



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published December 19th, 2012

## New MOFD Board Hits the Ground Running Approves sending Station 43 project out to bid

By Nick Marnell

Alex Evans and Steve Anderson were sworn in last week as the two newest members of the Moraga Orinda Fire District Board of Directors. Since they ran unopposed, Evans and Anderson were appointed in lieu of election. Anderson represents District 3, which includes sections of Orinda, Canyon and Moraga. Evans is from District 5 in Orinda. Board president Fred Weil, who also ran unchallenged, was sworn in as well.

After a brief celebration with family and friends the new board started working through a very long agenda that included, among other things, incident reports, the 2011-12 financial audit and Station 43.

"This was my most challenging day as fire chief," stated a visibly shaken Randall Bradley, referring to Dec. 2 when a multi-vehicle accident on Highway 24 resulted in serious injuries to three of his firefighters. Bradley told the board that all procedures were properly followed during the incident, but he also vowed that he was going to look again at everything, all of the policies and procedures, to be sure that something like this does not happen again. The firefighters will return to work. "Two of them, it may take a while. But they'll be back," said Bradley.

A representative of the Cropper Accountancy Corporation gave a presentation on the audit of the district's 2011-2012 financials. Evans and Anderson appeared frustrated by the findings, specifically, that the true liabilities of the pension and other post-employment benefit obligations were not stated. The auditor explained that government standards do not require that and quickly wrapped things up by calling it a "clean audit."

A debate about seeking bids for the construction of a new and improved Station 43 turned out to be the most interesting feature of the evening. In 2011 the board determined that Station 43 needs to be replaced because it does not meet seismic standards, modern fire equipment does not fit in the apparatus bays, and the living area does not adequately accommodate mixed gender staffing.

Weil opened the discussion by expressing the need to start the formal bidding process. Anderson wanted to know if the board could even authorize the work before they read the finalized financials. What if they discovered that they couldn't afford it? Evans agreed. Other members wanted to secure the bids and see how things fell into place.

Steve Meyers, MOFD attorney, cautioned that responding to bid requests is a time consuming process and companies expect that the request is made in good faith. "It's not to be a fishing expedition," he said.

Bradley was in favor of putting out the bids. "We need this structure to be safe for our employees," he said. "It must be redone, and brought to earthquake standards. It's one of the costs of doing business for a fire department."

Board member John Wyro said that due to all of the construction now going on in Walnut Creek costs are only going to go up because of demand, which would result in this project becoming even more expensive if delayed. Board member Frank Sperling countered that all of that new construction should mean more revenue down the road, so they could afford to wait.

Finally, Weil stated that the request for bids was a top priority and they ought to approve the request. "If the number doesn't come in, we're going to have to do something else," said Weil who then called for a vote.

On a 3-2 vote the board agreed to request bids, with Anderson and Evans dissenting.

The board broke for a closed session on labor negotiations. "No action was taken," said Weil. "It was simply an update on the status of negotiations for the new board members." Vince Wells, president of Local 1230, added, "We're scheduled to get back to negotiations in February."

The next regular meeting of the board was rescheduled from Jan. 2 to Jan. 9, 2013.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA