



MORAGA

See public meetings schedule on this page and check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
Town of Moraga:
 www.moraga.ca.us
 Phone: (925) 888-7022
Chamber of Commerce:
 www.moragachamber.org
Moraga Citizens' Network:
 www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Town Council:

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission:

Tuesday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m.,

Park and Recreation Commission:

Monday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.,

Moraga School District Board Meetings:

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 6 p.m.

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Moraga participates in opioid settlement agreement



By Vera Kochan

Moraga Police Chief Jon King and Assistant Town Attorney

Denise Bazzano informed the town council in a staff report during its Dec. 8 meeting about a multi-jurisdictional, national lawsuit begun in 2017, directed against opioid distributors such as AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson along with manufacturers Johnson & Johnson, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc. (collectively "Janssen").

Opioid abuse, addiction, overdose and death in the United States has become an increasing crisis in recent years. According to the www.drugabuse.gov website: "Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others."

The website explains, "All opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time as prescribed by a doctor, but because they produce euphoria in addition to pain relief, they can be misused (taken in a different

way or in a larger quantity than prescribed, or taken without a doctor's prescription). Regular use – even as prescribed by a doctor – can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to addiction, overdose incidents, and deaths."

In July 2021, the National Prescription Opiate Litigation (U.S.D.C. Case No.1:17-CV-2804) nationwide settlement, brought on by various states and subdivisions, came to an agreement requiring the distributors to pay nearly \$21 billion and the manufacturers to pay approximately \$5 billion. About \$2.4 billion of the settlements will be directed to California and its subdivisions.

If Moraga decides to opt in to the Settlement Agreements, it could receive between \$59,668 to \$72,800 which will be paid out over 18 years beginning as early as April 2022.

The staff report states, "Under the Settlement Agreements, all of the proceeds received by non-litigating entities, such as Moraga, must be spent on activities to abate the impacts of the opioid crisis such as: providing matching funds for operating costs for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) facilities; creating new or expanded SUD treatment infrastructure; addressing the needs of vulnerable populations that are disproportionately impacted by SUD; preventing addiction in vulnerable youth; and preventing overdose deaths and other harms through increased availability and distribution of naloxone and other drugs that treat overdoses."

"Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose," explains the Drug

Abuse website. "It is an opioid antagonist. This means that it attaches to opioid receptors and reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. Naloxone can be given as a nasal spray or it can be injected into the muscle, under the skin, or into the veins."

If the town opts into the Settlements prior to Jan. 2, it must notify the fund administrator whether it requests a direct payment or whether the payments are to be allocated to the county at least 60 days prior to the payment date in the agreement. Direct receipt of the funds will require the town to account for its usage with annual written reports.

One area where the funds could be put to good use would be to educate students about the dangers of opioid addiction. Another would be to continue with officer training in the use of naloxone in the emergency response of an opioid overdose. "Our officers already carry naloxone," stated King. "We reached an agreement with the county health department a couple of years ago, and while we have not had to, thank goodness, use it, every officer carries it. I carry it when I'm on patrol, and there have been times in the past where it would have been very useful."

Seeing a clear benefit to participate in the Settlement Agreement, the council unanimously voted in favor of receiving the payment over an 18-year period with the option to redirect the funds to the county for use in their programs.

Town accepts \$470K California Department of Justice Tobacco Grant

By Vera Kochan

In order to help law enforcement agencies combat tobacco-related crimes involving juveniles, the California Department of Justice Tobacco Grant program was established in 2017. Over \$124 million in grants have been awarded to police departments with the purpose of providing tobacco-related education and outreach to under-aged youths.

According to a staff report presented to the town council on Dec. 8, Moraga Police Chief Jon King and Lt. Brian South shared some findings from the 2019-20 California Healthy Kids Survey. "Campolindo High School students self-reported that 36% of 11th-graders had used a vape (electronic cigarette) product and 8% had smoked an entire cigarette. Additionally, only 37% of ninth-grade students believed that occasional cigarette smoking was harmful and only 34% thought occasional vaping was harmful."

The staff report also mentioned that "the October 2019 Merrill Fire was started by a discarded vaping device and teens or young adults were observed in the area just prior to the start of the fire."

During the grant application process, MPD declared a proposal to hire a Juvenile Officer to the force whose assign-

ment would involve the coordination of tobacco-related education, outreach and enforcement within the town. Said officer would provide tobacco-related training to the other officers within the department and retain contact with schools in order to conduct educational presentations on campuses.

At this point, there are nine establishments in Moraga engaged in the sale of tobacco involved products. MPD intends to work with those retailers to ensure their compliance with the town's statutes and ordinances.

In November, MPD was notified of the \$470,736 grant award (the full amount that was requested), which covers a 36-month period. The town council voted unanimously to accept the grant.

"The kudos go to Lt. South," declared King. "He actually did a lot of the research and found this grant. We've been talking about it and single-handedly, with only a minor amount of editing from yours truly, got this taken care of; got the grant written; followed up with the Department of Justice and hounded them a little bit; and literally brought home the bacon."

"Credit where credit's due on this one, Brian," added King. "He knows I think the world of him anyway. He did an incredible job on this and great work for us."

Cliff Dochterman Celebration of Life postponed

The Celebration of Life planned on Jan. 14 at 2 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Serbian Church in Moraga for Cliff Dochterman, who recently passed away following a brief illness, has been postponed due to COVID concerns.

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