

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

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**Wednesday, September 25, 2019 – 5:00 p.m.  
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 400, San Francisco, California, 94102**

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The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

[https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=34111](https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=34111)

President Nakajo called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.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           | Present |
| Acting Chief of Department | Victor Wyrsh                  | Present |
| Victor Wyrsh               | Deputy Chief -- Operations    |         |
| Jose Velo                  | Deputy Chief --Administration |         |
| Sandy Tong                 | EMS                           |         |
| Dan DeCossio               | Bureau of Fire Prevention     |         |
| Khai Ali                   | Airport Division              |         |
| Dawn DeWitt                | Support Services              |         |
| Michael Cochran            | Homeland Security             |         |
| Joel Sato                  | Training Division             |         |
| Assistant Chiefs           |                               |         |
| Bryan Rubenstein           | Division 2                    |         |
| Nicol Juratovac            | Division 3                    |         |
| 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 September 11, 2019.

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

There was no public comment.

**4. REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION, DEPUTY CHIEF JOSE VELO**

Report on the Administrative Divisions, Fleet and Facility status and updates, Finance, Support Services, Homeland Security, Training within the Department.

Chief Velo's report covered the Month of August. He highlighted some of the incidents contained in the attached comprehensive report. <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/9-25%20admin%20report.pdf>

Chief Velo touched on some of the highlights of his report that he is personally involved in including coordinating meetings with the workgroups and committees that were formed in June, working on a location of a new training facility with the Department of Real Estate, and the Chief of Department, the Candlestick Point project and the AWSS piping projects. He mentioned that he is working on a succession plan and one of the main goals of the administration is to make sure they have a good succession plan for the Department and to train officers, future officers, and chief officers. He added that they are in contact with different vendors to develop officer training for the Department. He touched on the Division of Training where they continue with active shooter training, as well as gearing up for the 126<sup>th</sup> Academy Class which will start on October 7, 2019, and will graduate on February 28, 2020. His report covered NERT, the Bureau of Research and Planning, Support Services which included Station 35 where demolition of the pier is scheduled for October 1, 2019. He added that they are making good progress on the Ambulance Deployment Facility and are two weeks behind schedule but are within budget and that the specs for the hose tenders have gone to Central Shops. He announced the promotion of Natasha Parks as the new Battalion Chief of the new Health, Safety and Wellness Unit, and where she will also oversee the restoration of the health check program. He acknowledged the commissioners who attended the September 11<sup>th</sup> ceremony as well as the stair climb and Fire Ops 101 drill.

Commissioner Veronese thanked Chief Velo for his report and confirmed that the hierarchy for Chief Parks' in regards to the Physician's office will be to communicate, collaborate and get information from the doctor's office in regards to health issues, injury issues and gather raw data that can be used to improve overall health of the members, but the Commission will still oversee the Physician's position. Commissioner Veronese added that this position is going to be critical in building up the trust of the members to make sure that the information is used appropriately and not to disqualify members from employment. He mentioned that in the future he would like to see a report about how many members have voluntarily done the testing the Department is offering and what information they are gaining from it and how the Department is using that information to better the Department. Commissioner Veronese stated that the Department does an amazing job of saving the lives of the public and a terrible job of fending for themselves and taking care of themselves and he thinks it is to the detriment of the members. He added that historically over the years, they are seeing it in cancers, suicides and all sorts of different health issues and he thinks they have a real opportunity to change that. Commissioner Veronese commented that he thought the Fire Ops drill was amazing on two different levels, one, it's the type of thing that should be done before a budget, not after a budget because all of the legislators that went through it were eyes wide open and shocked by

the experience and in a very positive way toward the Department and the second lesson for him was at least when you put a civilian through something like that and you're going into the burning building, he thought to himself, is this really the right type of equipment that we should be going into buildings with because it's so heavy and confining and you can't see anything and he thinks that's an important question they should be asking as he thinks some of the stuff they are using is outdated and old and they should be focused on a state of the art department. Commissioner Veronese touched on the very tragic incident where a law enforcement officer in San Francisco took his own life and we had to call on a neighboring county for a drone to come in and help search for him and he thinks it is an embarrassment to the city and it angered him. He added that we are putting police officers and firefighters in danger by not having these drones.

