



Moraga-Orinda Fire District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Orinda Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

March 19, 2025

(APPROVED 04-16-25)

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

President Hasler called the Board of Directors Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 PM. This meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with in-person and remote options for public participation. Both audio and video recordings of this meeting are available at www.mofd.org/agendas.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by President Hasler.

Roll Call: (*present in person unless noted with asterisks*):

Board Members: Directors Steven Danziger, John Jex, Craig Jorgens, Mike Roemer*, and President Hasler.

Staff: Interim Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs, Deputy Fire Chief Lucas Lambert, Administrative Services Director Gloriann Sasser, and District Clerk Marcia Holbrook.

District Counsel: Renne Public Law Group Founding Partner Jonathan Holtzman, Partner Rubin Cruse, Jr.*, Of Counsel James Ross*, Director of Labor Relations Luke Jensen*.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – CLOSED SESSION ITEMS (audio 00:01:43/video [00:03:26](#))

No public comments were made.

At 6:01 PM, the Board adjourned to Closed Session.

3. CLOSED SESSION

3.1 Conference with Labor Negotiator - Unrepresented Employees

(Government Code Section 54957.6)

Employee Organization: Unrepresented Employees

Agency Designated Representative: Luke Jensen

3.2 Conference with Labor Negotiator - MOFCOA

(Government Code Section 54957.6)

Employee Organization: Moraga-Orinda Fire Chief Officers' Association

Agency Designated Representative: Luke Jensen

3.3 Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation (Pearson)

(Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9)

Name of Case: Sandia Pearson and Anita K. Pearson v. Moraga-Orinda Fire District Case No. Case No. N23-2201

3.4 Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation

(Paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Government Code section 54956.9)

Initiation of litigation – One potential case

3.5 Conference with Real Property Negotiators

(Government Code Section 54956.8)

Agency Negotiator: Interim Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs

Negotiating parties: CCL Enterprises LLC, EOC Enterprises LLC, St. Andrews Associates LTD

Under Negotiations: Instructions to the negotiator will concern price and terms of payment. Real Property: 1150

Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556, 1100 Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556

3.6 Public Employee Performance Evaluation

(Government Code Section 54957)

Public Employee Appointment Title: Interim Fire Chief

At 6:05 PM, Deputy Fire Chief Lucas Lambert and Administrative Services Director Gloriann Sasser joined the Closed Session.

At 6:48 PM, Deputy Fire Chief Lucas Lambert and Administrative Services Director Gloriann Sasser left the Closed Session.

At 6:50 PM, Interim Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs left the Closed Session.

At 7:01 PM, the Board adjourned the Closed Session.

4. RECONVENE THE MEETING (audio 00:03:42/video [1:05:28](#))

President Hasler reconvened the Open session at 7:03 PM.

Roll Call: *(present in person unless noted with asterisks):*

Board Member: Directors Steven Danziger, John Jex, Craig Jorgens, Mike Roemer*, and President Hasler.

Staff: Interim Fire Chief Jeff Isaacs, Deputy Fire Chief Lucas Lambert, Administrative Services Director Gloriann Sasser, Fire Marshal Casey Irving, Finance Manager Mary Smith*, Human Resources Manager Christine Russell, and District Clerk Marcia Holbrook.

District Counsel: Renne Public Law Group Founding Partner Jonathan Holtzman, Partner Rubin Cruse, Jr.*, Of Counsel James Ross*.

5. REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION ACTION (audio 00:04:15/video [1:06:01](#))

No reportable action.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS (audio 00:04:23/video [1:06:07](#))

6.1 Brief information only reports related to meetings attended by a Director at District expense (Government Code Section 53232.3(d)). None reported.

6.2 Questions and informational comments from Board members and Staff. None reported.

6.3 Communications Received. None reported

6.4 Fire Chief Updates

a. Finance Report (audio 00:04:52/video [1:06:31](#))

Finance Manager Smith provided the report. Strike Team reimbursement net receivables are \$556,000. OPEB and Pension contributions are \$428,000 and \$1.1 million respectively. Treasury bill investments equal \$22 million. An update on the Tunnel East Bay Hills financials was provided. The interim audit is scheduled for the week of April 7, 2025. The presentation is attached to these minutes (item 6.4(a))

b. Human Resources (audio 00:07:02/video [1:08:40](#))

