

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

## FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 416, San Francisco, California, 94102

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=33391](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=33391)

President Nakajo called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

### 1. ROLL CALL

Commission President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commission Vice President	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Joe Alioto Veronese	Excused
Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present.
Victor Wyrsh	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Sandy Tong	EMS	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Tony Rivera	Support Services	
Michael Cochran	Homeland Security	
Joel Sato	Training Division	
Assistant Chiefs		
Brook Baker	Division 2	
Denise Newman	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
Clement Yeh	Medical Director	
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 April 24, 2019

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the above meeting Minutes. Commissioner Covington Seconded. Motion to approve Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

#### **4. UPDATE FROM THE DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

Assistant Deputy Chief Anthony Rivera to provide an update on the Division of Support Services.

Chief Rivera presented on accomplishments and future projects at Support Service. He presented the following PowerPoint: <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/Support%20Services%20Presentation.pptx>

Chief Rivera stated that Support Services not only maintains and procures equipment vehicles and facilities for the Department, but they also do a lot of research and try to ensure that the members are safe using the state-of-the-art equipment that not only allows them to do their job better but keeps them and the public healthy and safe. He touched on tools and equipment noting that they are reducing their reliance on fossil fuels, which also reduces firefighter's exposure to carcinogens. He explained the different equipment that now uses battery as opposed to fuel and gasoline. He added that every vehicle in the San Francisco Fire Department has a solar panel on the roof and that they have switched from biodiesel to renewable diesel, which is a nonpetroleum-based fuel that has remarkable reduction in output of emissions. He mentioned that they have exhaust extractor system at every firehouse, which means whenever the firefighters jump on to the vehicle to respond to an incident, a pressure sensitive switch is activated, and a fan comes on and sucks up all of the exhaust fumes out of the apparatus bay and put them out into the atmosphere to protect the firefighters. He touched on the vehicle-mounted filtration system that they are currently in a pilot program and he explained the promising results they are seeing from using that system. He talked about the innovation on the current hose tender design that the Department already has and how they work. Chief Rivera introduced Captain Ramon Serrano and Lieutenant Vince Wong, who do much of the work in the very specialized unit to mitigate any issues that arise at the Bureau of Equipment. They each introduced themselves. Chief Nicholson thanked Chief Rivera for his presentation and thanked Captain Serrano and Lieutenant Wong as they do so much to keep the department running.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Chief Rivera for his nice report and mentioned that he hopes Chief Nicholson continues the practice of allowing her staff to give commissioners paper report to take with them rather than just seeing it and he finds it beneficial. He asked how many hose tenders the department anticipates getting over the next couple of years. Chief Nicholson responded that they are hoping to get four this year and would like to have more than that. Commissioner Hardeman stated he was very impressed with the Bureau of Equipment when he visited the facility last year and he learned firsthand just exactly what these guys do and what their operation looks like. He also mentioned that he was glad were are reducing emissions.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Rivera for his report and appreciates all of the hard work that his division does. He confirmed that the goal of the department is to have all the vehicles outfitted with the mounted filtration system at a cost of about 73 million dollars. Commissioner Cleaveland also confirmed that there is only one manufacturer of PPE and they have reached out to them to make a turnout coat without carcinogenic elements and there are ongoing discussions with the National Fire Protection Association committee to come up with a product that can be testable and be able to certify.

Vice President Covington thanked Chief Rivera for his report and as she has gone through all of the material that he presented she doesn't want to miss the opportunity to say that what comes out very loud and clear to her is that all of it is a result of a vision and she thought it was a remarkable presentation and that the end result is beneficial to everyone. She was glad to see the reduction in carcinogenic materials on the trucks, in the firehouses and on the street and it all makes a huge difference in the long run. She congratulated his team and stated she also liked the comparison and contrast he outlined in his presentation. She asked Environmental Health and Safety Officer, Tony Boone, to come forward to add anything additional. Mr. Boone stated that he collaborated with the opacity test and explained in detail what that entailed, such as looking for carbon monoxide and other irritants like oxides of Nitrogen and oxides of sulfur.

