

Moraga approves employment agreement for interim position as MPD Chief King retires



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Moraga Police Chief Jon King

By Vera Kochan

To the surprise and chagrin of many within the town, Moraga Police Chief Jon King will officially retire effective Dec. 17.

The good news is that King will continue in the position of Interim Police Chief until the town is able to fill his “hard act to follow” shoes. In doing so, it is hoped that a seamless transition for his replacement will ensure an uninterrupted level of service for the community.

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg’s staff report stated, “Chief King has worked for the Town since 2014, and has valuable institutional knowledge as well as strong relationships with outside agencies and Town staff. Chief King’s continued employment will ensure continuity of leadership in the Police Department, which is especially important in light of the recent death of Detective (Kevin) Mooney. Chief King will continue to lead Moraga’s Po-

lice Department with the support of Lieutenant (Brian) South and his transition to Interim Police Chief should be invisible to the public.”

California Public Employees’ Retirement Systems (CalPERS) has requirements regarding retired personnel working in vacant managerial positions, which allows for King’s hiring as a retired annuitant. In doing so, he fills a void while recruitment begins to permanently fill the vacancy and in the event of an emergency to prevent an obstruction to public business.

The town council unanimously authorized an employment agreement with King during its Nov. 10 meeting effective until June 30, 2022, or until a permanent replacement

is hired, whichever comes first. He will be paid at the top step of the hourly rate for his service, which is currently \$105.23. Assuming that King serves the full designated period, the town’s projected savings will be \$60,000. The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget includes \$286,927 for the fully burdened Police Chief position.

According to Government Code Section 21221 (h): “A retired person appointed to a vacant position pursuant to this subdivision shall not receive any benefits, incentives, compensation in lieu of benefits, or any other forms of compensation in addition to the hourly rate.” However, King is entitled to Workers’ Compensation through the town.

During the council meet-

ing, King expressed his feelings regarding his impending retirement. “I truly have mixed emotions about this, but it’s for my family’s stability; that’s why I’ve chosen to retire at this point. I love this community. I have an incredible team who works with me. It’s been an honor to serve our community, and I’m in many, many ways not ready to go. This actually provides me with some extra time.”

King also acknowledged how important it is for him to “turn the reigns over to the right person” in order to “maintain the excellence we have in our department and maintain the level of service that we provide to our community.”

Firewise Communities can stay steps ahead of a disaster



Photo Vera Kochan

Wide open spaces surround Bollinger, the Bluffs and Valley Hill



Photo provided

Maura Richards hosts first annual MOFD/Camino Pablo community open house in 2020

By Vera Kochan

At least 25-30 communities within the Moraga-Orinda Fire District are already banding together to make their neighborhoods fire wise. Approximately two-thirds of the communities are located in Orinda, but Moraga is making a move to catch up.

Firewise USA is a national organization that “provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level.” The program is administered by the National Fire Protection Association (est. 1896), and is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, but it’s up to

neighborhood volunteers to keep each community’s program successful.

Moraga resident Maura Richards began her involvement with MOFD in the spring of 2020, when her son, Tommy, inexplicably dislocated his knee during swimming practice. Knowing that the drive to a hospital emergency room would take too long, she drove him to MOFD Station 42. Firefighter/paramedic Katy Himsl popped the knee back into place along with advising Richards to call 911 in the future. “I was so grateful, that I wondered what I could do for the people who keep us safe.”

Richards decided that “my zip code is my mission statement” and began to visit the MOFD fire stations to get acclimated with all of their procedures and personnel. She also began to host a few open house

get-togethers by inviting firefighters (and their rigs) as well as her neighbors. The events also produced discussions on fire safety and “how we look at wellness rather than illness.”

Moraga’s Bollinger area resident Ann Walgenbach became involved in Firewise after the October 2019 Sanders Ranch Fire. “The people who live in Bollinger, the Bluffs and Valley Hill have only one way in and out.” She credits neighbor Anne Obsitnik with getting the ball rolling.

MOFD Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs stated, “In Nov 2019, there was a passion to do more, so the MOFD decided to make that location an organized Firewise community and do an assessment of the area. While there’s not an active role during a fire, it’s basically for fire prevention. [Chief] Dave Winnacker was pushing for the

Firewise program. Because of the wildfire threat to Lamorinda it’s important to get more neighborhoods established and working together to make them safe.” Isaacs noted that California provides funding to programs involved in fire prevention, and MOFD has been granted \$90,000 to distribute for that purpose.

Walgenbach and her neighbors received a not too surprising assessment from Winnacker. “The wildfire behavior will be dominated by topography and weather due to the open spaces surrounding this area. Due to the proximity of undeveloped areas immediately surrounding the community, the primary fire concern is three dimensional spread via ember cast from a distant fire.” There was also concern regarding older trees and vegetation in close proximity to struc-

tures and the difficulty in evacuating 155 residences in the event of an emergency.

Last year as a first-time Firewise community, residents increased their awareness of fire danger through safety education, meetings and a neighborhood newsletter. They also stepped up maintenance of vegetation adjacent to structures by removing flammable species; conducted maintenance of duff and litter under mature trees; trimmed trees to create a minimum 5-foot air gap; removed dead tree litter and other combustible material from roofs and gutters; and held a community chipping day.

This year, residents conducted evacuation exercises and appointed block captains in addition to continually mitigating their properties. They have also joined a free group texting app called GroupMe that allows the neighbors to be in contact with each other in the event of emergencies.

MOFD is developing an ambassador program for residents to operate in their own neighborhoods for home assessment and fire safety.

