



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published December 9th, 2009

MOFD Board Member Pete Wilson Withdraws Resignation

By Lucy Amaral

The Sarge Littlehale Room at Orinda's city offices was standing room only December 2 at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board Meeting, with citizens ardently voicing their opinion during the public comment section on whether the Board should hold a special election to replace resigning Board President Pete Wilson or whether the Board, itself, should appoint a replacement. Wilson had tendered his resignation, citing health reasons, at the MOFD Board Meeting on November 18. A surprise announcement ended the discussion.

While some speakers favored an appointment by the Board, the vast majority of the speakers came out in favor of an open election, most noting that transparency in all efforts is critical at this time and an open election would go a long way to boost the community's confidence in the Board.

The spirited debate became a moot point as Wilson opted to withdraw his resignation. Wilson noted in a letter he read later in the meeting, that a medical crisis in Board Member Frank Sperling's family caused Wilson to rethink his resignation. According to Wilson's letter, his desire to maintain a Board quorum, along with the fact that Fire Chief Randall Bradley is new in that position, compelled him to rescind his resignation, for the next several months at least.

"It was a very heartfelt gesture on Pete's part and a decision that must have been very difficult for him to make," said Board Member John Wyro. "Saying goodbye the first time was emotional for him, he has given so much, but to step back in when he saw a need must have been equally, if not more, difficult. We look forward to good news from the Sperling household and thank Pete for his dedication to the community."

Almost lost in the shuffle was that night's ratification of MOFD's Local 1230 union's Memorandum of Understanding; in essence, the firefighter's contract. According to Wyro, the union made several strong concessions including no salary increases for the duration of this contract, which expires January 1, 2011, and that a joint labor-management committee will be formed to review health and retirement options. The committee's goal, according to the contract, is to identify alternate approaches that may provide some cost savings to the District and its employees.

"It is a new beginning to a cooperative effort with Local 1230, working together to deal with pension and rising health care costs as well as to assure the maintenance of the high level of service the community expects." said Wyro.

During this meeting, Board Member Fred Weil also requested that the MOFD Board meet with the Orinda and Moraga City Councils to discuss items of mutual interest, such as housing density, building height requirements and how it relates to MOFD service. Weil instructed Chief Bradley to seek possible meeting times in January as well as agenda items from both city councils. Weil said he sees these meetings building on themselves with the initial 'tri-agency' meeting being complemented with Orinda/MOFD and Moraga/MOFD as city-specific agenda items come to light.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA