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## With Parks and Rec revenue gone, Orinda furloughs some staff

By Sora O'Doherty



All four playing fields at Wilder are empty during the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing in no revenue to the city. Photo Sora O'Doherty

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a drastic drop in revenues for the city of Orinda, and the most drastic is the total cessation of fees coming in from the use of the city's parks and recreational facilities. The city is facing a two-year projected General Fund budget deficit of \$850,000. As a step to addressing this looming budgetary crisis, the city council on June 2 agreed to make temporary changes concerning unrepresented employees, including placing three parks and recreations positions on furlough with a 40% reduction in hours worked. The Director of Parks and Recreation, Recreation Supervisor II and the Facility and Parks Supervisor will be reduced from 40 to 24 hours per week, but will retain benefits including health care.

The change will result in an estimated cost reduction of \$160,000. The elimination of one half-time position will save an additional \$58,000 for fiscal year 2020-21, and an additional \$65,000 will be saved by foregoing a 3% cost of living adjustment for other non-represented

employees. The current salary schedule will continue without change for the unrepresented employees.

Orinda has 36 regular employees. Of those, 19 are represented by the Teamsters Union and they are currently in formal negotiations with the city. A second group consists of 17 managers and mid-managers, who are unrepresented. City Manager Steve Salomon is subject to a contract for which salary and benefit adjustments are made in the same manner as for the unrepresented employee group.

The city manager noted that the changes will impact individuals as well as service delivery. He suggested that the council should be open to new initiatives, given the reduction in staffing.

However, if recreation programs and facility rentals rebound, the furlough could be adjusted in future months to respond to changing operational needs. The city manager has been authorized to make additional adjustments to the unrepresented employee personnel policies when employees are assigned to a furlough status and report to the city council any material changes. The changes made by the city council are not intended to set a precedent.

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[back](#)

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