

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 9, 2020 – 9:00 a.m.
This meeting was held remotely on WebEx**

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=37259

Vice President Feinstein called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

Commission President	Francee Covington	Present
Commission Vice President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Commissioner	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Tony Rodriguez	Present
Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present.
Bryan Rubenstein	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Joel Sato	Division of Training	
Sandy Tong	EMS	
Mark Johnson	Airport Division	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Dawn DeWitt	Support Services	
Erica Arteseros	Homeland Security	
Natasha Parks	Health and Wellness	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
Olivia Scanlon	Communications and Outreach	

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to approve meeting minutes.

- Minutes from Regular Meeting on November 10, 2020.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Rodriguez Seconded. The motion was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

4. CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT [Discussion]

REPORT FROM CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT, JEANINE NICHOLSON

Report on current issues, activities, and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting on October 28, 2020, including budget, academies, special events, communications, and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Nicholson reported on activities since the last meeting on November 10, 2020. She stated that there has been a COVID surge in the city which put the city into the more restrictive purple tier, with cases quadrupling since the beginning of December, and if it continued at this rate the city will run out of ICU beds. She stated that members are continuing to decontaminate stations, wearing masks, and doing the health check routines when they get to work. She announced that they have had approximately 50 members within the Department with COVID, some with symptoms, some without, and as of yesterday they had 13 members in quarantine. She touched on the budget, which they have recently been provided instructions by the mayor's budget office and the city is asking for more cuts, but the department will make their best case for minimal to no cuts. She provided an update on the vaccine and stated that the EMS Division has come up with a plan for how to both receive and provide the vaccine, not only for the members but to help the city roll out the vaccine. She mentioned that they had a successful launch of the Street Crisis Response Team that Chief Tong and Chief Pang and many others worked diligently on along with the Department of Public Health.

She provided an update on Station 35, stating the floating structure has arrived and that Chief DeWitt has been working tirelessly on and they are waiting for a plan from PG&E in terms of how to best electrify the station and that the Ambulance Deployment Facility construction is moving along, and they are hoping to have substantial completion by the end of January and a possible move-in date in February. Chief Nicholson announced that they are in the process of getting a therapy dog from a nonprofit and she thinks it will be a great addition to the Department and the Behavioral Health Unit.

There was no public comment.

REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION, DEPUTY CHIEF JOSE VELO

Report on the Administrative Divisions, Fleet and Facility status and updates, Finance, Support Services, and Training within the Department.

Chief Velo presented his October report and stated he would cover the months of November and December report during the January meeting. He gave an overview of the mutual aid response through the city to the Jason Cortez memorial services and vigil as well as strike teams that were pre-positioned to Southern California. He mentioned that the Division of Training has been busy training members on disciplinary investigations seminar that they conducted with the City Attorney's Office and focused on battalion chiefs and RC's and they also hosted a three-session firefighter Bill of Rights training that was funded by CJAC (California Joint Apprenticeship Committee) which is a combined effort between labor and administration. He added that they also hosted leadership and team-building training where they conducted a train the trainer class where they selected 25 members of the department from the ranks of captain and above, to be the trainers for this project where they discuss leadership in general, how to communicate the mission and values of the Department so they can project it

to the citizens and how to address personal issues in a way that conforms with the policies, procedures. The goal is to have this group of instructors rotate through different sessions and to provide this training as a two-day class to the members in the next year or so and make sure they all get the same curriculum. He mentioned that the Airport Division continues to do multi-agency training, coastal rescue training, and training with Coast Guard units in the Bay. Regarding NERT, he announced that they celebrated their 30th anniversary through a virtual meeting. Chief Velo stated that Chief Parks, Chief of Health Safety, and Wellness has been extremely busy as they continue to meet with the “turnout” committee trying to select a new set of turnouts for the new contract and she was very busy making sure that the plans for Firefighter Cortez’ services met with the city’s health plan and she has been meeting with the Peer Support teams and Critical Incident Response teams and she has worked tirelessly on the Rescue Captain 5 rollout. Chief Velo also mentioned that the Doctor’s office has been extremely busy, and he acknowledged Firefighter/Paramedic Jim Green who assisted with the flu vaccinations in October, and Captain Zalba who continues to administer random drug and alcohol tests and post-accident tests, and that all have come back negative.

Chief Velo touched on Support Services under the direction of Chief DeWitt and gave an equipment update and that the barge has been moved into Station 35 and they are waiting for the PG&E electrical connection. He added that Station 49 is moving along very well, and they expect to move in sometime in mid-February. He mentioned that members assisted the community on Treasure Island where they built desks for children that were home learning remotely.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the delay with station 35 was PG&E’s initial plans for a specific point of connection was not sufficient so they had to identify a new location.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Velo for his comprehensive report and confirmed that the projects that were allocated through the ESER Bond 2010 are wrapping up and have been closed out and they are reconciling the small remaining balance and as for ESER Bond 2014, there are a number of projects that are still underway, such as the new Station 35. He announced that the Department has been fortunate enough to have ESER bonds in 2010 and 2014. He confirmed that the most recent ESER Bond will mostly be used for a new training facility and neighborhood fire station. He confirmed that the Department did send mutual aid to the Blue Ridge fire in Orange County.

