

## FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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**Wednesday, August 25, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**This meeting was held remotely on WebEx**

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The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

[https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=39251](https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=39251)

President Feinstein called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Commission President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Vice President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present.
Bryan Rubenstein	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Shayne Kaialoa	Division of Training	
Sandy Tong	EMS	
David Brown	Airport Division	
Ken Cofflin	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Dawn DeWitt	Support Services	
Erica Arteseros	Homeland Security	
Natasha Parks	Health and Wellness	
Tom O'Connor	AWSS	
Brice Peoples	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	
Simon Pang	Community Paramedicine	
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 August 11, 2021.

Commissioner Covington wanted a more robust report out on the vaccination conversation, and President Feinstein put this item over to the next commission meeting so that Secretary Conefrey could amend the minutes.

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 August 11, 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 June 23. She announced that the Delta Variant is still causing concern for the entire nation but fortunately, for San Francisco, the numbers are starting to plateau and come down a bit. She added that the Department at this time, has 30 people off with either COVID or they are quarantined and they continue to communicate with the members the importance of mask-wearing, PPE, and hygiene, and she and CD2 and 3 have been visiting different stations over the last couple of weeks to express how important the vaccine is and what ramifications could be if they do not meet the timelines that the Department of Human Resources has scheduled. She discussed the timeline deadlines which she stated they put much effort into educating the members of those deadlines

Chief Nicholson announced that they had 18 EMTs graduate from the academy and many will start in the field on Saturday. She also provided a brief update on the wildland fires and stated Chief Velo will provide a more detailed report on that during his report. She announced that they hired Dr. Joseph Graterol as the Community Paramedicine Medical Director. She also announced that there will be a remembrance ceremony for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11. She stated that tomorrow is Women's Equality Day, and she will be attending a ceremony at City Hall with Mayor Breed, Congresswoman Pelosi, and many others.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the BLS authorization memo that allows the BLS providers to be able to come into the 9-1-1- system as a backup to address increased call volume which allows the system to accept up to four BLS ambulances to assist with transport to hospitals and has been extended for two weeks and that once it expires on August 31, 2021, it will be extended again for two weeks, expiring in September where they will reevaluate to see what the staffing levels look like. He asked the chief what their position is on Slow Streets. Chief Nicholson responded that they are looking at all of the data in terms of response times and she is concerned that there are some variabilities over the city and response times have gone up over the past three years which she believes has to do with traffic calming, speed humps and bumps, and bulb-outs and they are talking to the policymakers and working with MTA to figure out next steps and where they go from here. She added that they weigh-in and have conversations all the time, along with Fire Marshal Cofflin and they make recommendations on what is best for the Department.

Commissioner Covington asked for more information about the role the SFFD has in the Transportation Advisory Safety Committee (TASC). Chief Cofflin explained that Captain Ed Londono is assigned to the TASC program representing the Fire Department and he meets with the other TASC Committee members where they have representatives from different city agencies where they discuss upcoming projects such as installing a stop sign, changing the color of a curb or changing the permit parking area or adding a speed bump or hump and it's the TASC Committee that gets together and provides their input if it does or does not affect

their particular agency. If it's a project that may affect the Fire Department, Captain Londono works with the members in the field, the chiefs, the engine drivers, and the companies that will be using those areas to get some input and then they work with the command staff to address any problems and give recommendations at the TASC meetings. He added that SFMTA has agreed that many of the Slow Streets will be going away, and they have 120 days to remove them, also some will succeed to be Slow Streets, such as Lake Street, Shotwell Street, and Sanchez Street, but the SFFD has not agreed to anything permanent. He stated that they have an agreement with SFMTA that if the response times significantly increase or become an even greater concern for the Chief, she can meet with the director of SFMTA and conclude that they are not working out for the Fire Department response times, and they can be removed before that time frame. Commissioner Covington confirmed that the SFMTA chairs the TASC Committee meetings and sets the agenda and she thinks it's helpful information for everyone as to how these decisions are made and by whom and the more information they have, the better.

President Feinstein agreed with Commissioner Covington and asked if the TASC meetings are open to the public. Chief Cofflin stated that no in-person meetings are happening, but the SFMTA does post the agenda on their website, along with the minutes and results. He also mentioned that the agencies at the TASC Committee are SFMTA, Public Works, SFPD, Planning Department, Fire Department, and Golden Gate Transit. President Feinstein expressed her concern that if these meetings are not open to the public, does it mean that government representatives are going around without public input determining what is in the public's best interest? Chief Cofflin responded that the agenda is posted with a list of projects the public has the right to provide comments on. President Feinstein also described the slow streets surrounding her and how she can drive through the middle of the speed bumps which doesn't slow her down, but that a fire engine cannot, and it concerns her that it is damaging the Department's equipment and she also doesn't think it's working to reduce the number of accidents. She added that if the Slow Streets are slowing our response times and causing damage to the equipment, she would like to know about it and decide whether the Commission should weigh in on it as she is not particularly interested in being politically correct about it as it is a matter of safety and receiving the emergency services the citizens expect. She added that she knows the detriments but not the benefits of the Slow Streets program. She also confirmed that the Physician's Office had vaccines available and some of the members received their first dose.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Chief Nicholson for her comprehensive report and details on the important issue of the vaccine for the members of the Department and the timelines that she spoke about that have been issued by DHR.

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 June 2021 report. Chief Velo gave a mutual aid update stating 24 members are currently assigned to different fires in the State of California and all deployed personnel are in good health.

