



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 1, 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

Lamorinda Fire News Briefs

By Nick Marnell

New ConFire Operations Chief
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman announced that 13-year ConFire veteran Lon Goetsch has been promoted to assistant chief of operations. After 12 years with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Goetsch worked his way through the ConFire ranks as a firefighter-paramedic, engineer, captain and battalion chief. "I'm humbled and proud to be our operations chief," he said. "We've survived one of the most difficult periods I've ever seen in my 25 years. We are recovering, we are evolving and we are stronger."

The operations chief oversees district firefighting efforts, including training and emergency medical and rescue services. He directly supervises the battalion chiefs, who lead the 24 on-duty companies. ConFire comprises four battalions, numbered 1 through 4; Lafayette resides in Battalion 1.

"Please take the time to improve the defensible space around your homes," Goetsch advised

Lamorindans. "With the extra dry fire season ahead, it's going to be a very dangerous year."

TV Coverage of Station 46 Opposition

Two Bay Area television stations recently aired the concerns of The Committee to Save Honey Hill Fire Station over the planned relocation of Moraga-Orinda Fire District fire station 43 to a new facility on the Orinda-Lafayette border. Construction of the new fire station 46, a combined effort between MOFD and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, whose Lafayette station 16 closed in 2012, awaits approval from both district governing boards. The joint venture is expected to save each district \$1 million in annual operating costs.

"I found the experience interesting in that they spent quite a bit of time with us, filming us answering questions, and then used very little of what was said," said committee spokesperson Ellen Dale. "But, I think they both included our most important concern, namely the increase in

response times." The grass roots committee acknowledges that station 43 experiences low call volume, but fears that the response times in its Orinda neighborhood will increase by two minutes once the new station opens.

"We say one life lost, one home that burns down while waiting longer for help to arrive, is worth more than the million dollars they hope to save," said Dale.

Should construction of the new station be approved, MOFD plans to conduct public workshops throughout the district. "We are working to put all of our data into a form that will be understandable to the public," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy, who noted that a report the district commissioned on station 46 response times has not been completed.

MOFD Approves OPEB Trust Fund

In January, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District approved the pre-funding of its other post-employment benefit costs, which include the cost of retiree health care benefits. The district finance commit-

tee recommended March 11 that MOFD set up an OPEB trust account and hire an investment firm to manage the trust account. And at its March 18 meeting, the district voted to pre-fund its OPEB costs into a trust for the first time in its history, simultaneously approving Public Agency Retirement Services as the trust manager. The district will fund \$84,000 into the trust account this fiscal year.

MOFD administrative services director Gloriann Sasser said that pre-funding OPEB costs strengthens the district's financial position by lowering its net OPEB liability, and using the earnings on investments will reduce future employer costs. The district carries both a \$17 million unfunded OPEB liability and an estimated \$40 million unfunded pension liability.

"It's the first time we've even been in the position to do something like this since 2008," said director Fred Weil, citing the district's improved financial condition due to increased property tax revenue and lower labor costs.

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Lafayette Construction Coming Together for New Manzanita Room

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A crane uses powerful vacuum suction cups on an assembly to hoist roofing panels on the new Manzanita Room in Lafayette. Photo Cathy Tyson
Tongue and groove edging on the panels' sides fit tightly together forming a no-leak seal.

The new and vastly improved building at the Lafayette Community Center on St. Mary's Road is approximately 5,300 square feet, and will

cost \$2.3 million, paid for by park facilities fees, not the city's general fund. Measure WW funds, from the voter-approved East Bay Regional Park District bond measure, will pay \$241,000 of that total.

The original structure, dating

back more than 60 years, had major structural issues, wasn't consistent with current building codes including seismic safety and would soon need a substantial amount of expensive repair. The all-volunteer Parks and Recreation Commission, after getting estimates on extensive remodeling versus a tear down, recommended that the city council start fresh for a more functional sustainable design that would be more beneficial over the long term.

The project is on schedule, said Jennifer Russell, director of Parks, Trails and Recreation, with wall panels scheduled to go in next week. "It was amazing how quickly the metal frame went up. The contractor is exceptionally diligent." She added, "We cut viewing windows through the fence fabric because so many people, especially little kids, love looking at the progress. We are very excited to open the building to the public in the later part of the summer."

Lafayette What's Next for Lafayette?

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Photo courtesy Steven Falk

"None of this drives policy," said Anderson. "It just gives us a good idea of where we want to start looking."

The search will continue at the next two Community Conversation

events at 7 p.m. April 16 at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, and at 7 p.m. May 14 at the Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Residents are en-

couraged to attend. For those who can't attend a meeting, the city would still like residents to voice their opinions via the survey available online at www.lovelafayette.org.

Moraga Body-Worn Cameras for Moraga Police Officers

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King explained that if the department gets a phone call saying that an officer was rude, he will sit down with that officer, review the tape, and discuss it. He adds that he hasn't had a phone call like that yet in Moraga. The cameras have only been active since the end of February, but he remembers cases in the park district where officers were surprised to hear how they sounded, and they changed some things they were doing.

Moraga police officers are now wearing their personal cameras whenever they are on patrol. The rule is

that when they enter into an enforcement or investigative contact, they turn the camera on. "Sometimes we would be talking to somebody during a friendly contact, then for whatever reason it becomes adversarial. At that point in time the officer should be thinking about recording the conversation," said King. He added that it is important that the officers stay sensitive to the dignity of the individual when in an embarrassing situation; then, they should not record.

The recordings will not find their way onto the Internet. The cameras

are downloaded into a secure stand-alone computer in the department. Each device can record four hours before it needs to be downloaded. The films will be kept for at least 180 days, and much longer if they are part of an investigation such as a DUI that could take more than 180 days to go to court. Only King and Sargent Brian South have the authority to erase a film.

King said that all the officers are embracing the system. "With this, everybody is protected."