

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

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=38721

President Feinstein called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Commission President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Commission Vice President	Tony Rodriguez	Excused
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

Shaine Kaialoa	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 Regular Meeting on May 26, 2021.

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

There was no public comment.

4. CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT [Discussion]

REPORT FROM CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT, JEANINE NICHOLSON

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Report on current issues, activities, and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting on May 26, 2021, including budget, academies, special events, communications, and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

This matter was called out of order and followed General Public Comment as the Chief needed to leave early to participate in a Mayor's Department Head meeting.

Chief Nicholson reported on activities since the last meeting on May 26, 2021. She notified the commission with a heavy heart, the passing of firefighter Christopher Yock, of the Airport Division who collapsed at home after working his shift at the airport. He was a 21-year veteran. She added that over the last year, they have had four active-duty deaths and of the four, three were most likely cardiac-related and Dr. Brokaw has been working on some cardiac initiatives. Chief Nicholson stated she attended the memorial service for Steven Brantley and Ed Banks and the June 2nd 10th anniversary memorial of the deaths of Lt. Vincent Perez and FF/PM Anthony Valerio. She also attended the flag raising at City Hall in honor of Pride Month. She also announced that this meeting would be the last meeting for Chief Johnson and Fire Marshal De Cossio as they are retiring. She concluded by asking that the meeting be adjourned in memory of Christopher Yock.

Commissioner Covington was very sad to hear the news of Firefighter Yock and added that it points to the tremendous amount of stress that everyone has been under, particularly in a stressful career and that she feels for the families who have lost loved ones. She stated that her son was 13 years old when her husband died of a heart attack.

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 reported on Operations for May 2021 in the memory of Chris Yock. He mentioned that they had many drills in preparation for wildfire season as well as at a building on 45th Avenue that was being demoed which the Division of Training was able to use to conduct drills such as cutting holes in roofs, practicing rescue techniques, forcible entry drills and hose lays drills. He added that they also had a series of surf rescue training. He touched on other notable incidents that took place throughout the month, including an increase in vehicle accidents and a significant fire in a garbage truck. He described the 2nd Alarm fire at 14 Wheat Street and the obstacles members were faced when putting up the 35-foot ladder, including parked cars and overhead wires. He also described the 2nd Alarm fire at 180 Grattan Street, which was an intense fire. He mentioned that EMS has been very busy, and they celebrated EMS week with an awards presentation at the new facility. He touched on Fire Prevention and Investigation and asked Fire Marshal DeCossio to say a few parting words. Fire Marshal DeCossio stated that he had a long career and is very proud of his division and everything they've accomplished, and he thanked the residents of San Francisco and stated it has been a great honor to serve them and the great City, the Chief of the Department, the members of the Department and former Chief Joanne Hayes-White. Chief Rubenstein touched on the Airport

Division where they had a major incident where many vehicles caught fire and were fully destroyed, and it was the last incident Firefighter Yock was at on the day of his passing. He thanked Chief Johnson for being there for the members during this tragic time and invited Chief Johnson to say some parting words. Chief Johnson stated that it has been a tough day and blows anything he was thinking of saying out of the water. He provided a brief history of his career and that his end goal was to speak up for people who could not speak up for themselves and defend people who could not defend themselves and to make things better for people around him and he truly hopes that he did that. He added that he worked with some outstanding people, made great friends, and is grateful for it. Chief Rubenstein touched on the Homeland Security Division which has taken on a lot of tasks lately and he described the CBRNE exercise he and Chief Brown were able to participate in.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Rubenstein for his report, and he thanked both Chief Johnson and Fire Marshal DeCossio for their service for so many years to the Department and he described the times he worked for BOMA when Chief DeCossio would update them on the codes that commercial real estate property managers needed to abide by when they were doing work on their properties.

Commissioner Nakajo expressed his condolences on the death of Firefighter Yock. He thanked Chief DeCossio and Chief Johnson for their service to the city, to the department, to the membership, to the commission, and to the citizens of San Francisco. He also thanked Chief Rubenstein for his comprehensive report and all the thought that goes into it. He confirmed that EMS administrative offices have moved to the new home at 2241 Jarrod and that the SCRT and Street Wellness Teams will stay at the current Station 49 on Evans and will be sharing that space with BOE as there is not enough room for all the apparatus at the new Station. He also confirmed that there are SCRT captains housed at the Evans Street facility, and they do direct oversight of the personnel and Chief Pang is in constant contact with all the captains overseeing those teams. Commissioner Nakajo also confirmed that the BOE at 25th Street is being reimagined as a warehouse storage for apparatus, but it needs an earthquake retrofit and many more upgrades, including possible solar panels, and that it is a long-term project and will need funding. He stated how he was impressed with the report on the 2021 EMS awards ceremony and was sorry he was unable to attend. He also brought up the challenges that EMS-6 members have observed with a lack of placement and treatment options for individuals, especially those who receive emergency care but are not admitted to the hospital. He also confirmed with Chief DeCossio that the Division will be fine under the leadership of Ken Cofflin and his team will do their part and keep things moving forward and expressed that he is very proud of them. Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief DeCossio for his dedication, support, and expertise in terms of his endeavors with the Department and wished him well. He asked Chief Johnson if the Commission should be aware of any issues upon his retirement and Chief Johnson responded that the Airport Division is running smoothly, and his greatest concern is a lack of staffing. Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Johnson for his dedication and hard work and wished him well.

Commissioner Covington thanked Fire Marshal DeCossio and Chief Johnson for their dedication and good humor and added that they have both excelled and done extremely well and she wished them both well in their retirements. She suggested that the Chief of

Department should do exit interviews as they can provide candid ideas of what is going on and where improvements might be made.