HR Manager Russell provided the report. Recruitment for Fire Captain/Fire Captain Paramedic II (internal recruitment), Firefighter/Paramedic Trainee, and Fuels Mitigation Specialist positions was noted, along with a list of employment changes and the announcement of Fire Engineer Paramedic I, Dan Johansen's retirement. The presentation is attached to these minutes (item 6.4(b))

c. Fire Marshal (00:08:37/video [1:10:17](#))

Fire Marshal Irving reported 26 outstanding enforcement cases, down from 36 in January, with two involving Juniper vegetation. Plans to address older violations were discussed. Five apartment inspections were completed in February, and St. Mary's dorm inspections began in March, aiming for completion by May. Director Danziger inquired about unresolved school (E-occupancy) violations. Fire Marshal Irving noted that public school inspections will resume in September, with unresolved issues carried forward. Interim Fire Chief Isaacs stated that schools are aware of violations and are working with Fire Inspectors on full correction plans. There are no immediate life safety threats; citations have been issued, but multiple citations are avoided when schools cooperate.

Director Jorgens suggested shifting the inspection schedule to spring (e.g., April) to allow schools to plan corrections during their budget cycle and make improvements over the summer break. Fire Marshal Irving acknowledged the idea but expressed concern that waiting until spring means students would be in school all year before safety inspections occur.

d. Operations (audio 00:16:47/video [1:18:35](#))

Deputy Fire Chief Lambert highlighted a multi-agency evacuation drill in Orinda, updates on Fire Hazard Severity Zone mapping outreach, continued assessment of Engine 43 (damaged in December), and the status of probationary firefighters nearing completion of

their probationary period. The Board discussed safety concerns on highway incidents and alternatives to using front-line engines for traffic control. Director Danziger requested advance notice for future evacuation drills so Board members may observe. The presentation is attached to these minutes (item 6.4(d))

Board direction was given for Staff to notify the Board in advance of evacuation drills.

e. Upcoming Calendar and Events - (next 30 days) (audio 00:36:35/video 1:06:31)

District Clerk Holbrook announced that the annual Spring Open House at Station 45 will be held on May 3, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

No public comments were received regarding the announcement items.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (audio 00:37:04/video 1:38:46)

District Clerk Holbrook reported that one written public comment was received from Joel Libove. The comment was forwarded to the Board, included in the meeting packet, and posted on the District's website under the public comment section at www.mofd.org/agendas. Chief Isaacs provided a written response, which was included with the materials.

8. CONSENT AGENDA (audio 00:38:00/video 1:39:39)

8.1 Meeting Minutes - February 19, 2025 (regular)

8.2 Monthly Incident Report - February 2025

8.3 Monthly Check/Voucher Register - February 2025

8.4 Monthly Financial Report - February 2025

8.5 Approval of Salary Schedule for Unrepresented Employees Effective March 20, 2025

8.6 Approval of the Amended Annual Operating Budget Timeline Fiscal Year 2026

8.7 Approval of Payment to Contra Costa County Fire Protection District for Dispatching and Communications Services

8.8 Approval of Tunnel East Bay Hills Fuel Break Fund Revenue Budget adjustment Increase in the Amount of \$268,484 and Expenditure Budget Adjustment Increase in the Amount of \$432,752

No public comments were received for items on the Consent Calendar.

Director Jorgens requested to pull items 8.6 and 8.8 for discussion.

Motion by Director Danziger and seconded by Director Jorgens to approve Consent Agenda items 8.1-8.5, 8.7. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

8.6 Approval of the Amended Annual Operating Budget Timeline Fiscal Year 2026

Director Jorgens noted he would be unavailable for the April 16, 2025, Board meeting, when both the Long-Range Financial Forecast and Budget Workshop were scheduled. He requested an alternative date to participate and stated that he would be available any time before April 15 or any time after April 27. The Board discussed options and agreed by consensus to move the workshops to a special meeting.

Board direction was given to Staff to reschedule the Long-Range Financial Forecast and Budget Workshops to a special meeting, with potential dates either before April 15 or after April 27, 2025.

Item 8.8 – Budget Adjustment for East Bay Hills Fuel Break Grant

Director Jorgens asked for clarification on why a budget adjustment was needed if the grant project had ended. Administrative Services Director Sasser explained that the adjustment was to align the budget with actual grant revenue and expenses for FY25.

