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Letters to the editor

MOFD power grab

I was disturbed by the report that the Board of MOFD has continued with its "unprecedented reorganization" by electing board member Steve Danziger President for the second year in a row, as opposed to tradition (shared by both the Orinda and Moraga Councils) of passing the gavel to a new "leader", each year.

Mr. Danziger was elected to the Board in November 2018 along with Michael Donner and Greg Baitx, all three heavily supported by the firefighters' union. Their first public act was to break tradition, by voting in freshman board member Danziger as president over the existing vice president John Jex even after Chief Winnacker explained historical rotation and all public comments were against the break from tradition. They have now continued this power grab for a second year. Is Mr. Danziger now president-for-life (or at least for his four year term)?

The Community needs to pay more attention to MOFD. We send them 26 million property tax dollars each year; over three times what Orinda and Moraga receive. Employee compensation, including the funding of the retirement plans, accounts for almost 90% of MOFD's expenses; with half of the compensation costs going to fund the retirement plans, which are \$70 million underfunded.

So who do we elect to oversee this effort? Three employee-sponsored board members who have decided not to play by the "rules" and grab the reins of power. What do they plan next?

In 2021 the firefighters' employment contract comes up. What will the board give them?

Right now we are served by 17 firefighters per shift; manning six response units. Last year they responded to 2,000 medical emergencies, 40 fires and 250 vehicle accidents; 2,300 emergencies in total. That averages to one incident per day per unit. But members of the board have been pushing for another two person unit, two more firefighters per shift. As opposed to concentrating on wildfire prevention.

The community needs to be aware of this.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Yes, Mike McCluer is the right choice for Moraga vice mayor

Articles in the Lamorinda Weekly Dec. 25, 2019 and Jan. 8 editions appear to question the rationale for electing Mike McCluer over Renata Sos to 2020 Moraga Vice Mayor. I believe the articles are based on incomplete information. First, I have great respect for Mike and Renata, and all Council Members, and we all have strengths and opportunities to improve in representing Moraga's citizens.

Up until 2020, there would have been no question that Mike was the right choice. The historical norm was for the highest vote getter in the last election to be elected Vice Mayor, in line to become Mayor the following year. Mike received over 5000 votes in the November 2018 election, compared to Renata being appointed by four members of the Town Council, just before that election, to fill the seat vacated by Jeannette Fritzky's death.

There is rationale to using votes received as criteria for electing a Vice Mayor. The election process is lengthy, during which each candidate must demonstrate more-than-significant capabilities and dedication to the Town, and the citizens themselves get multiple opportu-

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Unfunded Needs Assessments survey results

... continued from Page A4

Additional comments included adding an additional police officer to focus on the schools, having developers pay more fees, and utilizing the talents of local residents on a volunteer basis to fix things like the flag pole, or interior lighting at library. "Many projects can be accomplished on this basis," one resident said.

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg stressed, "People can still provide feedback. There is no deadline, but we will consider input from the community as part of the budget preparation process, so I would say we will incorporate feedback received prior to March 31.

"The Feedback Form was developed to obtain input from the community regarding how the town should prioritize its resources," Battenberg said. "This is an opportunity for residents to let us know how they would like their tax-payer dollars spent and we hope to hear from them."

The survey is on the landing page of the town's website www.moraga.ca.us in the article titled "Update on Unfunded Needs."

Irene Smith
Orinda native