



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, March 18, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, April 14, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information
and training:
Lamorinda Community
Emergency Response Team (CERT)
www.lamorindacert.org

ConFire Seeks Public-Private Ambulance Partnership

By Nick Marnell

Jeff Carman has proposed his most radical idea yet as the chief rebuilds the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Carman convinced the Board of Supervisors to allow ConFire to pitch for the available county ambulance contract, up for renewal this year. But not only does the district plan to pitch for the ambulance contract, it is looking to partner with a private ambulance company to help secure the winning bid.

Financial advantages to both the ambulance company and the fire district make this partnership

concept feasible. "The ambulance companies are very good at the business side of their operation, including billing and dynamic deployment of resources," said Carman. Private ambulance companies are not eligible for the government Ground Emergency Medical Transportation reimbursement program – a federal match, up to costs incurred, for providing approved services – which is available only to public entities. So partnering with a public entity may be a sound business model for the ambulance companies. AP Triton LLC, a fire

consultant, estimates that nearly \$10 million per year will be available in GEMT funds in Contra Costa County.

ConFire posted a request for qualifications last month to prospective contractors. The incumbent county ambulance vendor, American Medical Response, likely a bidder for the new county contract, could also be a partnership candidate. "Yes, we'll certainly consider it," said Erik Rohde, AMR General Manager for Contra Costa County. "We're looking to improve the county emergency medical system in

whatever way we can."

Proposals were due to the district at the end of February; ConFire expects to choose its partner later this month. "Other fire agencies in and around the Bay Area and across the state are watching what model emerges from our negotiations," said Carman. "I am excited about it. I think it will be a true blend of public and private and will provide the best service to the citizens of any system I have seen."

Supervisors Settle Salary Dispute

By Nick Marnell

By declining to take the lead of Supervisor Candace Andersen, the county supervisors will each earn an additional \$81 in salary in 2015.

The Board of Supervisors passed

a motion in November to increase the supervisors' salaries by 33 percent, but Andersen, whose district includes Lamorinda, voted no and vowed to take only a 4 percent raise. "It's not the appropriate thing to do," she said at the time. "For us to take that large of an increase, while the raises for 9,000 county employees average around 4 percent, seems arrogant, and is not the way to lead." She asked her fellow supervisors to forfeit a portion of their raise as well, but the board voted 4-1 for the 33 percent increase.

An outraged public called for a referendum to block the salary increase. Responding to both the public backlash and the outcry from labor unions, the board rescinded its raise in January. It directed county counsel to prepare an ordinance authorizing a 7 percent salary increase, and an alternate ordinance that linked the supervisors' salary to 56.5 percent of a Superior Court judge's salary. The 7 percent increase was based on a 4 percent cost of living adjustment granted to county employees in July 2014 plus a 3 percent COLA that employees will receive July 1.

The supervisors eschewed the benchmark formula at the March 3 board meeting and passed a motion 3-1 introducing an ordinance calling for the 7 percent pay increase. The board also voted 4-0 to create an ad hoc committee to study the supervisors'

compensation. Supervisor Mary Piepho dissented on the raise motion, suggesting that the board not vote on its compensation until the ad hoc committee releases its findings. Absent was Supervisor Federal Glover (see separate story).

The 7 percent increase takes effect June 1, giving the supervisors a 2015 salary of \$101,463. Had they taken the 4 percent raise suggested by

Andersen in November, the supervisors would have earned \$101,382 this year.

The ad hoc committee will report to the board in July. "It's a fresh look at our compensation, and it's preferably now out of our hands," said Andersen, who advised the board that the committee may also recommend to lower the supervisors' compensation.

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