President Nakajo stated that he appreciated that Captain Serrano and Lieutenant Wong were at the meeting and stated at a future meeting, he would also like updates on the Department of Training site that's futuristic and Station 13, in terms of potential developments as well as the EMS building, Station 16, Station 5 and Station 35. He touched on cordless extraction tools, and thermal imaging cameras and how to fund them. He added that it's a challenge every year, and everything they don't get through the budget process, they need to get it from somewhere such as grants. He confirmed that solar panels were initially installed in 2015 and that the department gets its renewable diesel from Golden Gate Petroleum. He also confirmed that the fireboat engineers deal with light maintenance issues, but if there is a major issue, they have a vendor or the fireboat will go into a dry dock where they will have a qualified technician take care of large repairs. He added that he was glad Chief Rivera put a picture of a hose tender in his presentation because it shows the engine and the capacity and description that can extend current AWSS and other possibilities, including high-rises as well and he mentioned how important it is to the greater overall AWSS system in terms of the west side, as the department has to have a system in play to be able to deal with suppression and issues in those prone areas. He confirmed they will have the capacity to draft directly into the board pump and/or use the portable submersible pump into the bay or other water sources. There was a discussion on hydrogen-powered vehicles. President Nakajo asked if there was a need for a resolution in terms of PPE's being made without carcinogens and Chief Rivera and Chief Nicholson was in support of that concept. He also mentioned that he would like more information on the "Chief's Residence" and the cost to make it "livable".

Commissioner Hardeman stated that in regard to the development of a new turnout coat, he thinks there is a big pot of gold waiting for somebody that can invent a turnout that protects and keeps you cool without carcinogens. He described what it feels like when he wears his turnout coat at a working fire.

##### **5. OVERVIEW OF FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET *[Discussion]***

Update and overview from Director Mark Corso on the current budget.

Mark Corso gave a brief overview of the Department's proposed budget. He mentioned that the mayor proposed her budget back on May 31<sup>st</sup>. He presented the attached PowerPoint:

[https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/budget\\_5.pdf](https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/budget_5.pdf)

He stated that general fund operations are the main funding allocation that contains day to day operations of the Fire Department, administratively and operationally and that they have some annual projects and continuing projects. He explained those in detail. He added that the biggest ticket item in the budget is their work order with the Port for services provided to them. He announced that the total proposed budget currently sits at 424 million dollars in the next upcoming year and it is an increase from the current year for a variety of factors. He explained that since the Commission approved the Department's submittal to the mayor's office, there was a joint letter with the Department and the Commission advocating for departmental needs. He added that Local 798, Department Administration and the Budget Committee met and determined at the time their three main priorities, which was EMS, Incident Support Specialists and equipment. He provided an overview of what the mayor's office has allocated, which includes 4 hose tenders, continuation of the mayor's public safety hiring plan, five additional EMS-6 FTEs to supplement operational staffing that they currently have, funding for EMS-6 training, an upgrade to the EMS-6 manager position, three additional fire inspector positions to deal with increased workload, three substitutions to assistant fire marshal from other officer positions and will allow for a strategic reorganization of the Bureau and the inclusion of assistant deputy chief to serve as the health and safety chief for the department. He touched on the allocation of over nine million dollars over the two years specific to equipment and the equipment plan, allocation of one senior administrative analyst to assist with EMS billing, one executive secretary position to assist with the increased administrative demands on the Department and an additional administrative position to assist with tasks. He expounded on the submittal timelines.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked him for his report and stated that he's always impressed by the numbers he puts together and how he presents them and let him know how fortunate the department is to have him as the CFO. He confirmed that the Department was proposing a very small fee increase of about four percent for fire inspections and permits. Commissioner Cleaveland expressed his support for the assistant deputy chief position and confirmed that that position will have oversight of the physician's office position. He was also happy to see the allocation for an administrative analyst position to ramp up the EMS billing practices.

Commissioner Hardeman stated that the report was concise and well written. He mentioned that although he hasn't had a formal meeting with Supervisors' Peskin and Safai, he has had numerous discussions with them and he thinks they are favorable to the Fire Department without specifically picking anything they didn't like. He likes seeing the addition of staffing to keep up with the responsibilities that the Fire Department has with increased population.

President Nakajo confirmed that all of the presented positions have been approved by the mayor's office and needs to be approved by the Board of Supervisors Budget Committee. He confirmed that the additional EMS-6 positions will be coordinated out of Station 49 and the executive secretary position is also for the admin side of EMS. He also confirmed that the new assistant deputy chief's position is through an unfunded battalion chief's position and they are transferring it up to an assistant deputy chief position which will report to Deputy Chief of Administration Chief Velo. Commissioner Nakajo expressed his concerns about that position supervising the Physician's office.

There was no public comment.

