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Orinda management staff get 3% salary hike

By Sora O'Doherty

Management employees of the city of Orinda will receive a 3% cost-of-living salary adjustment, postponed since July. The increase will be effective Oct. 10. As the city has struggled to deal with reduced revenues owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, general employees, who declined postponing the 3% COLA, received the increase in July, but three general employees were laid off. The management unrepresented group agreed to postpone the COLA which has now been adopted. The city attorney, although not an employee of the city, will also receive an increase of 3%.

The city experienced several unexpected improvements to its budget picture, including quick actions of the city to reduce costs, an unanticipated vacancy of one senior planner position, the adoption of the state budget that included federal grant funds under the CARES Act being made available to the city in response to the costs of dealing with the COVID pandemic. Other budget savings were effected in the Parks and Rec department, which in normal circumstances brings in a lot of the city's revenues. Three unrepresented positions in that department, including the department director, were furloughed, reducing their hours by 40%, and one part-time position was eliminated.

In other changes, the Director of Planning will receive a 13% salary increase, as human resources had found that his salary was below other cities in the identified labor market by more than 20%. In addition, the Finance Director will be reclassified to an existing Administrative Services Director position, with a consequent increase in salary as an equity adjustment. The staff report was presented to the city council by Ginger Staton, Orinda's Human Resources Manager. The full list of salary adjustments is available in the agenda packet for Sept. 1 on the city's web site.

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