

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.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=37986

President Feinstein called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commission President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Commission Vice President	Tony Rodriguez	Present
Commissioner	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present

Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present.
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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
Tom O'Connor	AWSS

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 the Special Meeting on February 10, 2021.

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

- Minutes from Regular Meeting on February 24, 2021.

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 January 27, 2021, 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 February 24, 2021. She announced that she would have to leave the meeting at 9:30 to attend the Mayor's Department Head meeting. She thanked Chief Joel Sato for his dedicated service at the Division of Training and welcomed the new ADC of training, Shayne Kaialoa. Chief Kaialoa introduced himself and stated he is honored to be the new Assistant Deputy Chief of Training and added that he appreciates all the support. President Feinstein thanked Chief Sato for his service and dedication. Chief Sato responded that it has been a pleasure to be on the command staff and he appreciates all the support he was given over the years.

Chief Nicholson touched on COVID within the department and that they are working on setting up a mobile vaccination program for the most vulnerable and house-bound individuals and are looking at the possibility of using the multi-casualty bus. She added that they are also talking about helping to vaccinate folks on Treasure Island as they have one of the lowest rates of vaccinations. She stated that she participated in a ride-along with EMS-6 and the Street Crisis Response Team and that it was an incredible experience, and she is amazed by the work that the members are doing. She stated that they hope to have six teams on 24 hours a day by the end of April.

Regarding EMS, she stated that Chief Tong is in the nomination process of EMS awards which is a great way to acknowledge the great work of the EMS members who work their tails off. She mentioned that she met with Local 798, President Feinstein, and the command staff to make sure they are all on the same page regarding the budget and looking at creative ways to fund some of the programs including EMS-6 and the Street Crisis Response Team, which both fall under what Prop C is mandated to do, they are applying for grants, FEMA assistance and they submitted requests for projects in the amount of 3.3 million dollars consisting of air purification systems on apparatus that will take the toxic stuff and keep it from going into the air. They have also requested EMS equipment, some health checks for members and PPE, turnout coats and pants and they have also submitted to FEMA a fire prevention and safety grant,

Vice President Rodriguez thanked Chief Nicholson for her report and was glad to hear about the grants, considering the position they are in.

Commissioner Nakajo asked that once the CNN video is complete, that it be shown at an upcoming meeting so the public can also be aware of it as anything that has a positive light on the work the department does is much appreciated and the public should be knowledgeable about that. He confirmed that the supplement of the 125 million dollars that the city discovered has not been allocated as of yet, but the federal stimulus package, COVID relief bill from Congress, will make a significant dent in the City's Budget deficit over the next two years.

Commissioner Covington thanked the Chief for her report and thanked Chief Sato for his years at the tower and that she appreciates his efforts, and she welcomed the new head of Training. She stated that she is a great proponent of grant writers and with all the competing interests requested from the general fund, she wondered that when they submit applications for grants if

they send out videos of the work the members do. Mr. Corso responded that the process does not allow for that type of attachment but is something that they will investigate. She suggested that when sending requests to private funders and foundations the videos should be included.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Nicholson for making her monthly calls to the Commission and giving them an overview of what is going on as well as challenges the Department is facing.

There was no public comment.

REPORT FROM OPERATIONS, DEPUTY CHIEF BRYAN RUBENSTEIN

Report on overall field operations, including greater alarm fires, Emergency Medical Services, Bureau of Fire Prevention & Investigation, Homeland Security, and Airport Division.

Chief Rubenstein's Operations report covered February 2021. He thanked Chief Sato for his contributions over the years and stated he Chief Sato moved the department in the right direction, and he appreciates what he has done. He mentioned that Lt. Baxter, PIO has been very busy responding to all the notable incidents as well as he prepares and distributes informational materials, manages print and television media and the department's social media sites. He stated that EMS decontaminates and resupplies the ambulances every day. He showed a video of members in action that NBC filmed. He touched on the Airport Division where they are always conducting drills and he showed pictures of the new ARFF rigs which are powerful apparatus. He mentioned that the Bureau of Prevention and Investigation is coming back up to speed and they are looking at pre COVID numbers for requests for permits and inspections. Chief DeCossio gave a brief update on the shared spaces, which he stated may transition into a permanent program and they are working out how best to move forward with that and what the Fire Department's role will be. He explained the challenges and safety issues they may face, and he believes that the SFFD should identify building standards and non-building standards that will apply to the program.

Chief Rubenstein touched on Homeland Security under the leadership of Chief Arteseros who has supported the COVID 19 reporting and response and helps in scheduling vaccinations, as well as major exercise planning, managing the FDOC, and is the lead on the Incident Management Team. He described many of the notable incidents that took place during the reporting period including many remarkable rescues on the coastline, surf, and cliffs.