**6.. 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 April 24, 2019, including budget, academies, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Nicholson stated she, Deputy Chief Velo and Deputy Chief Wyrsh have been visiting the fire stations as well as having had a town hall meeting at Station 49 and they are continuing to do that and are getting good feedback from the members. She added that sometimes the best ideas happen over a cup of coffee and they have had some good conversations going. She mentioned that they are reorganizing and reestablishing internal committees and workgroups and that members have until June 17<sup>th</sup> to apply. In regard to the recent heatwave the city experienced, she stated it had a large impact on the department operationally and on EMS as well as on the Suppression side and they are continuing to make the story known to the Board of Supervisors in terms of what is going on in EMS and has been going on for a while. She added that the time on task is up 27 percent since 2014 and that means that the members in the ambulances are spending 27 percent more time on their work at hand to run a 9-1-1- call and it's taking 27 percent longer. She explained some of the reasons, such as increased traffic and more documentation requirements are due to the increase. She touched on the challenges at Chase Center, and the budget that they are currently working on. With regard to upcoming events, she mentioned that on Friday she will be attending the Women's Summit and the 125<sup>th</sup> Academy class graduation and on Saturday she will be marching in the Juneteenth celebration parade with command staff and next week she will be conducting conversations with possible recruits for the H-2 and H-3 Level 1 upcoming academy classes.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Nicholson for her report and asked what the general comments and feedback has been from her visits to the various fire stations. Chief Nicholson responded that initially, she was getting more of a dumbfounded look like, wow, you guys are coming to talk to us, but that they are really happy that the administration is opening the lines of communication and having conversations and that they are willing to listen, and they really want to hear about what it is that the administration is doing. Commissioner Cleaveland applauded Chief Nicholson for reaching out to the rank and file and getting feedback and having that open dialogue on a regular basis will be valuable for everyone. He confirmed that approximately 70 percent of the 9-1-1- calls are medical emergencies and of that 70 percent, about 37 percent have unidentifiable addresses.

Regarding the update on the Drone program, Chief Cochrane stated that the drone is grant funded by UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative) and to make the purchases, an approved aviation request form is required from Cal OES. He added that the request was submitted by UASI on April 5<sup>th</sup> for Cal OES to review and a follow up was requested on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup> and there has been no response. Vice President Covington responded by stating that with all the inclement weather and the flooding throughout the country, FEMA is pressed to the wall right now and she thinks when things settle down a bit, they will be more responsive and that we need to be patient.

Commissioner Hardeman added that he doesn't think the public knows how important of a person Chief Cochrane is to this Department, but his position is very important as the safety of all of San Francisco as he works with every part of city government and he has his hands full

all the time. He touched briefly on the preparation for the Pride Parade. He confirmed that King American Ambulance has the contract with Oracle Park and that Chase will have a similar contract with one of the ambulance companies.

Vice President Covington asked Chief Nicholson to enumerate her top three asks are in terms of importance for the Department regarding the budget. Chief Nicholson responded that everything that she asked for in the budget she felt was an absolute necessity although they didn't get everything they asked for. She strongly expressed that they absolutely need the fleet and equipment replacement as well as the hose tenders and EMS personnel, and additional assistance in Fire Prevention. She added that they need everything and more that they are asking for. Vice President Covington stated that they've been running at a deficit for quite some time and these asks are very serious, not just for fleet and EMS and Fire Prevention, but there are so many things that are going on and since these are flush times in the city, now is the time when they need to acquire these materials and promote people so that they can do the job that needs to be done in order to protect the citizens and the visitors of the City. She touched on the letter that PG-& E sent out to ratepayers informing them of their public safety power shutoff. She mentioned that her first thought after reading the letter was this is going to increase call volume to 9-1-1. Chief Cochrane explained that he is also concerned, but that DEM is on top of it and tomorrow there is going to be a preparation coordination workshop being held at the Bill Graham Center with all involved agencies to have discussions and solutions for preparing and planning for such a shutoff.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that they have finalized the job description and announcement for the Grant Writer and will repost it in hopes of getting a bigger pool of applications this time around.

There was no public comment.

#### REPORT FROM OPERATIONS, DEPUTY CHIEF VICTOR WYRSCH

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

Chief Wyrsh took time to commend Chief Nicholson as she has taken the baton and run with it at a speed he can't believe, and it's inspiring to him and is helping in keeping him going. He also thanked the ADC's behind him, as he thought it was a day job, and it's basically 24/7 and he appreciates how they have been answering his phone calls and emails and are always there for him. He also gave out kudos to IT manager, Jesus Mora.

Chief Wyrsh stated during the reporting period, there were a total of 13 working fires in the month of May with two greater alarms, the first was at 1557 Innes Avenue, and Assistant Chief Kalos was the incident commander. He explained the attack on the fire, and that there were no injuries, but 12 people were displaced. The second greater alarm was at 1635 Golden Gate, with Chief Kalos as incident commander. He described in detail the efforts made to attack the fire from the members on scene. He touched on other significant events during the reporting period and can they can be retrieved by uploading the attached report: [https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/ops%20report\\_2.pdf](https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/ops%20report_2.pdf)

There was no public comment:

**6. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]**

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on April 24, 2019.

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.

There was no public comment.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED [Discussion]**

- Email dated 4/23/19 from Daniela Ponce

There was no public comment.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 11**

Public comment on all matters pertaining to Item 11 below, including public comment on whether to hold Item 11(b) (c) and (d) in closed session.

There was no public comment.

**11. POSSIBLE CLOSED SESSION REGARDING PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**a. VOTE ON WHETHER TO CONDUCT ITEMS 11(b) (c) and (d) IN CLOSED SESSION [Action]**

The Commission may hear Item 11(b) (c) and (d) in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b) and Administrative Code Section 67.10(b).

*Commissioner Cleaveland made a motion to conduct item 11(b) (c) and (d), in Closed Session. Commissioner Hardeman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. (4-0; Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Cleaveland)*

*The Commission went into closed session at 11:33 p.m.*

*Also present was Deputy City Attorney, Brad Russi.*

**b. CASE NO. 2018-01: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS ON PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT REGARDING COMMISSION'S DECISION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL, FOR VIOLATIONS AS FOLLOWS: [Discussion and possible action]**

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

- Section 3901 - Unauthorized Use of Department Name
- Section 3902 - Unauthorized Use of Uniform
- Section 3905 - Familiarity with the Rules
- Section 3914- Unauthorized Visit to Places of Amusement
- Section 3923 -Acts Detrimental to the Welfare of the Department

*At the Commission's meeting on December 12, 2018, the Commission deliberated and decided member's appeal of a 3-day suspension imposed by the Chief of Department and by a unanimous vote the Commission the Commission denied members appeal and upheld the Chief's 3-day suspension. The Commission is now considering proposed Findings of Fact in relation to that decision.*

*Vice President Covington Moved to approve the findings of fact. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. The motion was unanimous.*

**c. CASE NO. 2018-04: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS ON PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT REGARDING COMMISSION'S DECISION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL, FOR VIOLATIONS AS FOLLOWS: [Discussion and possible action]**

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

- Section 3909 – False Reports
- Section 3921 – Inattention to Duty
- Section 3929 – First Alarm Areas
- Section 3941 – Use of Department Vehicles

*At the Commission meeting on January 9, 2019, the Commission deliberated and decided member's appeal of a 10-day suspension imposed by the Chief of Department and by a vote of 3-2 (Ayes: Cleaveland, Nakajo, Hardeman, Nays: Covington, Alioto-Veronese), the Commission upheld the charged rule violations and reduced the penalty from a 10-day suspension to a 4-day suspension. The Commission is now considering proposed Findings of Fact in relation to that decision.*

*Vice President Covington Moved to approve the findings of fact. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. The motion was unanimous.*

**d. CASE NO. 2018-05: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS ON PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT REGARDING COMMISSION'S DECISION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL, FOR VIOLATIONS AS FOLLOWS: [Discussion and possible action]**

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

- Section 2808 – Welfare of Subordinates
- Section 3909 – False Reports
- Section 3921 – Inattention to Duty
- Section 3941 – Use of Department Vehicles

*At the Commission meeting on January 9, 2019, the Commission deliberated and decided member's appeal of a 10-day suspension imposed by the Chief of Department and by a vote of 3-2 (Ayes: Cleaveland, Nakajo, Hardeman, Nays: Covington, Alioto-Veronese), the Commission upheld the charged rule violations and reduced the penalty from a 10-day suspension to a 4-day suspension. The Commission is now considering proposed Findings of Fact in relation to that decision.*

*Vice President Covington Moved to approve the findings of fact. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. The motion was unanimous.*

**e. IF CLOSED SESSION HELD, RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.**

**i. REPORT ON ANY ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION** as specified in California Government Code Section 54957.1(a) and San Francisco Administrative Code section 67.12(b).

*The Commission reconvened in Open Session at 11:44 a.m. The Commission had nothing to report.*

**ii. 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*]

*Commissioner Hardeman Moved to not disclose discussions held in closed session. Vice President Covington Seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. (4-0; Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Veronese)*

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

President Nakajo adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.