Motion by Director Jorgens and seconded by Director Jex to approve Consent Agenda items 8.6 and 8.8. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

9. REGULAR AGENDA

9.1 Approve Resolution 25-02 Authorizing a First Amendment to the Personal Services Agreement with Shah Kawasaki, Inc., for Architectural Design Services for the Fire Station 45 Remodel Project, Approve the First Amendment to the Personal Services Agreement with Shah Kawasaki Architects for Architectural Design Services for the Fire Station 45 Remodel Project in an Amount Not to Exceed \$412,860 and Consider Providing

Direction to Staff Regarding the Station 45 Remodel Project (audio [00:45:06/video 1:46:53](#))

Deputy Fire Chief Lambert provided the report on Resolution 25-02 and a proposed first amendment to the personal services agreement with Shah Kawasaki Architects for architectural design services related to the Fire Station 45 remodel. The proposed amendment included revisions to the project scope to add a remodel of the entire kitchen and day room, an increase in contract value to accommodate the proposed additional architectural services, and an increase from \$29,000 to \$50,000 for extra work that the Fire Chief can approve. Significant discussion ensued. While there was general agreement on the need for improvements at Station 45, concerns were raised about the expanded scope, overall cost, and delay to the project.

Mr. Kawasaki clarified that the project was placed on hold as of January 31. As a result, no work occurred through February and into mid-March, which amounted to a 1.5-month delay. He further explained that re-engaging the project team, revising documents, and integrating design work would add an additional 1.5 months, bringing the total estimated schedule extension to approximately three months. Mr. Kawasaki addressed questions from the Board regarding fire station design standards, construction practices, and cost considerations for the kitchen component of the remodel.

A motion was made by Director Danziger to approve Resolution 25-02, to authorize a first amendment to the Personal Services Agreement with Shah Kawasaki, Inc., for Architectural Design Services for the Fire Station 45 Remodel Project, and to approve the first amendment to the Personal Services Agreement with Shah Kawasaki Architects for Architectural Design Services for the Fire Station 45 Remodel Project in an Amount Not to Exceed \$412,860. The motion failed for a lack of a second.

A substitute motion was made by Director Jorgens and seconded by Director Roemer to approve Resolution 25-02, authorizing the first amendment to the professional services agreement; to approve the first amendment with modifications, including a three-month extension of time to account for both the one-month project hold and the additional two months needed to re-engage design work; to grant the Fire Chief authority to approve up to \$50,000 in additional work; and to omit the kitchen component from the scope of work. The motion carried a 3-1-0-1 roll call vote (Ayes: Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: Danziger; Absent: None; Abstain: Jex).

No public comments were received for Item 9.1.

9.2 Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (audio [01:11:11/video 2:12:56](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs briefed the Board on the release of updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA), as mandated by Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-18-25. The maps, released on February 24, 2025, significantly expanded the number of parcels designated as "Very High" within the District. The District posted the maps as required, is coordinating with Contra Costa County on public notice and is preparing an ordinance to adopt the maps within the required 120-day timeframe. Chief Isaacs explained that while the District must adopt the state's designations, it has the discretion to increase fire hazard ratings or expand building code requirements. He requested Board direction on how to proceed with maintaining or expanding the District's existing Wildland Urban Interface Fire Area (WUIFA) designations, which are affected by the new maps, and on whether to apply Zone Zero regulations and home hardening standards District wide.

Board members expressed strong support for applying more restrictive building codes and home hardening standards across the entire District rather than limiting them to the "Very High" fire zones identified in the state maps. Board members also emphasized the importance of consistency and fairness in applying regulations, avoiding a situation where neighboring properties are subject to different standards. There was general agreement that building codes and defensible space requirements should be applied uniformly across the District, especially

for new construction, and that Zone Zero regulations, once finalized by the state, should also be considered for District wide application.

Board direction was provided to Staff to return in April with a proposed ordinance adopting the new Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps and to include language that would extend the District's more restrictive building and home hardening standards District wide.

During the public comment period, District Clerk Holbrook noted that five written public comments had been submitted prior to the meeting and included in the board packet from Nick Waranoff, Mike Reaves, Laura Myers, Steve Compton, Tyler Burkett. Since the packet was published, two additional public comments have been received from Joan Dorsey and Chee Chow. A dynamic link to view public comments in real-time is available on the District's website at: www.mofd.org/Fire-Hazard-Zone-Map.

