and character between Campolindo High School and St. Mary's Road); Canyon Bridge Replacement Project; minor traffic safety programs; St. Mary's Road/Rheem/Bollinger Canyon roundabouts design; Moraga Way and Canyon Road/Camino Pablo improvements; and pavement management (fixing neighborhood streets).

Finally, general government projects include the Bollinger Valley Special Study Area; streamlining the planning and zoning review and approval process; and implementing the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation. These costs come in at

\$595,000.

The CIP budget proposed for FY 2020-21 and presented to the town council during the May 27 meeting tops out at \$13.1 million. Town staff's diligence in obtaining grant funding will offset that amount by 70% (\$9.2 million). Other sources of funding will come from Measure K, Garbage Vehicle Impact Fees and Measure J, relieving the town of an additional 27% in costs. Taking that into consideration, only 2% (\$325,000) of the proposed budget will be funded from the General Fund revenue. The preliminary FY 2020-21 budget, including updates to the CIP budget, will be presented at the June 10 council meeting.

Voluntary temporary furlough program for town staff

By Vera Kochan

Besides changing the way the town provided services, with the town of Moraga closing its offices and facilities to the general public after the March 16 shelter-in-place order and many of the town's employees shifting to telework, the economic impact from COVID-19 on the town may not be as large as originally feared.

Moraga's General Fund revenues for Fiscal Year 2019-20 are projected to de-

crease by \$421,000, according to a May 27 presentation for the town council by Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg. "Initially we were very concerned regarding the impact of COVID-19 on our operations and our revenue," Battenberg stated. "We were hearing some really scary news that revenue was going to be severely impacted. The town of Moraga appears to benefit in an economic downturn in the same way that we don't benefit from an economic upturn in that our revenues are relatively flat, so we're not seeing a huge impact to our revenue that leads me to be concerned that we need to look at furlough programs."

The decrease will be partially offset by \$155,000 in expenditure savings at which point the town is expected to meet the 50% General Fund Reserve policy at year's end.

Deciding to look at the big picture and take proactive steps to protect the town's finances throughout the COVID-19 situation, Moraga's council members voted unanimously to enact a voluntary temporary furlough program effective through June 30, 2021.

"Almost all staff have continued to work without taking extra time off, even through COVID-19, and many people are busier than before," Battenberg explained. Now that construction has restarted, the planning department has been in demand again. The parks and recreation department has become occupied with the start of the

camp season. The biggest impact is for town staff with kids at home. No layoffs have been necessary as yet, but the town felt it prudent to have a program in place for future needs.

The Voluntary Temporary Furlough Program allows employees to reduce their regular hours by either 10% or 25%. Furlough hours will be calculated for each bi-weekly pay period and can be taken in increments of one hour, and employees who are unable to work full-time due to personal issues or a lack of work will be strongly encouraged to participate in the furlough program. A request to participate in the furlough program, however, will not be granted if it will result in the need for another employee to work overtime to perform the duties that would otherwise be completed by the employee taking the voluntary furlough time off.

In order to avoid unintended overtime liability, Moraga Employees Association employees may not perform work while on furlough or work additional hours during the work week to make up for lost productive time. Any employees who participate in the program would continue to receive 100% of their normal medical benefits along with vacation and sick leave at their current accrual rates.

The Voluntary Temporary Furlough Program would not be offered to members of the Police Officers Association.

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Town Council
 Wednesday, June 10, 7 p.m.
 Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission: Monday, June 15, 7 p.m.
 Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Park and Recreation Commission: Tuesday, June 16, 7 p.m.,
 Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Moraga School District Board Meetings :
 Special Board Meeting - Superintendent Evaluation
 Wednesday, June 10, 5 p.m., www.moraga.k12.ca.us.
 See also AUHSD meeting page A2