Chief Velo touched on the Training Division and the 128<sup>th</sup> academy that started August 2, 2021, with 41 recruits. He added that active shooter training took place at SFO and Chief Brown is doing a tremendous job making sure the crews are always engaged and prepared. Chief Velo, Chief Kaialoa, and Lieutenant Mota went to New York to their training academy that sits on Randall's Island and learned of things they do in their academy, what kinds of props, buildings they have and brought that information back to start the process of preparing for the SFFD new training facility. He mentioned that Chief Peoples is busy working on projects including enrollment of the City EMT interns and McCarthy Fellow Internship Program. He touched on some of the changes going forward with future recruit classes, including orientation for recruits and their families and a pre-academy kick-off. He touched on NERT, Health, Safety, and Wellness under Chief Parks who was able to secure rapid COVID testing from CDPH and has been going to stations that had some positive cases and makes sure the members can be tested; the Physician's Office where they are working on several projects; The Investigative Services Bureau; Support Services; and PUC Liaison.

Commissioner Covington asked what the status was of the artwork for the gates at Station 49 was. Chief DeWitt responded that because the fence changed in size, there have been major changes made to the artwork and they have an art meeting tomorrow and she will have more information following that meeting. Commissioner Covington confirmed that the Art's Commission will be paying for the new artwork, and she expressed her concerns on prior images that reminded some of the images used in World War II, not calming images. Commissioner Covington also confirmed that there are no funds to maintain the large green space behind the Chief's Residence, but a company comes out and does the front yard to keep it looking tidy. She asked Chief DeWitt to follow up with Rec and Park to see if it's something they can consider and maintain as it is the only official residence in the City and County of San Francisco and she would appreciate knowing how it's being kept and not overtaken by weeds.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Velo for his comprehensive report and confirmed that the firehouse recipe book will be in electronic form and will not be published and it's a project that the Doctor's office along with nurse, Stephanie Phelps has been working on gathering some healthier recipes as part of the overall health and wellness projects that they are working on. Commissioner Cleaveland also confirmed that the moose boat is part of their fleet of boats and is used for rescues. He mentioned that he is keenly interested in the upkeep and maintenance of the firehouses and other buildings that are managed and owned by the Fire Department and he thinks it is incumbent on us to make the living conditions for our firefighters as good as possible and when there are repairs that need to be done, that they are done as expeditiously as possible. He confirmed that Station 19 got a new extractor and that polishing the fuel for the generator at Station 3 was more reasonable than replacing it entirely. He added that he couldn't think of anything more critical at a fire station than having emergency generators that are operable if there is a power outage, so they are still able to respond to fires or emergencies and get the doors open. He was glad to hear that the relationship with DPW and BBR has improved and has made the SFFD a larger priority.

Vice President Nakajo stated he appreciated how comprehensive Chief Velo got on reporting of the wildfires and was glad to hear all personnel are good. He confirmed that the morale of the

members deployed is high, even after 4 rotations. Chief Velo added that he is also concerned about their health because they are breathing that smoke day in and day out with long shifts. Vice President Nakajo confirmed that the department has enough members trained as he feels it's going to be a long fire season. Chief Velo added that the issue they are having is a shortage of staff as more people are off with COVID and that's reducing the pool of people that can be deployed for mutual aid. Vice President Nakajo thanked Chief Nicholson for her commitment to the mutual aid and for the members who have responded and that his heart and prayers go out to all the members and the residents in Northern California who are dealing with these fires.

Commissioner Covington confirmed that the Training Division is working with the driverless vehicle companies Cruise and Waymo to develop a training video for the Department so that if the vehicles were to get in an accident members will know how to control the vehicle. She also confirmed that Target Solutions is an online platform for training, instead of going to a classroom.

President Feinstein confirmed that Station 35 is making progress but a move-in date is not known. She expressed her concern for members who can't socially distance themselves while sleeping in the firehouses and not knowing who is vaccinated and who is not. She asked if adjustments can be made. Chief Nicholson responded that they are following every guidance that they get from DHR and the Department of Public Health and putting those messages out to the members regularly and they cannot at this time, ask someone if they're not vaccinated to go and sleep elsewhere. President Feinstein confirmed that the members who are deployed to the wildfires do not have equipment that prevents them from breathing in smoke and there is nothing in the industry that the NFPA has adopted as a mitigating measure for folks to respond to wildland areas. President Feinstein expressed her concern over damage to the department's vehicles when they must travel over speed humps and bumps. Chief DeWitt responded that she reached out to Central Shops, and they confirmed there has been an increase in broken leaf springs but there is no way to discern whether it's because of the speed humps or the age of the rigs.

There was no public comment.

**5. RESOLUTION 2021-01 RAMAYTUSH OHLONE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**  
*[Discussion and possible action]*

Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution 2021-01, Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement

Commissioner Secretary read the Resolution into the record.

There was discussion for and against the resolution.

Commissioner Covington moved to adopt the Resolution. Commissioner Nakajo Seconded. The motion passed 3 to 1. (Ayes: Nakajo, Covington, Feinstein; No: Cleaveland)

Francisco DaCosta stated the land belongs to the Muwekma Ohlone and suggested having the right facts and history.

**5. COMMISSION REPORT [*Discussion*]**

Report on Commission activities since last meeting of August 11, 2021.

Vice President Nakajo gave a progress update on the Commission Secretary's evaluation.

President Feinstein explained that she is working with the labor attorney in the City Attorney's office on how to proceed with evaluating the Department physician as the form that DHR provided doesn't apply in any way and it is not a meaningful evaluation.

There was nothing to report.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

There was no public comment.

- Findings of Fact
- Commission Secretary evaluation
- Chief's evaluation
- Physician's evaluation

There was no public comment.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

President Feinstein adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.