



MORAGA

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Moraga amends employment agreement with town manager

By Vera Kochan

The town council was tasked with approving and authorizing the mayor to execute the third amendment of the employment agreement between Moraga and Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg during the May 26 council meeting.

The initial agreement was dated March 12, 2018, and provided Battenberg with an annual salary of \$197,000. It was agreed that an annual performance review would take place every April.

On May 23 of that year, the council approved a resolution authorizing a first amendment to the agreement, which would

eliminate the town's payment of a portion of Battenberg's required California Public Employees Retirement System contributions in favor of increasing her salary by 4.58%.

A second amendment, effective March 12, 2019, increased Battenberg's annual salary by 8.5% to a rate comparable with other city managers such as those from Pleasant Hill, Lafayette and Orinda. An April 2020 performance review was conducted by the town council, but no salary adjustments were made at the time.

In April of this year, an ad hoc subcommittee, consisting of Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke

and Council Member Renata Sos, met with Battenberg to evaluate and negotiate the upcoming salary compensation, once again taking into consideration neighboring municipality benefits. A salary increase of 3% was agreed upon based on the town manager's performance over the past two years.

According to town attorney Michelle Marchetta Kenyon's staff report, part of the consideration was founded on Battenberg's "strong leadership, competency in achieving, and exceeding her defined responsibilities, resulting in significant benefit to the town, its operations, and finances."

High praise was given for Battenberg's detailed understanding of the town's overall financial situation and implementation of tracking procedures; strategic addressing of the town's infrastructural needs; reduction of Moraga's interest payments by \$175,000; participation in the successful negotiation agreement with East Bay Municipal Utility District to stabilize the hillside near Canyon Bridge at no cost to the town; and launching of a staff training program with regards to specialized work, thereby cutting costs of hiring outside contractors.

The town council unanimously (with Mayor Mike Mc-

Cluer absent) to approve the third amendment to the employment agreement. Battenberg's adjusted annual salary will be \$247,983, which also includes cost of living adjustments for the years 2020 and 2021.

"It's a pleasure working for the town of Moraga," stated Battenberg. "It's a lot of work, but we're seeing great things happen that makes me proud. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge each and every one of the department directors for their work." She went on to thank all of the additional staff and the council members.

Town continues long-standing dispatch services with county sheriff's office

By Vera Kochan

When the Moraga Police Department was established in 1979, the East Bay Regional Park District Police Department was contracted for dispatching services, which also included 911 and non-emergency services.

In 1987, the Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff was contracted by the town to perform police dispatching services above and beyond



Photo Vera Kochan

what EBRPD provided. A main benefit was that both Lafayette and Orinda police departments were on the same radio frequency and channel as MPD, often times providing a tri-city assist in emergencies. Additionally, the sheriff's office constantly upgrades its technology and is known for its excellent service to Moraga.

"The Office of the Sheriff maintains a professional dispatch center at their headquarters in Martinez," stated MPD Chief Jon King in his staff report during the May 26 town council meeting. "The center is staffed 24/7 with trained dispatchers and overseen by a sheriff's lieutenant. The dispatch center is also directly connected with the county's Community Warning System (CWS) to expedite emergency community messaging during a disaster or other type of emergency." King also said that the county keeps MPD connected with statewide law enforcement telecommunication networks.

To cast an even wider net of communications, the sheriff's office also provides dispatch services for Pittsburgh, Oakley, Danville and Blackhawk. Other beneficiaries of their services are Animal Control, the Probation Department, and the District Attorney's Office.

During orientation training for new dispatchers, trainees are mandated to pay a visit to the various areas that they serve. King has been informed that the dispatch staff loves providing

service to Moraga.

The town council approved a new four-year agreement contract with a vote of 4 in favor and 1 absent (Mayor Mike McCluer). The new agreement is not to exceed \$1 million. Currently the rate is approximately \$174,000 annually, but could potentially rise to \$250,000 depending on Dispatch Center costs or town activity. "Historically, these costs have increased at a reasonable rate and have actually decreased in some years due to changes in the level of use," King explained. "If the town were to establish its own dispatch center and bring these services in-house, the costs would far exceed the current expenditure. If the town were to seek services from another agency, MPD officers would not be on the same radio channel as officers from the adjoining agencies, losing critical operational advantage and potentially decreasing the safety of our community and level of service to residents." The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Proposed Budget includes \$184,000 toward Contract Services – Dispatch Services for police.

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg informed the council, "One thing the chief doesn't tell you is, he does a lot of behind-the-scenes work with donuts and other visits to the dispatchers, so we're on really good terms with the dispatch service."

King replied, "Anything I can do, to ensure the very best service to our town."

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