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked Chief Velo for his report and confirmed that the apprenticeship class is a program offered by the California Joint Apprentice Committee that was started by the California Department of Education and the State Fire Marshal’s Office which SFFD joined in 2012. He also confirmed that they enroll the recruits into the program and for the first three years of their probation, they get a specific amount of dollars per hour of training they receive, and that fund is created and is handled by the program, which is hosted by the professional firefighters in Sacramento.

President Covington asked that in the future, the commissioners get all press releases hopefully before the media does so that the Commissioners are not playing catch up. She confirmed that the new OES apparatus will be able to be used at any time, not just for mutual aid.

There was no public comment.

5. RESOLUTION 2020-03 [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution 2020-03, recommending that the Board of Supervisors authorize the San Francisco Fire Department to accept and expend a SAFER grant from FEMA in the amount of \$13,760,604 for the hiring of thirty-six new firefighters.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the resolution and Vice President Feinstein Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no public comment.

6. UPDATE FROM ON THE SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT'S DRAFT RACIAL EQUITY PLAN [Discussion]

Equity Officer Captain Brice Peoples to provide an update on the Department's draft Racial Equity Plan.

Captain Peoples thanked the senior leadership, Chief Nicholson, Chief Velo, and Chief Rubenstein for all of their help in the project. He stated that he is the first diversity, equity, and inclusion officer for the San Francisco Fire Department. He described the plan which is to go into effect next year and they are talking about integrating it into the strategic plan. He added that they have put together an internal committee consisting of 25 diverse members of all ranks across the divisions of the Department who have been working tirelessly and through a lot of challenges and they are called the REAC, Racial Equity Advisory Committee. Some of the challenges he touched on were that this has never been done before and they got a bit of a late start due to COVID, wildland fires, and preparing for promotional exams. He mentioned that the purpose of the presentation today is to formally deliver the draft REAP (Racial Equity Action Plan) to the Commission per City Ordinance 188-19. which states that each city department shall develop a Racial Equity Action Plan in alignment with the racial equity framework by December 31st, 2020. The adopted plan will be posted on the Department's website. He added that it is also consistent with the Department's mission and values and it's good to have a strategy to see how to bring in talented qualified people and develop them and provide a work environment that values health, wellness, and cultural diversity and is free from harassment and discrimination. The legislation also talks about the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) and was legislated in response to the city's growing racial disparities and as a means to address the history of structural and institutional racism in San Francisco's delivery of services to the public and its own internal practices and systems and is basically a top-down review of everything, all city departments, the services that are offered to the citizens and employees and to make sure they aren't marginalizing individuals and that vulnerable populations are being looked after equally. He stated that it mandates the appointing of racial equity leaders in every city department and protects those leaders from retaliation. He added that the plan is not just focused on racial equity, the primary emphasis is the law, but as seen in the Department, they are making sure that no one is left behind or being marginalized and the committee has broadened the plan to include diversity, equity, and inclusion across the board. He touched on the seven sections of the plan and how it will be implemented. The draft plan is attached.

<https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/REAP%202020%20Draft%20for%20Fire%20Commission.pdf>

He stated that they will be seeking future staff and funding to make the office effective. Captain Peoples explained that they will be developing external partnerships, identifying talent acquisitions as well as employee development, including leadership and mobility.

Vice President Feinstein thanked Captain Peoples for his “knock your socks off” presentation and stated that she thinks he will meet with nothing but success as she can see the amount of work that has gone into the plan in such a short amount of time. She added that she thought it was organized and linear.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Captain Peoples for his impressive presentation including the timeline, and inclusion of the 25 volunteers that worked on the draft plan. He thinks it’s a good plan and is an excellent example for anybody trying to put together a program with inclusion and the amount of work that the committee put in is very evident. Commissioner Nakajo reminisced about when Chief Bob Demons was appointed as the Chief of the Department, and a line in the mission statement was added to provide a work environment that values health, wellness, and cultural diversity free of harassment and discrimination and was also a big piece implemented after the Consent Decree was ordered by Judge Marilyn Patel.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Captain Peoples for his comprehensive report. He confirmed that the stakeholder component of the office is to involve the affinity groups within the Department about outreach and recruitment and to be able to support them in finding talented individuals that they have identified and to continue to help and work with and develop them so that there will always be a diverse, qualified, and talented applicant pool. Regarding extra funding, they will look at applying for grants and possibly identify private partnerships. Chief Nicholson added that if this office isn’t properly funded, they are going to have a near-impossible time getting all this important work done.