9.3 First Reading and Introduction of Fee Ordinance No. 25-01, Revising a Schedule of Fees for District Services (audio 01:37:54/video [2:39:47](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs introduced Ordinance 25-01, which proposed updates to the District's fire prevention and other non-EMS-related fees based on a comprehensive fee study conducted by Matrix Consulting Group. The study evaluated cost recovery and provided recommendations to ensure fees reflect the actual cost of services. Chief Isaacs noted that prior feedback from the Board had been incorporated into the proposal. Board members Danziger, Jex, and Jorgens expressed support for the ordinance and commented on the quality and value of the fee study.

Motion by Director Danziger and seconded by Director Jorgens to approve the introduction and waive the reading of Ordinance No. 25-01, an ordinance of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District of Contra Costa County revising a Schedule of Fees for District Services and superseding Ordinance No. 24-01, and the revised Fee Schedule operative July 1, 2025. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

No public comments were received for Item 9.3.

9.4 First Reading and Introduction of Fee Ordinance No. 25-02, Revising a Schedule of Fees and Collection Policies for Ambulance Transport and Emergency Medical Services and Superseding Ordinance 24-02 (audio 01:40:03/video [2:41:58](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs introduced Ordinance 25-02, which updates the District's emergency medical services (EMS) and Ambulance fees based on recommendations from Matrix Consulting Group. He noted the ordinance reflects previous input from the Board and incorporates fee adjustments, including reductions in cases where the District's existing fees exceeded cost recovery benchmarks.

Motion by Director Jorgens and seconded by Director Danziger to approve the introduction and waive the reading of Ordinance No. 25-02, an ordinance of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District of Contra Costa County Revising a Schedule of Fees and Collection Policies for Ambulance Transport and Emergency Medical Services and Superseding Ordinance No. 24-02, and the revised Fee Schedule operative July 1, 2025. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

No public comments were received for Item 9.4.

9.5 Approve Cost Recovery Policy (audio 01:42:17/video [2:44:04](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs presented the proposed Cost Recovery Policy, which was developed following recommendations from Matrix Consulting Group and previous Board direction. He noted that the policy was updated in consultation with legal counsel to reflect all Board feedback and had been broadened to apply District wide, not just to EMS or fire prevention fees. Board members expressed support for the policy.

Motion by Director Jorgens and seconded by Director Jex to approve the Cost Recovery Policy as presented. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

No public comments were received for Item 9.5.

9.6 Single-Role Ambulance Staffing Plan (audio 01:44:04/video [2:45:49](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs presented a plan and cost estimates for the District's transition to a single-role ambulance staffing model. The plan included hiring an ambulance supervisor starting July 1, 2025, followed by the phased onboarding of paramedics and EMTs to fully staff Medic 45 and, eventually, Medic 41. Chief Isaacs explained that phasing the rollout would allow time to evaluate the system's performance before expanding staffing. He then reviewed the total estimated cost for all phases, including limited-term EMTs and the elimination of certain firefighter stipends, detailed in the staff report. The Board discussed the benefits of expanded ambulance coverage and long-term cost savings through adjusted staffing levels. The Board members expressed unanimous support for the proposed implementation plan.

No public comments were received for Item 9.6.

9.7 Receive Status Update on Search for New Investment Advisor and Consider Providing Direction to Staff (audio 01:53:50/video [2:55:29](#))

Director Jorgens provided an update on efforts to identify a new investment advisor for the District's Section 115 Trusts, following previous concerns about the current provider, PFM Asset Management. After outreach to several firms—including a list recommended by U.S. Bank (the trustee for the trusts)—one qualified advisor expressed interest in managing the District's funds under a low-cost model, consistent with the District's investment guidelines. Director Jorgens noted the challenges of securing advisor interest given the relatively small trust size but expressed confidence in the alternative advisor's qualifications and willingness to work within the District's parameters. Legal counsel clarified that in order to move forward, several documents would need to be amended, including the District's investment policy and agreements with PARS and U.S. Bank, as well as minor revisions to the draft advisor agreement.

After discussion, a majority of the Board expressed support for moving forward with the preparation of the necessary documents, with Directors Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and President Hasler in favor and Director Danziger opposed.

