



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published August 14th, 2013

## Lamorinda Fire News Briefs

By Nick Marnell

### MOFD Board Meeting

Kathy Famulener was sworn in as the first female director of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District at its Aug. 7 meeting. Famulener is the deputy district attorney of Alameda County; she replaces Frank Sperling, who resigned in May. The new director wasted no time jumping into district operations, accompanying interim chief Stephen Healy on a wildfire response in late July. "It was great that she got to see the guys in action," said Healy.

The district also approved the hiring of Gloriann Sasser as administrative services director to replace the departing Sue Casey effective Aug. 26. Sasser was most recently the finance supervisor for the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

Casey, who is leaving for a finance position with the city of American Canyon, was recognized for her six years of service to the district. "I had great trust in your ability to handle our finances," said director Fred Weil. "I feel so much better about our financial situation than I ever thought would be possible."

On July 26, MOFD was awarded a \$1.15 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The SAFER grant (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) is provided to help fire agencies that are dealing with service reductions. While MOFD has not experienced any service cutbacks, battalion chief Jerry Lee authored a grant proposal indicating that there was a potential for district service reductions. It worked. The district plans to use the money to fund four firefighter positions over the next two years.

The salaries of the four new firefighters will wash with the grant money. The savings to the district should come in the reduction in overtime costs. "I did a rough calculation, and the amount we'd save in overtime is similar to the award amount," said Lee.

A motion to accept the SAFER grant passed unanimously, 4-0. Director Steve Anderson was absent.

### ConFire Town Hall Meeting

It's been a tough year for the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Property tax revenue fell drastically through the 2012-13 fiscal year, and voters did not pass a parcel tax measure to help the district bridge the budget gap. Five fire stations were closed as a result, including station 16 in Lafayette, with one more slated for closure in January.

In February, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors approved a \$400,000 contract with Fitch and Associates, LLC, a Platte City, Mo fire consulting firm, to conduct an assessment of district fire operations. Fitch will host a town hall meeting in Lafayette Aug. 20 at which it plans to educate the public on its study and conduct a public forum.

Supervisor Candace Andersen hopes Lafayette residents will participate. "Lafayette is a valued member of ConFire," she said. "It has been directly impacted by the district's financial struggles with the closure of fire station 16. As we look for the best ways to meet both the emergency medical and fire protection needs of Lafayette, community input is very important," she stressed.

"We encourage the community to attend," said Vince Wells, president of the United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County, Local 1230. "The lack of community involvement throughout this whole process has been noticeable. Many do not realize the impacts of these service reductions or potential service model changes until they call 911."

The meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

### New ConFire Chief

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors was scheduled to vote Aug. 13, after press deadline, on the appointment of a new chief for ConFire. Please check our website, [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com), for updates.

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

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA