



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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Plenty of 'new' for MOFD in 2018

By Nick Marnell



In the district crosshairs in 2018
Photo Nick Marnell

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 Winacker 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. 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 Mil-

ligan, 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.

ConFire all-day training session preps first responders for medical emergencies



Capt. Gary Hearn, firefighter Brian George and engineer Sean Tracey of Lafayette Fire Station 15 participate in December in an all-day emergency medical services training session with recruits from Academy 51.



The recruits learn how to use a Rapid Intervention Crew pack. A Rapid Intervention Crew is a specialized fire crew that rescues firefighters in distress. Photos courtesy Danny Nguyen, ConFire

Contra Costa LAFCO seeks one special individual

By Nick Marnell

If you made a new year's resolution to become more active in local government, an alternate public seat with the Contra Costa

Local Agency Formation Commission may be just what you are looking for.

According to statute, LAFCO

is an independent agency created by the state of California, charged with encouraging orderly growth, discouraging urban sprawl and preserving agricultural and open space lands. The commission meets these objectives by regulating the boundaries of cities and special districts and conducting municipal services reviews and other special studies.

Lamorinda residents may be familiar with the commission's objective of regulating special district boundaries, as the city of Lafayette considered seceding from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District in 2013 and briefly discussed annexation by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Had the city and the two districts worked out the details of the planned detachment and annexation, MOFD or the city would have submitted an application to LAFCO for approval.

"LAFCO would consider the impact on the government agencies, and would look out for the best interests of the residents of Contra Costa County," said Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, a LAFCO commissioner since 2010.

Tatzin said that most of the applications that LAFCO receives deal with annexations and consolidations. If LAFCO doesn't agree with the submitted terms, it would send the parties back to restructure the deal or to rethink the entire process. In rare events, LAFCO is sued over its decision. "LAFCO doesn't lose many of those lawsuits," Tatzin said.

Contra Costa LAFCO comprises seven voting members and four alternates. These include two

members from the Board of Supervisors, two members from municipal councils, two members from independent special district boards and one public member, plus one alternate in each sector. Alternate members participate in meetings, but vote only when the regular member is absent or has a conflict of interest. The alternate public member recently resigned, hence the current opening.

Candidates face few rigid requirements. Lou Ann Texiera, LAFCO executive officer, said that since the alternate public member is a public official, that person must fill out a standard annual financial disclosure statement with the California Fair Political Practices Commission. The alternate public member may not be an elected public official or a member of a special district board.

"I'm not set on a certain type of person, other than someone who is willing to invest the time required, is interested in planning, land use, public safety and healthcare, and has a strong sense of fiscal responsibility," said District 2 Supervisor and LAFCO Commissioner Candace Andersen.

Tatzin stressed that public sector experience is not required of those applying for the alternate public position. "You have got to be comfortable looking out for what's best for the residents of Contra Costa County," repeated Tatzin, a member of the LAFCO ad hoc committee that will interview candidates and recommend finalists to the commission.

Details of the position, including an application, are listed on the Contra Costa LAFCO website.

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