Board direction was given to Staff and legal counsel to amend the District's investment policy, amend Trust-Related Agreements with PARS and U.S. Bank, Update the Investment Advisor Agreement, Coordinate with PARS and U.S. Bank, and return these documents for consideration at the upcoming special meeting, rather than waiting until the regular May meeting.

No public comments were received for Item 9.7.

9.8 Discussion of Board Rules of Procedure: Regular Meeting Start Times and Virtual Participation of the Presiding Officer (audio 02:01:04/video [3:03:05](#))

Interim Fire Chief Isaacs introduced potential revisions to the District's Rules of Procedure, focusing on adjusting regular meeting start times and clarifying whether the presiding officer must attend in person. Director Danziger proposed moving the regular start time from 7:00 PM to 6:00 PM and requiring the presiding officer to be physically present. The Board supported the earlier start time, with the Closed Session beginning between 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM as needed. While there was consensus that in-person attendance is preferred for the presiding officer, the Board favored a flexible approach, allowing the Vice President or Second Vice President to preside if the President is remote.

Board direction was given to Staff to draft revisions to the Rules of Procedure reflecting a 6:00 PM regular meeting start time and clarifying presiding officer protocols, with an emphasis on in-person leadership when possible. Staff will confirm facility availability for

an earlier start time and, if available, return to a future open session with proposed language for Board consideration.

No public comments were received for Item 9.8.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS (audio 02:14:08/video [3:15:47](#))

10.1 Standing Audit Committee (Directors Jex and Hasler): The interim audit is scheduled for the week of April 7. Pending auditor availability, an audit committee meeting is to be scheduled immediately before the May 21st regular board meeting.

10.2 Ad Hoc Committee Joint Fire Prevention w/City of Orinda (Directors Danziger and Jorgens): No meetings since the last regular board meeting. The next ad hoc meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2025.

10.3 Ad Hoc Committee Station 45 Facilities Project (Directors Danziger and Jorgens): No additional update; items discussed earlier in the meeting.

No public comments were received for the Committee Reports.

11. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS ON FUTURE AGENDAS (audio 02:16:11/video [3:17:53](#))

Director Danziger requested three items:

1. Approval of an MOU between UC Master Gardeners and MOFD for a landscaping project at Station 42.
2. A report—or inclusion in the Fire Chief's Report—on Community Warning System (CWS) sign-up statistics and outreach strategies to improve participation.
3. An informational item on evacuation zones (Zonehaven, now part of the Genasys Protect platform), including how zones are defined, how notifications are issued, and why it is important for residents to know their specific zone.

One public comment was received:


1. James Duff, a Moraga resident, and City of Orinda employee, informed the Board that the next 2x2, also known as the Joint Fire Prevention Ad Hoc Committee, is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 2025.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:21 PM, Motion by Director Jorgens and seconded by Director Danziger to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried a 5-0 roll call vote (Ayes: Danziger, Jex, Jorgens, Roemer, and Hasler; Noes: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None)

/s/ Marcia Holbrook
District Secretary/District Clerk

For audio & video recordings of this and other Board meetings, please visit the MOFD District Board Meeting at www.mofd.org/agendas.



Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors

Finance Report
March 19, 2025

1

Strike Team Reimbursement - OES

- Strike Team Receivable Update:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Estimated |
| | <u>2024-2025</u> |
| OES Strike Team Receivable | \$1,694,113 |
| OES Payments Received | <u>\$1,138,000</u> |
| Net Receivable Outstanding | \$ 556,113 |

- FY25 represents estimated Strike team activity to date
- \$305k in payments received in Feb 2025

2

Tunnel East Bay Hills - Financial Update

- Tunnel East Bay Hills Financial Update:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Project Budget | \$6,380,563 |
| Invoiced to Cal Fire through 12/31/24 | \$6,161,728 |
| Payments Received from Cal Fire | <u>\$6,161,728</u> |
| Outstanding Receivable | \$ 0 |
| Expenses Paid but Not yet Invoiced | \$ 110,927 |
| Total Expenses Outstanding | \$ 110,927 |

- 4Q24 Invoice was submitted to Cal Fire on 1/30/25 and approved
- Total Expenses to date are \$6,178,109 which is 98.3% of Total Budget
- The Grant closes on March 15, 2025. Final reports to be submitted by April 15.