President Feinstein expressed her deep admiration of both Fire Marshal DeCossio and Chief Johnson for their work. She commended Chief DeCossio for the breadth and scope of his responsibilities and she thanked him for helping her every step of the way to learn and understand important issues and questions she had. She wished him a happy retirement. She thanked Chief Johnson for his service and wished she were able to visit the airport but because of COVID restrictions, she was unable to but appreciates all the information provided in his reports and finds it very educational. She wished him a happy retirement.

There was no public comment.

5. SFFD OVERVIEW OF BUDGET [Discussion]

Mark Corso, Deputy Director of Finance and Planning, to give an update on the Mayor's Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 proposed budget for the Fire Department for Commission review and discussion.

Director Corso provided a brief overview of the Mayor's Proposed Budget that was presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 1, 2021, as part of the charter request. He mentioned that for once it's good budget news from his perspective. He reminded folks that the last time he presented formally at the commission was in mid-February and was approved by the commission and submitted to the mayor's office on February 22, 2021, and the Department was requested to make a significant reduction to the general fund budget. He added that since that time, the city's fiscal outlook has dramatically been altered as there was the American Recovery Plan Act for coronavirus stimulus payments and stimulus relief that was passed in Congress. He explained in detail the results of the city's financial plan due to the federal stimulus payments. His PowerPoint is attached:

<https://sf-fire.org/files/2021-06/Commission%20Presentation%20-%202021%2006%2009%20MYR%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf>

He added that operations are where most of the funding is allocated, including a significant increase in resources for the Department's community paramedicine division and the fleet and equipment plan. He mentioned that additional funding allocations are set aside for new initiatives such as equity reinvestment initiatives, and an upgrade of a position to assistant deputy chief for diversity equity inclusions. He touched on other allocations and initiatives and provided the timeline for wrapping up the budget process and he thanked the Commission for their support.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Mr. Corso for his report and noted it is certainly good news to see that we don't have to do significant cuts to the Fire Department budget as he can't think of a more important department to the city and its citizens than the Fire Department. He confirmed that there are monies budgeted for two hose tenders in the current budget and the bidding has been completed.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Director Corso for his thorough comprehensive report and confirmed that the mayor's budget goes to the Board of Supervisors in July of 2021. He also confirmed that Director Corso does not anticipate a reduction of funds once submitted to the Board of Supervisors. He offered to support the budget by approaching individual supervisors for particular needs, to make sure the Department is going to have adequate personnel, which is the bread and butter in terms of how they deal with services and programs for the city and

county. He also expressed his concern with the number of retirees that are going to be leaving the Department.

President Feinstein echoed Commissioner Nakajo's concerns as they continue to increase the newly established teams, SCRT, SWRT, and SORT, and not having enough equipment such as defibrillators, vehicles, and personnel. Chief Nicholson responded that Director Corso has accounted for those in the submitted budget, which falls under community paramedicine.

There was no public comment.

6. COMMISSION REPORT *[Discussion]*

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on May 26, 2021.

Commissioner Covington stated that she attended the budget overview at Willie "Woo Woo" Wong Playground in Chinatown and there was much excitement that the budget is much more robust than they had initially thought, and everyone can breathe somewhat of a sigh of relief, and she thinks things are moving in the right direction.

President Feinstein stated that she attended a meeting on behalf of the Commission with the Department of Public Works regarding the Fire Training Center and various issues associated with it and she also attended the 10th year commemoration of the loss of Firefighters Perez and Valerio in the Berkeley Way fire and was joined by Commissioner Cleaveland. She also attended the Grattan Street fire and stated she is always amazed at the number of people, the pieces of apparatus that are there, and the coordination and she is incredibly impressed and proud with the response from the members and commended them all as they are heroes. President Feinstein confirmed that the best way to dispose of batteries is through Recology and instructions are on their website.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

- Performance Evaluations for Chief of Department, Commission Secretary and Department Physician.

8. COMMUNICATIONS *[Discussion]*

- 5/24/21 email from Geoffrey Moore
- 5/25/21 email from Nancy Wuerfel

There was no public comment.

Items 9 and 10 were continued as Vice President Rodriguez was unable to attend the meeting and was the hearing officer in this matter.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 10

Public comment on all matters pertaining to Item 10 below, including public comment on whether to hold Item 10 in closed session.

10. POSSIBLE CLOSED SESSION REGARDING PERSONNEL MATTER

a. VOTE ON WHETHER TO CONDUCT ITEM 10 (b) IN CLOSED SESSION *[Action]*

The Commission may hear Item 10 (b) in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b) and Administrative Code Section 67.10(b).

b. CASE NO. 2020-03: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL *[Action item]*

The appeal is from a six-calendar day suspension for violation of the Rules and Regulations as follows:

- Section 3901 – Unauthorized Use of Department Name
- Section 3904 – Active Participation in Other Employment, Business, or Enterprise
- Section 2905 – Familiarity with the Rules
- Section 3909 – False Reports
- Section 3923 – Acts Detrimental to the Welfare of the Department
- San Francisco Civil Service Rule 318.2: Requiring prior approval for outside employment.

c. IF CLOSED SESSION IS HELD, RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

1. Report on any action taken in Closed Session as specified in California Government Code Section 54957.1(a)(5) and San Francisco Administrative Code section 67.12(b)(4).
2. Vote to elect whether to disclose any or all discussions held in Closed Session, as specified in San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.12(a). *[Action Item]*

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Feinstein adjourned the meeting at 10:59 a.m. in memory of Firefighter Christopher Yock.