

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

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**Wednesday, September 8, 2021  
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=39298](https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=39298)

President Feinstein called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.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	
Shaine 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	
Tom O'Connor	AWSS	
Simon Pang	Community Paramedicine	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	

President Feinstein read the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement. Vice President Nakajo confirmed that there did not need to be any changes to the Fire Commission's Land Acknowledgment, and he thanked Commissioner Covington for the research she did on the Ohlone Peoples.

**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, and August 25, 2021.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the minutes and Vice President 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**

Report on current issues, activities, and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting on August 25, 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 August 25, 2021. Chief Nicholson announced that Armie Morgan has been nominated as a new Fire Commissioner and he currently works with the Operating Engineers Local 3. She gave an update on COVID stating 18 members are either off with symptoms or a positive test result or exposure and that 177 members are non-compliant with the vaccine requirements, and they are meeting with those members to make sure they understand what is required of them. She mentioned that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks is on Saturday where there will be a remembrance ceremony at the Public Safety Building at 6:45 a.m. and where Mr. Harry Ong will be in attendance. Mr. Ong is the brother of Ms. Betty Ong who was a flight attendant on American Airlines Flight 11.

Commissioner Covington confirmed that the discussions with Human Resources regarding the process for those people who are not compliant are ongoing, and the first thing the department is doing is meeting with those members and explaining to them why they need to comply, what the deadlines are and what the consequences are, which will be termination if not compliant, a process that is going to be a non-disciplinary separation. Commissioner Covington expressed her concerns about the number of those members who can appeal to the Commission and how the Commission can handle a flood of cases and being aware of the Firefighters Bill of Rights and she would like to know sooner rather than later what the process is going to be so they can plan accordingly. President Feinstein explained that she has been working with the City Attorney's Office on this issue and what kind of hearing an unvaccinated member would be entitled to receive and that she would report back to discuss and determine the appropriate procedure. She added that it boggles the mind that members are not being vaccinated and placing not only their fellow members in danger but also members of the public. Chief Velo added that Local 798 is sitting next to these employees and advising them of their rights and have been working with the Department to try and convince them to get vaccinated. Commissioner Covington added that she appreciates the leadership of the union taking this on.

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 Operation activities for August 2021. He mentioned that they had many incidents and drills during August, including a fire on Geary Boulevard, a car fire on the Bay Bridge, and many cliff and surf rescues. He touched on the mutual aid deployments and described the many fires burning throughout the state. He added that at the fire on La Playa, a Muni bus ran over the fire hose in front of him, and the driver claimed she didn't know she was not permitted to drive over the hoses. He added that they are working hard to get that message across and to hold people accountable when they do this, as it is illegal to drive over a

fire hose and to not follow the directions of a firefighter at the scene of an emergency. He mentioned that the Public Information Officer has been busy out in the community trying to get the message out to encampments not to have open flames. He added that EMS has been busy, and the call volume continues to spike. He described the COVID outbreak on a global striker vessel with 19 crew members that tested positive for COVID. He touched on the Bureau of Fire Prevention and Investigation, Airport Division, and Homeland Security. He announced that on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, the city had a failure at DEM that took out many systems, including the 9-1-1 system for over an hour. He acknowledged Chief Cannon who showed a tremendous amount of ingenuity during this outage, as he was able to develop systems never before conceived so that they could capture cell phone numbers of people trying to call into 9-1-1 that couldn't get through to the system so they could call them back.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Rubenstein for his excellent report and confirmed that the 9-1-1 outage was most likely caused by a redundant uninterruptible power supply system where one of them had experienced a failure and while they were preparing to fix it, they accidentally damaged the other one. He also noticed that EMS continually has problems with finding beds to take patients to and asked if there is any way they can expand the number of shelter beds and the hours of operation of intake. Chief Pang responded that they have been meeting with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing about this as they also recognize the problem and they are doing an analysis to see what it would take for increased hiring and staff so they could have longer intake hours as well as considering accommodating all of the new street teams, to have one designated site that would have extended hour intake.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Chief Rubenstein for his comprehensive report, and he stated that he looks forward to a more detailed report of the breakdown of the 9-1-1 communications system. He also appreciated Chief Pang's efforts in the discussions on the subject matter of the result of the lack of beds, resources, and staffing. He went through the written report and highlighted some of the matters covered including the "SCRT, service time and response area, the EMS-6 report with detailed descriptions of encounters and their successes and challenges and acknowledged the members who went above and beyond the call of service and provided needed help to a mother and her four-year-old daughter as well as a family whose van was stolen leaving them with no resources, clothes, food or accommodations. He acknowledged the good work of Chief Pang and how he rolled out six various teams over a very tight timeline and stated he was gratified that the Department and Director Corso have this funded. He acknowledged and appreciated all the members in terms of the work that they are doing.

President Feinstein reminded people that firefighter Matt Vann had a very serious injury as a result of a Muni bus running over a hose line and asked what the consequences are and what MTA is doing and asked if there was something the Commission can do to get MTA educated. She added that not knowing the rules is no excuse. Chief Rubenstein responded that in the case of the La Playa fire, the driver was cited for two things, driving over the hose and failing to follow the directions of a firefighter. He added that they are communicating at the highest level and are currently engaged in a training program with MTA so they can provide that training to MTA members. President Feinstein brought up other incidents regarding the rental bicycle and scooter accidents she gets alerts about. She also confirmed that the categories in the SFFD's monthly response to medical calls are the desired time that they want the first unit, the ALS

unit, the first ambulance on scene, and Chief Tong explained the "on time percentage" of those calls.

Commissioner Covington confirmed that the Muni driver who was cited at the La Playa fire was cited by the police for a moving violation of running over the hose and for a misdemeanor of not following the directions of the firefighter at the scene of an emergency. She also suggested having a video available to the larger community about taking directions from the Fire Department at a fire scene or any emergency and that video should be sent to SFGOV-TV TV and she added that the more people that have the information the better things will be. She proposed that the Department PIO get involved and send out some information to everybody on his list. She also advised scooter riders to stay off the sidewalks.

There was no public comment.

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

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on August 25, 2021.

Vice President Nakajo reported that he has concluded the evaluation on the Department secretary and will be finishing that product with an interview with the secretary within the next two weeks and he thanked his fellow commissioners for their cooperation.

Commissioner Covington reported that she was at Headquarters when the systems failed, and she was very pleased with how calm everyone was, and she acknowledged Chief Rubenstein in his efforts to get the information out to the commissioners under the most trying of circumstances.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

Commissioner Covington inquired as to whether there was going to be a presentation on the EFWS supply system as they received voluminous materials some time ago. President Feinstein responded that it was her understanding that they were provided those documents for informational purposes only. Chief Velo added that if the Commission wants a presentation, Chief O'Connor can present the items in a summarized version.

- Presentation from the Physician's office as to the operations of her office and what they have accomplished during this past year.

There was no public comment.

**7. ADJOURNMENT** President Feinstein adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.