3

Treasury Bill Update:


- The District now has \$22,000,000 invested in Treasury Bills
- Treasury bill maturity:
 - \$3,050,000 matures 4/1/25 @ 4.282%
 - \$3,050,000 matures 5/1/25 @ 4.266%
 - \$3,100,000 matures 5/29/25 @ 4.267%
 - \$3,200,000 matures 6/6/25 @ 4.14%
 - \$9,600,000 matures 7/10/25 @ 4.198%
- Staff will project cash flows to determine amount of reinvestment available when treasury bills mature

4

Other Items

- Board approved OPEB/Pension contributions made on 3/12/25
 - OPEB \$428,630
 - Pension \$1,135,247
- Interim Audit scheduled for the week of April 7

5



Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors

Human Resources Update – March 19, 2025

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

- Fire Captain/Fire Captain Paramedic II (internal recruitment)
- Firefighter/Paramedic Trainee
- Fuels Mitigation Specialist

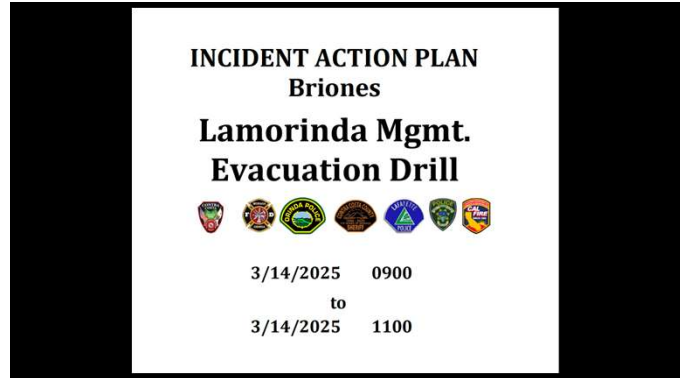
EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

- Employee Retirement – Fire Engineer Paramedic I, Dan Johansen
- Employee Separations – Temporary Project Coordinator / Assistant Project Coordinator, Tunnel East Bay Hills Fuel Break Project
- Employee Appointment – Temporary Administrative Services Director

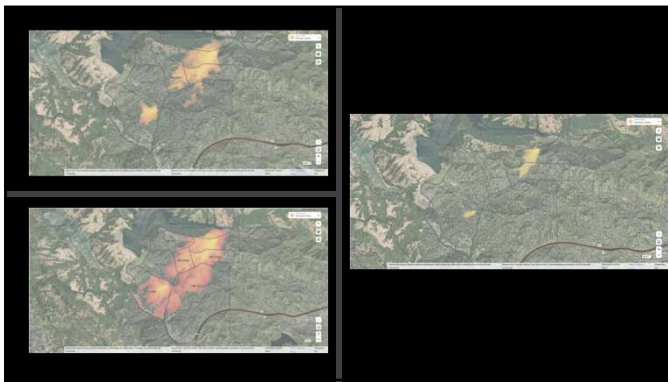
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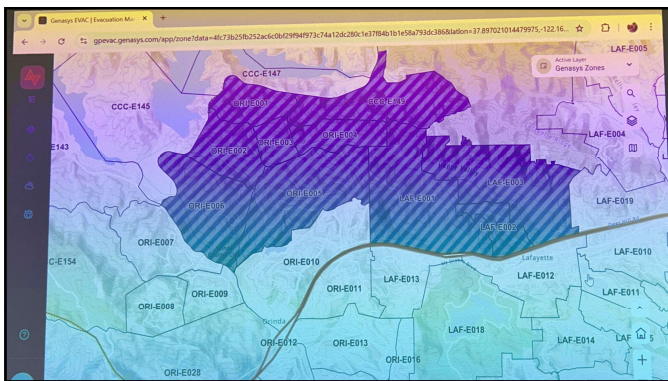
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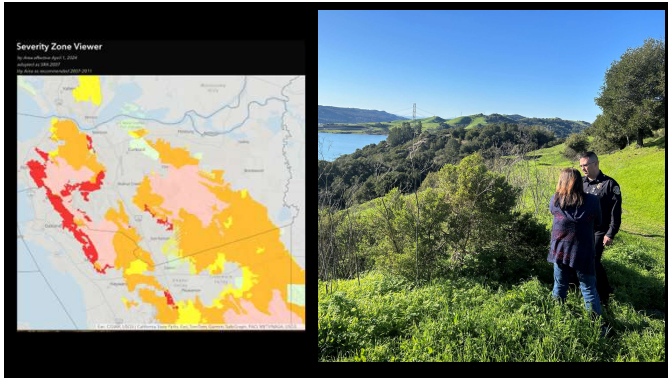
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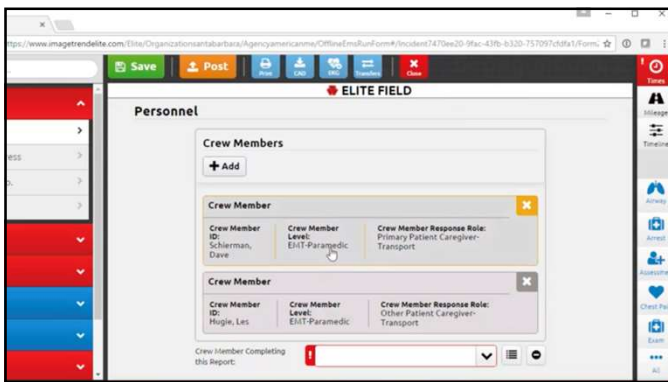
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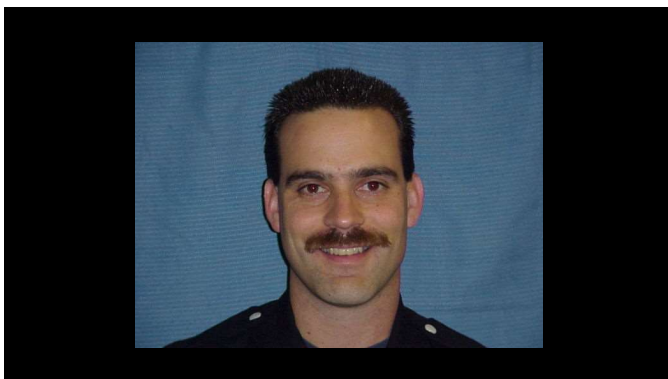
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18