Commissioner Cleaveland asked if the wellness checkup program was going to be mandatory so each member of the Fire Department will have to have a wellness checkup annually in the future. Chief Velo responded that that is the goal and they feel strongly that they need to have that conversation with 798 so the membership's involved, but it will start as a voluntary program. Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that there are about 15-20 workgroup and committee groups with about 225 members from all ranks involved in those committees. He touched on the curriculum for the officer training, the balancing tours, and the ongoing projects using the 2014 ESER bond funds.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Chief Velo for his detailed report and echoed the comments of Commissioner Veronese about the drone program. He stated that he is a big proponent of the drone and he thinks it was at least three years ago when he, Support Services Assistant Deputy Chief Ken Lombardi and CD2 Mark Gonzales had a demonstration over at Station 7 by somebody who was promoting a particular drone, which was state of the art at the time and it was a fantastic demonstration. He added that it seemed simple and uncomplicated and here it is, three years later and no drone and he is also disappointed that they are dragging their feet on this. He added that the public should be outraged that for some technical privacy reason which is holding up the drone program and is so petty. He congratulated the commissioners for participating in the recent training drills on Treasure Island and that they did a great job.

Vice President Covington thanked Commissioner Hardeman for his kind comments and stated she hasn't seen the KTVU clip showing her at the Treasure Island Training Drill and is looking forwarding to seeing it. She added that she was very impressed by the Fire Ops 101 drill that 798 sponsored and that several supervisors were there as well as the Lieutenant Governor, who stayed all day and she went through all of the modules and was very impressed. She announced that it was the first time in 27 years that the Department has done this drill and the amount of coordination and energy that was required to put on such a large training event was very impressive. She added that she learned a tremendous amount and that it was as close to real-life as you can get without endangering someone and was very hands-on. The last module for her group was the burn room and it was at 750 degrees, the hottest of the day. She asked Chief Velo to explain the 4 modules. Chief Velo made it clear that 798 put this drill together, and Adrian Simms was the coordinator for all the events, the first module was a medical emergency inside the ambulance, the second was a rescue from a second-story window through a ladder where they highlighted the evolutions on how to do that and the techniques that they

use. The third one was an auto extrication where they used the Jaw of Life to cut the "victim" out and the last one was the burn room, where they had Class A fuels in containers that do get caught on fire and produce a significant amount of heat and smoke. She added that Support Specialist Adrian Simms had everybody doing everything and it went off without a hitch. She thanked Chief Velo and 798. She asked Chief Velo to give more details on the succession planning. Chief Velo confirmed that there is a committee called career track workgroup that actually is meeting next week and they will review all the ranks and what qualifications and prerequisites they would like them to have with the current standards, the State Fire Marshal's office, or classes that are available for them and what kind of courses will be required or desired for those folks to have in order to succeed at those positions when they get promoted. She confirmed that they will be meeting with 798, Chief Parks, the doctor's office along with other folks to come up with the best solution for the members to move the health check program forward and that they have the funding for it which is about \$300,00 annually and is within the general fund budget. Vice President Covington also expressed her frustration with the drone program and mentioned it's been about four years now that she went down to the Menlo Park training demonstration on drones and spent the whole day where they were going over legal issues and various ways to deploy the drones. She asked President Nakajo to add it to the next agenda.

President Nakajo confirmed that the six new buggies are being outfitted for Code 3 response and they should have them in operation in a few weeks. He asked Chief Velo to explain the shift change at Station 49. Chief Velo responded that the way the tours for the members' work is they analyze the data of the call volume and based on the call volume, where they are needed most, they shift the schedules for them to be available at those times. He added that every year, members bid for different shifts and tours, so they have better coverage according to the call volume study. President Nakajo was glad to hear that they brought back the health check with improvements as he thinks it is a crucial essential component to the Department. He was also encouraged to hear they have reactivated workgroups and committees. He also mentioned that there is no better way to meet the various members than to sit in the house, have lunch or dinner and have some interaction with the members. He added that there has been a lot of changes in 25 years and some of those members that he had interactions with are no longer here and the new members, unfortunately, don't even know who the commissioners are. He touched on the succession plan and how he would like to see it continue to be diversified among the ranks.

There was no public comment.

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

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on September 11, 2019

President Nakajo announced that the Civil Grand Jury report was accepted with the recommendations and findings and he acknowledged the command force, Olivia Scanlon and Mark Corso for their support.

There was no Public Comment.

**6. AGENDA FOR NEXT AND FUTURE FIRE COMMISSION MEETINGS** *[Discussion]*  
Discussion regarding agenda for the next and future regular meetings.

- Department Physician's Office Presentation
- Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation

There was no Public Comment.

**7. ADJOURNMENT** President Nakajo adjourned the meeting at 5:58 p.m.