President Feinstein thanked Chief Rubenstein for his report on the many different functions the Fire Department executes with consistent and high-quality performance and because of that many lives are saved.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Rubenstein for his comprehensive report and acknowledged all the officers for the work that they are doing especially when called upon to answer questions from Commissioners. He acknowledged the discussions Chief DeCossio is having regarding shared spaces and that he supports the Fire Department's efforts of supporting the restaurant owners in the concept of economic vitality or recovery as he has a lot of restaurant associate colleagues and friends that many of them are thinking that the investment they put into their shared space should become permanent spaces and he's glad Chief DeCossio's questions and concerns are on point and very important for clarity's sake and he appreciates the fact that he has the oversight to see the safety concerns they potentially may come across. Commissioner Nakajo stated he hopes with all the work and oversight that

somewhere along the line there will be revenue coming the Department's way. He also confirmed that in February 2021 there were 134 permits issued. He confirmed that 17 percent of the 9-1-1 medical calls were from high-frequency callers. He confirmed that EMS is facing challenges on a lack of sufficient relief due to increased growth and they are working on stabilizing their staffing.

Commissioner Rodriguez confirmed that the Department is working on a solution to the Community Paramedicine Division shortage. Chief Tong added that Chief Pang has been trying to plan out more specifically what it is that they see the future of the growth of community paramedicine and trying to identify where they see the growth and see if they can stay ahead with hiring, unfortunately, the budget situation makes it difficult to be proactive about how they can staff. They are working with UC to try and get a grant for geriatric care. Vice President Rodriguez thinks the Department should have a part in the permanent shared spaces to make sure they are safe and done correctly. He also noted how everybody is worried about the budget and the Department is responding to more and more calls of encampment fires, cliff rescues and a lot of money is being spent on these responses and he would like to figure out how to lessen these incidents and he is concerned that the Department is bearing a huge brunt of all these calls and is always being asked to cut the budget. He stated he was glad the Department is going after grants.

Commissioner Cleaveland agreed with Vice President Rodriguez's comments and support of the Fire Department and its budget as they are asked to do more and more every day, and he thinks it's incumbent on all the commissioners to support the Department's need for increased funding. He applauded Chief Rubenstein for his comprehensive report and the video, and he thinks it is very important to be broadcast city-wide and nationally, and hopefully that will give them a little publicity to get some additional funding from some of the national nonprofit organizations that support good community paramedicine. Commissioner Cleaveland also confirmed that the 17 percent of frequent 9-1-1 callers could include multiple calls from the same person.

Commissioner Covington thanked Chief Rubenstein for his report and the video. She confirmed that the department does not get reimbursed for responding to the many cliff rescues, they only get some reimbursement for ambulance transports. Commissioner Covington suggested finding out a way to work with the Federal Government to get bills into the hands of people who are not doing what they should be doing, that there are all sorts of signage telling people not to go beyond a certain point and they get into dire straits when they go beyond a certain point and it is an emergency they caused and she doesn't understand why the taxpayers of the city and county of San Francisco should pick up that bill.

President Feinstein also agreed that many resources are being dedicated for these cliff rescues and the Department should be reimbursed for responding and the risk that the men and women of the Department take to rescue people that are being idiots, to her, is not acceptable. She also confirmed that the Department was instructed to waive permit inspection fees for shared spaces. She also confirmed that the Fire Department is proactive in addressing safety issues with shared spaces and filing and responding to complaints to keep them on the radar. She also stated that she thinks it is unfair for the restaurants that do not have space to share near their locations.

Commissioner Covington confirmed that the geriatric care Chief Tong mentioned is they are working on assisting with a three-year grant that would be utilizing the community paramedics to assist with aftercare support if there are identified patients from the ER that requires additional check-ins at home, and they are looking at trying to better identify the population that may be able to utilize their services rather than having to go into an emergency room for care.

There was no public comment.

5. PRESENTATION FROM THE LGBT EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP SF RESQ
[Discussion]

Firefighter Keith Baraka, President of LGBT Employee Resource Group SF ResQ to provide an overview of their Group.

Firefighter Baraka notified the Commission after the agenda was posted that he would be unable to present at this meeting.

President Feinstein stated that when she was informed that Firefighter Baraka was unable to appear, and noted it was the second time they have been unable to send a representative to present she asked the Commission secretary to respond and ask that they let the commission know in the future if there is a time that he or another member of the organization has the time or is willing to give us the time to appear and that we would then attempt to get them on a future agenda.

6. FIRE COMMISSION AMENDED ANNUAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2021
[Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action on the amended Statement of Purpose and Department's Mission Statement.

At the call of the chair, this matter was continued to a future meeting date. President Feinstein would like to get a committee together to finalize the statement.

7. COMMISSION REPORT *[Discussion]*

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on February 24, 2021.

President Feinstein reported that on February 26, 2021, she encountered the Street Crisis Response Team and was impressed with the team and added that they were enthusiastic and positive, and she looks forward to the program's expansion.

Commissioner Cleaveland announced that he was reappointed to his third term on the fire Commission and looks forward to working with everyone. All the commissioners congratulated him on his reappointment.

Commissioner Rodriguez confirmed that they are waiting for further directions from the Department of Public Health in terms of when the commissioners can go on ride alongs and attend drills.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

There was no public comment.

- Update from Chief Parks and Tony Boone
- Update on Station 35 and the Ambulance Deployment Facility
- Update on AWSS

There was no public comment.

11. ADJOURNMENT President Feinstein adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.