

Fire board delays vote on pay hikes

New member to be picked after Aug. 31

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The Menlo Park Fire Protection District board voted last night to appoint a successor to replace outgoing board member Rex Ianson, and postponed voting on raises for fire marshals, division chiefs, accountants and others.

The board delayed voting to a later date, saying the two resolutions did not present the compensation clearly. The report for last night's meeting, written by district Human Resources Manager Brenna Rowe, recommended the board approve two resolutions that would have given 3% raises over the next year to the district's fire marshals, division chiefs, deputy chief, senior accountants and clerks.

5% raises possible

Yet board members Virginia Chang Kiraly and Chuck Bernstein were confused as to why the report didn't say that these employees would be eligible for an additional 2% raise based on performance, bringing the hike to as much

as 5%. Here's a couple of examples of what employees now make: Last year, Fire Marshal Jonathan's gross pay was \$249,287 while Division Chief of Operations Manuel Navarro's gross salary was \$283,957.

Later last night, the board voted 4-0 in favor of appointing a successor to replace Ianson rather than calling a special election, with Ianson abstaining from the vote.

Election would cost more

Board member Robert Silano said appointing a successor would be quicker and more economical than calling an election. Fire district attorney Lauren Quint said the board can plan ahead in appointing a successor but will not be able to solicit, interview or appoint a candidate to replace Ianson until he departs from the board.

Ianson emailed board president Peter Carpenter on June 14, saying he is resigning from the board effective Aug. 31. At that point, the board will have 60 days to appoint a successor.

Within the 60-day period, state law requires the district to spend 15 days informing the public about the vacancy so people can apply for the opening.