



**Fire Districts**

**Public Meetings**

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District** Board of Directors  
 Wednesday, June 6, 7 p.m.  
 Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

**ConFire** Board of Directors  
 Tuesday, June 12, 1:30 p.m.  
 Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez  
 For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

**Chief praises firefighters for improved MOFD turnout times**

By Nick Marnell



Photo courtesy MOFD

Firefighters from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District contained a May 16 structure fire to the garage at 199 Corliss Drive in Moraga, with minimal fire, heat or smoke damage to living space in the home. No residents or firefighters were injured. Because of the extensive fire damage the cause and origin of the fire remain under investigation.

According to the district incident report, the call was dispatched at 8:17 a.m. and the first responding unit arrived seven minutes later. Fire Chief Dave Winnacker attributed the quick response to a speedy turnout time, and also to a bit of luck, as the Corliss home is surrounded by fire stations 41, 42 and 44. "And there was a fire hy-

drant right in front of the house," the chief said.

Improved turnout time, the period between the call dispatch and the crew's departure from the fire station, has been an emphasis for Winnacker. He identified areas where the district was able to improve the times, such as the replacement of defective hardware and through firefighter education.

When the chief pulled daily reports of turnout times, he noticed one station in particular lagged in reported times. The captains and the battalion chief reported nothing out of the ordinary in firefighter behavior during turnout, so when the chief officers dug deeper, they found that the station was using defective communication equipment.

As the fire engine was already a couple of blocks down the road, the equipment was only then reporting that the engine had left the station. The equipment was replaced, and reported turnout times improved.

Code 3 calls, the most serious of emergency calls, include lights and sirens, while Code 2 calls are nonemergencies, with no lights and sirens. Winnacker found that the firefighters treated turnout for the Code 2 calls exactly that way: that they weren't emergencies, so no need for the crews to hustle into their turnout gear. Firefighters changed that mindset.

Other tweaks to the system included reorganized turnout at Station 41, which houses five firefighters but contains only one bath-

room. (The station is scheduled for an overhaul in 2019.) Five people battling over one bathroom can be hectic when the bell goes off, so the companies arranged for the two medics to use the bathroom first so they could run the ambulance out of the station. That tiny adjustment saves precious seconds of ambulance turnout time.

District records show that March and April median turnout times dropped an average of 17 seconds from those of December, January and February to 1 minute, 16 seconds.

"The crews have been committed," Winnacker said. "Their work is what is responsible for the drop in turnout time."

**MOFD firefighters save the life of a cyclist in Orinda**

By Nick Marnell

Saturday morning, April 21, a bicyclist alerted the crew at Moraga-Orinda Fire District Station 45 that a fellow cyclist was down on Camino Sobrante in Orinda. Before the call was even dispatched, firefighters arrived at the scene of a man who had suffered a cardiac emergency.

"We got there at 9:09, and at 9:11 we gave him his first shock," said MOFD engineer Daniel Elbanna, who described how the patient, after being revived by a third shock, groggily complained only about the IV needle that was bothering his leg. Less than 20 minutes after the first responders arrived, the patient was on his way to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek.

"To have a patient who was dead a few minutes ago complaining about knee pain was phenomenal," Elbanna said. "It was a horrible thing that happened, but the outcome? We've been glowing about it for weeks."

"It was truly an example of great teamwork, and that is why

I'm here today," Craig Schlatter, the downed bicyclist, said among family, friends and firefighters at

the MOFD May 16 district meeting.



From left, MOFD firefighter-paramedic Kevin Brashem, Craig Schlatter, and MOFD engineer Dan Elbanna. Photo Nick Marnell

**ConFire dodges bullet at Station 16 site**

By Nick Marnell



The root of the problem.

Photo ConFire

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District avoided a major headache pertaining to Fire Station 16 construction when the city of Lafayette agreed to issue a permit for the district to remove two oak trees from the station site. Had the tree removal not

been approved administratively by the city planning department, a public hearing may have been necessary, which would have delayed construction for months.

"ConFire has gone to every extent possible to retain the trees," city planning technician

Chris Joram said. "The trees really limited the district's construction ability."

The issue was the sheer number of oak tree roots penetrating the footprint of the structure, forcing workers to dig trenches for the foundation by hand. "We just could not put our building there," Assistant Fire Chief Aaron McAlister said. Two oak trees had to go, but they were protected by city ordinance.

Lafayette officials and fire officials met May 23 and solved the problem. The city agreed to issue a tree-removal permit for the two oak trees, and the district will mitigate their removal by increasing the number of trees to 17 that it will plant on the station site, an increase of two over the original landscaping plan. Had the district not agreed to plant the additional trees, it could have made an in-lieu \$3,945 payment to the city to be used in its tree education and planting program.

McAlister said that the trees, which ConFire will plant where the construction trailers now sit, will actually enhance the landscape of the station. "And our neighbor loves the idea," he said.

The two oak trees should be removed by the end of May, posing no construction delays, according to Deputy Fire Chief Lewis Broschard.

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