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked Captain Peoples for his report, and that he thinks it is exciting to see something like this going into action. He confirmed that the plan would identify things that needed to be fixed or offered to the new people that were trying to come in as well as for the existing members, and that it would be offered to everybody, which he also thinks is good. He added that for 37 years he belonged to a Union as a fire sprinkler installer and 37 years ago when he got in, things were a lot different. If you were a nonunion sprinkler fitter, you were called a scab, and you were looked down on because you weren't a union member, and after a couple of years, the United Association, which covered nationwide unions came out with a program for organizing non-union workers and trying to educate existing members that weren't part of a union that these folks were just regular people trying to make a living like they were and that they should be afforded the same chances and benefits that the union members had. He stated that he knows it is a different kind of a comparison when you talk about racial equality but some of the same problems that existed during his time 37 years, he thinks the Department might be facing if they do not handle it correctly. He added that by educating the current firefighters of why this is needed is important and to share with the other members that they were deserving of what they were getting, not that it was just given to them because they are trying to meet a quota and that it is important that the recruits felt that they weren't just being handed something, that they had to work for it and earn it. He applauded Captain

Peoples for the work he has done and for his report and added that whatever he can do to help, feel free to call him.

President Covington praised Captain Peoples for his report and thanked all the committee members who have been working so hard on the plan. She added that the 47 pages of the draft plan are an incredible indication of how organized they are. She confirmed that section 1.2.2. where it specified to foster relationships with non-traditional outlets, they are looking to make sure that they are not just using the current pipeline model with the NTN but to actually scour and look at different methods of getting people in the department such as the city EMT or EMS Core, which is a wraparound service that targets individuals who have certain vulnerabilities and work with them to help meet the qualifications and become competitive in the process. They are reaching out to individuals or agencies like that to make sure they are going across the spectrum and not leaving any potential talented candidates out of the loop because they have not identified them in the traditional outlet. President Covington offered to provide a list of non-traditional organizations. She also confirmed that the written and oral testing format will be transparent. She also stated that she thinks having a college degree is important and should not be devalued.

Committee member Captain Julie Mau stated that the work that has been done on the plan was quite an undertaking and a heavy lift in a compressed amount of time and the 25 committee members really care about the Department and put in a lot of effort to get the document together and they understand that it is not fixed in stone and is something they hope to constantly review it, apply it, work on it and continue to make it better.

7. CONTINUATION OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2020 EMS-6: COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE IN THE SFFD PRESENTATION [Discussion]

Chief Simon Pang, Captain April Sloan, Captain Michael Mason, and Dr. Clement Yeh provided an overview of the EMS-6: Community Paramedicine in the SFFD and we ran out of time to conclude the questions and answers.

Commissioner Nakajo stated he appreciated the presentation by Chief Pang and Captain Sloan and the follow up of materials from Chief Tong. He also mentioned the recent rollout of the program and mentioned the publicity on the TV media was good and goes well in terms of the leadership and initiative of what they are trying to accomplish.

Vice President Feinstein stated that the documents that were sent to her pertaining to the presentation were helpful and she confirmed that EMS-6's core mission is to help and connect frequent 9-1-1 utilizers to appropriate resources and the Street Crisis Response Team is going to apply the experience and the skill that they have learned in helping these most vulnerable of the vulnerable to people that are in a behavioral crisis in the street, and once they get there, they are going to do a needs assessment together with the behavioral clinician and the peer support specialist and refer and connect that person to appropriate resources. Chief Pang added the difference is street crisis response is to help everybody, and the three goals are to improve the delivery of care using a trauma-informed approach with the people; to reduce the incidents of law enforcement response to people that are nonviolent and have not committed a crime but are having a behavioral crisis in public spaces, and reducing inappropriate ER visits by people having a behavioral crisis.

President Covington stated that it was a wonderful presentation and expressed her concerns about the future of the city in that she is fearful that when the moratorium on evictions expires, there will be many more people in dire straits and not able to successfully process everything that is happening to them. Chief Nicholson added that they have a plan in place by ramping up a few more units in January and March.

Captain Sloan stated that getting people conserved remains a barrier based on system capacity and COVID is not helping as it's very hard to ask for beds for somebody who is not unstable medically when they need those beds for people who are severely ill. President Covington suggested getting more information on the housing conservatorship so that they can have a better grasp of why it is that with more than one hundred calls for service for one individual, why that person was not appointed a conservator and it may help her understand as to why the safety net has so many holes in it and why it's such a small safety net when the need is so massive. She added that the work is so important and so vital and demanding physically and mentally for the EMS-6 team, where they take care of people physically and then advocate for them over and over and she applauds them for the essential work they do.

There was no public comment.

8. FIRE COMMISSION MEETING CALENDAR 2021 [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to adopt the 2021 Fire Commission Regular Meeting calendar.

President Covington stated that she thinks the commission would have benefited from having two more meetings, one in November and another in December, and asked Commissioner Secretary to poll the commissioners for two extra dates in 2021 and if there is nothing pressing when those dates come around, the meeting can be canceled. President Covington tabled the meeting until the January 13th meeting.

There was no public comment.

9. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on November 10, 2020.

There was nothing to report.

There was no public comment.

10. AGENDA FOR NEXT AND FUTURE FIRE COMMISSION MEETINGS [Discussion]

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

There was no public comment.

- Report from Dr. Brokaw/Physician's Office
- Election of Officers

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Covington adjourned the meeting at 11: 48 a.m.