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Plenty of 'new' for MOFD in 2018

By Nick Marnell



In the district crosshairs in 2018 Photo Nick Marnell

Fire roared down the hillside into the neighborhood and burned houses on all sides of the Milligan property, and due to the efforts of Capt. John Bensley, engineer David Mazaika and firefighter-paramedics Andrew Leach and Jeremy Kshevatzky, Marshall Milligan said his house was unscathed.

Milligan thanked the MOFD crew members for their effort. "Their response was as professional as their performance in the field. They said they appreciate the opportunity to serve and don't deserve any special thanks," said Milligan, who offered special thanks nonetheless via a \$2,500 donation to the Rescue One Foundation, a nonprofit which supports emergency medical programs and purchases medical equipment for the district.

Barber added a new topic under the district announcement section of the meeting, calling for future agenda items to be discussed by the board. Barber kicked off the new format by offering quick reinforcement to Nelson, ordering an agenda item for Feb. 21 on steps to take to improve the inadequate water flow of underperforming district fire hydrants.

The district also announced a new meeting schedule for 2018, doubling the number to the first and third Wednesdays of each month, rotating between Moraga and Orinda.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District redefined the "new" of the new year Jan. 3 as new board president Brad Barber convened the first 2018 district meeting at a new time - 6:15 p.m. - in a new location - a conference room at the Orinda City Hall complex.

New goals were proposed for the district by Orinda resident Richard Nelson, starting with the timely rebuild of Fire Station 43, around the corner from which Nelson lives. "The public will forgive mistakes of the past but only if they are not repeated in the future," Nelson said of the beleaguered project that suffered through two false starts in 2017. Nelson also stressed the importance of improving the inadequate flow at many Orinda fire hydrants, which are owned by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. "It's time to work with the city of Orinda and EBMUD," Nelson said. "It's our problem, not somebody else's problem."

New Fire Chief Dave Winnacker announced a new schedule for the Station 43 rebuild, with bidding on the project to close Jan. 19, board approval of the contract on March 9 and the first shovels to hit the ground March 21.

The chief shared news from the Milligan family of Santa Barbara, whose house was saved by an MOFD strike team during the December Southern California wildfires.

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