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Orinda begins search for a high priority analyst

By Sora O'Doherty

To begin the search for a senior management analyst to assist the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Committee (SSTOC) and other priority assignments, the Orinda City Council on May 4 approved a revised job classification and authorized the city manager to initiate recruitment.

Jud Hammon, the chair of the SSTOC, told the council that he was not so happy with one area of the job description, which lacked a requirement for specific knowledge and experience relating to fire safety, disaster management and roads and storm drains, which are the primary responsibilities of the SSTOC.

City manager David Briggs said that the analyst will support activities of the SSTOC, which is advisory to the city council. The position has existed in the past, but has been vacant since May 2018. The job description is fairly broad, he explained, but advertisements for the position will emphasize that Orinda is looking for people with experience in public works, capital improvement, grants, fire prevention, emergency preparedness, etc. Biggs hopes to have the position filled within 60 days.

Former city manager Steve Salomon had identified the types of skills needed for both Measure R and general

support functions including resources to more effectively communicate with the public on issues and topics of interest; coordination of staff training and administration of disaster planning functions; analytical support for research of topics and programs brought to the city council; legislative tracking and advocacy; coordination and support of the SSTOC and programs and services that may relate to their work; and general assistance in preparing staff reports on a variety of topics.

Orinda's human resources manager Ginger Staton undertook an effort to update the job classification, in consultation

with the city manager and Jim Bourgart, currently serving as contract interim program manager for SSTOC activities. According to the staff report, this position could be assigned as the lead position responsible for coordinating the day-to-day activities and programs resulting from Measure R, the supplemental sale tax. However, the goal is to retain flexibility to provide support to the city manager in other areas as well. It is also the city manager's intent to assign a department director position to be the lead contact for the SSTOC.

<https://www.cityoforinda.org/DocumentCenter/View/399/Senior-Management-Analyst>

Local leaders gather to raise awareness of wildfire danger and push residents to prepare

By Sora O'Doherty

The Directors of the California Office of Emergency Services, the Director of Cal Fire, the mayors of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, the president of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board, MOFD Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, and other elected officials were at the San Pablo Reservoir May 3 to try to raise awareness of wildfire danger and help residents get ready for the probability of serious fires this season.

"We now have nine months of fire season," Cal Fire Director Thom Porter began. "We need more resources; we need to prevent fires and promote fire preparedness." Cal Fire is adding 1,400 new firefighters now above the normal hire, which will add more new hires be-

fore peak fire season. Cal Fire's biggest concern is boots on the ground, he said.

In addition to more firefighters, Cal Fire is also adding new firefighting helicopters. The new S70i helicopters are larger and faster and will change the way Cal Fire battles blazes, Porter said. Five of 12 new helicopters have been added now, and numbers six and seven will be added by the end of May.

The director also talked about the Cal Fire Grant Funding for Fire Prevention and Forest Health Projects program. Up to \$317 million is available for forest health, fire prevention, forest legacy and forest health research grant projects. Cal Fire is soliciting applications for projects that prevent catastrophic wildfires, protect communities, and restore forests to healthy, functioning ecosystems while also sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Applications for grants are due by 3 p.m. on May 19.

Porter then turned to what residents can do. He stressed the need to create defensible space around residences and other buildings. "At a minimum," he urged, "meet state requirements." He suggested that there are low cost retrofit options available to harden homes. "Think every area in California can and will burn someday," he said. "Right now we have seen both at the federal and state levels 1,787 wildfires that have burned 8,420 acres." Although he said that the fire season this year is two months early,



Orinda Mayor Amy Worth and Moraga Mayor Mike McCluer Photo Sora O'Doherty

it is not too late, but work needs to be done now.

Director of Cal OES Mark Ghilarducci said that last year the agency handled 12,500 mutual aid requests, and 32 counties required presidential disaster declarations. Noting that the day of the event was a red flag day, he said that the pattern is not slowing but instead we are having fires sooner. "As the Governor said, the hots are hotter and the

dries are drier," he quoted. Fires are more extreme and require newer equipment and more technology, and \$2.9 billion has been invested. OES has added 100 new pieces of equipment across 60 jurisdictions. Ghilarducci talked about positioning resources in advance of fires, a technique that was utilized very successfully by MOFD in Moraga last year to fight the Sanders Ranch fire.

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City Council Regular Meeting:
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Planning Commission
Tuesday, May 25, 7 p.m. By Teleconference Only

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