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East Contra Costa Fire District set to proceed with elections

By Rowena Coetsee
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 01/26/2011 12:20:06 PM PST

Updated: 01/26/2011 06:27:11 PM PST

OAKLEY -- East Contra Costa Fire District leaders will meet next week to take the next step toward becoming a directly elected board.

The district board will hold a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. Monday, when the agency's directors are expected to agree to hold an election that will determine how they are chosen.

The meeting will be in the council chamber at Oakley City Hall, 3201 Main St.

Seven of the nine directors currently serving were appointed by their colleagues on Brentwood's and Oakley's city councils; county supervisors tapped the remaining two to represent East County's unincorporated communities.

When the directors took office a year ago, however, they pledged to let the district's approximately 53,400 registered voters decide who they want running the fire district.

A mail-in election first would be held to determine whether the board members should be directly elected. Ballots would be distributed no later than April 23 and due back by May 3.

Assuming the public indicates it wants a directly elected board of directors, the fire district would hold a second election in August or November for voters to choose their representatives.

The East Contra Costa Fire District also is considering property assessments as a way to keep itself afloat, and directors are scheduled to decide at their regular meeting Feb. 7 whether to present that option to voters, as well.

In anticipation of that move, the

agency already is soliciting bids to do the necessary engineering report and conduct the election.

If the board opts to pursue a fire suppression assessment, it will award a contract at that February meeting.

Contact Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141.

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