Written Public Comment
Included in the Packet

From: [Joel Libove](#)
To: [Info](#); [Darlene Gee](#); [Latika Malkani](#); [Cara Hoxie](#); biverson@cityoforinda.org; jriley@cityoforinda.org; [Isaacs, Jeff](#)
Cc: [Barbara Libove](#)
Subject: We need a better system so that the results of significant fuel reduction programs can be made known to insurers
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 8:01:27 PM

To the MOFD Board of Directors, MOFD Fire Chief, and the Orinda City Council:


I've enjoyed receiving very helpful advice from MOFD on reducing fire risk on my property. Pursuant to this consultation, my neighbor and I have collectively removed seven pines and a large eucalyptus as part of the well-implemented Measure R fuels reduction program. I very much appreciate the resulting increased level of life safety for my family.

My house and garage were built (in 1994) with metal roofs, I've installed vent screens, brush is now sparse on my property, and I believe there are no longer high-risk trees on the property. Yet the new fire hazard map still doesn't appear to take into account the results of property-specific individual fuel mitigation measures and the homeowner's insurance renewal bill I just received has doubled to nearly \$7,000. I understand the increased costs of updating fire hazard maps so they provide more detail, and I realize that insurers use information other than these maps. However, something needs to be done to help residents who execute comprehensive mitigations, and yet still see their insurance rates raised, or have their coverage dropped, possibly due to the apparent lack of a system for making these improvements known to insurers.

Is there a way that insurers can be updated, in a timely manner, of large property-specific or localized-regional fire safety improvements that are being made in Orinda?

Respectfully,

Joel Libove, Ph.D.



Holbrook, Marcia

Subject: FW: Correspondence Received & Response from Fire Chief Isaacs

From: Isaacs, Jeff

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 3:34 PM

To: Joel Libove

Subject: Re: We need a better system so that the results of significant fuel reduction programs can be made known to insurers

Joel,
Thank you for contacting the Fire District and your proactive efforts in reducing wildfire risk on your property. Your commitment to defensible space, tree removal, and home hardening significantly contributes to the safety of your home and the broader community. We appreciate your dedication to fire prevention.