For more information regarding Firewise USA visit: nfaa.org/wildfirecontact. For questions regarding MOFD visit: MOFD.org or contact: Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs at: jisaacs@mofd.org. For neighborhood involvement with MOFD firefighters contact: Maurichards3@gmail.com. For information about creating a Firewise community contact: Annwalgenbach@gmail.com.

What’s in your water?

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“What’s not in your water are PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl Substances), lead or pathogens,” said Teefy. “PFAS are human-made contaminants, and the source where our water comes from has protected watersheds

that don’t have factories, airports or landfills that can leak PFAS into the environment.”

Lead has been removed from all service lines decades ago, and any pathogens (diseases) have been removed due to rigorous treatments done by EBMUD. If you’d like to test for

lead in the pipes on your property (these are not under the EBMUD jurisdiction) you may request a free home lead test kit by visiting: ebmud.com/lead. For additional questions about water quality call: State Water Board North Coast (707) 576-2220 or EBMUD 1-866-403-2683.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors
Wednesday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 7, 1 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



Public Safety

Emergency response:
Emergency: 24 Hours 911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010
Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt 925-299-3221
Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department:
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan 925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report
Oct. 31 - Nov. 13

Alarms	32
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	14
Traffic	95
Suspicious Circumstances	4
Suspicious Subject	11
Suspicious Vehicle	13
Service to Citizen	32
Patrol Req./Security Check	44
Public/School Assembly Check	15
Supplemental Report	24
Vacation House Check	11
Welfare Check	14

Ordinance Violation	3
Vehicle violations	
Auto Burglary	
3900 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
300 Block Buckeye Ct.	
Brown Ave./Deer Hill Rd.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Police Department	
800 Block Moraga Rd.	
50 Block Lafayette Cir.	
Reckless Driving	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24	
Moraga Blvd./2Nd St.	
St Marys Rd./Rohrer Dr.	
Glenside Dr./Michael Ln.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
Under The Acalanes Overpass	
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Stolen Vehicle Recovery	
Nb 1 680 At N Main St., Wcr	
Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Olympic Blvd.	
Tc - Minor Injuries	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Condit Rd.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Carol Ln.	
Tc - Property Damage	
Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Happy Valley Rd.	
Dewing Ave./Brook St.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Happy Valley Rd.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
600 Block Burton Dr.	
Quandt Rd./Hillview Ln.	
400 Block Florence Dr.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Golden Gate Way.	
Other criminal activity	
Computer Fraud	
20 Block Crest Rd.	
Identity Theft	
200 Block Happy Hollow Ct.	
Panhandling	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Mountain View Dr.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	

Petty Theft	
700 Block Los Palos Mnr	
900 Block Oak St.	
Shoplift	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Warrant Service	
Not Available	
Nuisance to the Community	
Disturbance-domestic	
Deer Hill Rd./Orchard Rd.	
3200 Block Judith Ln.	
Disturbing The Peace	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Loud Music	
Old Tunnel Rd./Buchan Dr.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Risa Rd.	
Risa Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Loud Noise	
Moraga Rd./Old Jonas Hill Rd.	
Loud Party	
1100 Block Upper Happy Valley Rd.	
Public Nuisance	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
900 Block Carl Rd.	
Hidden Valley Rd./Acalanes Rd.	
Paulson Ct./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Silver Springs Rd./Moraga Rd.	
Vandalism	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3500 Block Eagle Point Rd.	
Other	
Harassment	
900 Block Hough Ave.	
Indecent Exposure	
600 Block St Marys Rd.	
K9 Outside Assist Request	
1300 Block Camino Peral, Mor	
Loitering	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Trespass	
3500 Block Deer Hill Rd.	
900 Block Moraga Rd.	
10 Block Via Magnalena	
Trespass W/ Vehicle	
3200 Block Andreasen Dr.	
900 Block 1St St.	

Unwanted Guest	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Violation Custody Order	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3600 Block Brook St.	
Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report	
Nov. 2 - Nov. 14	
Alarms	8
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic	17
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	3
Suspicious Vehicle	1
Service to Citizen	44
Patrol Req./Security Check	4
Supplemental Report	16
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	11
Public/School Assembly Check	1
Ordinance Violation	0
Vehicle violations	
Accident Property	
St Marys College (2)	
Dui Misd	
100 Block Moraga Way, Ori	
Excessive Speed	
Bollinger Canyon Rd./Joseph Dr.	
St Marys College	
St Marys/Ifo College	
Ivy Dr./Moraga Way	
Rheem Blvd./Fernwood Dr.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Library	
St Marys College	
Reckless Driving	
St Marys Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.	
Campolindo High School	
Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd.	
Tc - Property Damage	
Ifo Safeway	

Traffic Hazard	
Post Office	
Campolindo High School	
Devin Dr./Moraga Rd.	
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.	
Other criminal activity	
Fraud False Pretenses	
30 Block Kinston Ct.	
Not Available	
Identity Theft	
10 Block Idlewood Ct.	
Panhandling	
Moraga Farmers Market	
Petty Theft	
Safeway (2)	
Petty Theft Veh Parts	
10 Block Willow Spring Ln.	
Unlawful Sexual Intercourse	
90 Block Miramonte Dr.	
Nuisance to the Community	
Disturbance-domestic	
Not Available	
Loud Music	
2100 Block Ascot Dr.	
Campolindo High School	
Loud Party	
70 Block Miramonte Dr.	
Public Nuisance	
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
1000 Block Country Club Dr.	
Other	
Extortion	
St Marys College	
Shots Fired	
Canyon Rd./Camino Pablo	
Threats	
St Marys College	



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back soon