The Lamorinda area faces a significant wildfire risk due to its topography, weather conditions, and dense vegetation. To address this, MOFD has a long history of wildfire risk reduction efforts, which have intensified under the MOFD Wildfire Prevention Strategic Plan. According to the plan, wildfire risk is influenced by two key factors:

- Hazards – Natural conditions that allow fires to spread quickly.
- Vulnerabilities – Unprepared homes where fire can transition from vegetation to structures.

To reduce wildfire spread and protect developed areas, MOFD and its regional partners have implemented major fuel reduction projects using grant funding. These efforts have expanded defensible space in high-risk areas of the City of Orinda and Town of Moraga by modifying vegetation near populated areas. However, research by actuaries and catastrophe modelers indicates that these large-scale projects account for only 20% of total wildfire risk reduction. The remaining 80% depends on defensible space around homes and home hardening (such as fire-resistant materials and ember-resistant vents), which is why the work you've accomplished is so valuable to the overall efforts.

Regarding your question about whether insurers can be updated on localized fire safety improvements, currently, there is no standardized process for MOFD or other local agencies to directly inform insurance companies of specific property improvements. The insurance industry has made it clear that it primarily recognizes Zone Zero—the first five feet surrounding a structure, where combustible materials should be minimized. If this area has not been addressed, insurers may not acknowledge other fire mitigation efforts.

MOFD remains committed to supporting the community in wildfire preparedness efforts. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions.

Jeff Isaacs

Fire Chief

Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District

| Date | First Name | Last Name | I am a District Resident of | Have you reviewed the proposed Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps? | Please provide your comments, concerns, or suggested changes regarding the proposed FHSZ maps |
|----------|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 3/5/2025 | Nick | Waranoff | City of Orinda | Yes; | <p>I have compared the most recent prior fire hazard zone map against the latest one and have confirmed that my house and neighboring houses that were formerly in a very high fire hazard severity zone have been "downgraded" and are now in a high fire hazard severity zone. I urge that you NOT inquire as to why locations were "downgraded" because the response may be to upgrade them back to very high hazard. This would not be good for residents and could adversely affect our ability to renew our insurance.</p> <p>Also, I suggest that any implementation of zone zero start with VHFHSZ and see how it plays out, before expanding it to high fire hazard severity zones. I believe that this would be a good idea politically and practically.</p> |
| 3/5/2025 | Mike | Reaves | City of Orinda | Yes; | <p>Zone Zero is proposed to be 0-5 feet away from your home. Given that ADUs in Orinda are permitted to be 4 feet from the property line, where there is usually a fence, often times a wood fence, how do you propose to reconcile this? Expecting people to rip down their fences and replace with steel or other non-combustible material is going to be expensive for homeowners. We don't need to bear yet another expense due to PG&E-caused wildfires. I already have large increases to my power bill and insurance which can be attributed to PG&E. There needs to be some relief for homeowners. Take some of PG&E's record profits and distribute to homeowners for mitigation. Don't put this financial burden onto homeowners.</p> |
| 3/8/2025 | Laura | Myers | City of Orinda | Yes; | <p>I'm concerned about how the boundaries between very high, high and moderate risk were determined in the knickerbocker neighborhood (stein way, oak road, Barbara road). The risk goes from very high to moderate over a very short distance but the fuels, slope do not change that quickly. I'd like to understand what explains the risk boundaries in this neighborhood which do not make sense. For example, proximity to stein way (great access by fire department vehicles) and the fire hydrant at the intersection of Stein/Oak are major protective factors but the areas with poorer access and no fire hydrants are listed as less risk. Barbara road is still extremely mountainous, lots of fuel and much more difficult to access. I think this neighborhood needs to be re examined looking at the local geography rather than using mathematical models/mapping software to arbitrarily draw boundaries.</p> |

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| 3/8/2025 Steve | Compton | City of Orinda | Yes; | The area around Oak Road just South of Stein Way is developed and well maintained, there are mainly grass or low fire risk irrigated yards on this street. Can we have Oak Road re-categorized as a lower risk than "Very High"? |
| 3/11/2025 Tyler | Burkett | City of Orinda | Yes; | I bought my house (on Oak Rd) in Oak Springs 4 years ago because it wasn't listed as a fire hazard. It's now suddenly listed as a severe hazard. I do appreciate all the work of Cal Fire. I'm curious what has changed in that time? and what can be done about it? |