

**Minutes from Fire Commission Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, April 27, 2016 - 5:00 p.m.**

Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc., 362 Capp Street, ■ San Francisco ■ California ■ 94110

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The video recording is attached:

[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=25268](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=25268)

President Covington called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

*Item No.*

**1. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commission Secretary Conefrey read the following announcements: This is a reminder that under administrative code section 67(a).1, the ringing and use of cell phones, pagers and similar sound-producing electronic devices is prohibited during Fire Commission meetings. Set all pagers, cellphones and other devices to vibrate or silent mode, or turn the device completely off now. This is also a reminder that food is not allowed during Fire Commission Meetings. The May 11, 2016 Regular Fire Commission meeting will resume back at City Hall in Room 416 at 9:00 a.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Commission President	Francee Covington	Present
Commission Vice President	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Chief of Department	Joanne Hayes-White	Excused
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief - Operations	
Raemona Williams	Deputy Chief – Administration	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Jeff Columbini	Division of Training	
Shane Francisco	Homeland Security	
Rudy Castellanos	Airport Division	
Assistant Chiefs		
Kevin Burke	Division 2	
Tom Siragusa	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	CFO	
Jesusa Bushong	Personnel Officer	
Olivia Scanlon	Communication and Outreach Coordinator	

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Whooley, President of the San Francisco EMS Officers Association stated it was appropriate

the meeting is being held in the southern part of the city, so he can bring to the public's attention the limited amount of paramedic supervision that is occurring. He added that they have one supervisor for roughly half the city and a second one was budgeted but has not been assigned because of an unwillingness by the administration to decouple staffing at Station 49 with the paramedic supervisor who should ideally be stationed out of Station 43. He also thanked Commissioner Nakajo who rode along with him on Monday night and invited any other Commissioner to do the same.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES [Discussion and possible action]**

Discussion and possible action to approve meeting minutes.

- Minutes from Regular Meeting on March 23, 2016

Vice President Cleaveland Moved to approve the March 23, 2016 regular meeting Minutes. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. Motion to approve above Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment:

**5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE [Discussion and possible action]**

Discussion and possible action to approve Chief of Department's request for leave of absence with pay for two (2) days, May 16 and May 17, 2016 to attend a portion of the 2016 Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Conference sponsored by the International Association of Fire Chiefs' in Long Beach, CA. The source of funds for this trip is provided for in the Fire Department 2015-2016 approved budget.

Commissioner Hardeman Moved to approve the Chief's Leave of Absence for (2) days, May 16 and May 17, 2016. Vice President Cleaveland Seconded. Motion to approve the Chief's Leave of Absence was unanimous.

There was no public comment on this item.

**6 CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT [Discussion]**

**REPORT FROM CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT**

Report on current issues, activities and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting of April 13 2016, including Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget, academies, Strategic Planning, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary update, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Hayes-White was excused from the meeting and Chief Gonzales provided her report since the previous meeting on April 13, 2016. He explained that the conference the Chief was attending, they will be working with the National Fire Protection Association with Jim Pauly; Diversity and Promotional and Entry Level Selections, Fire Based EMS.

With regards to the budget he announced that the Budget Committee met on April 19<sup>th</sup> with Supervisor Farrell and on April 20<sup>th</sup>, they presented before the Budget and Finance Committee and provided a general overview and highlighted funding needs with prioritization given to fleet and equipment. He thanked Commissioner Hardeman for attending.

Chief Gonzales mentioned that the 119<sup>th</sup> academy is in there 14<sup>th</sup> week and 50 recruits remain. The graduation is scheduled for June 9, 20156 at Riordan High School. He announced that interviews are being conducted for the 120<sup>th</sup> academy class. He touched on the H-8 per diems, and that 31 offers have been made to members who currently completed their online training with a classroom component to begin on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2016. The goal is to have 100 H-8's by the end of the year.

He stated that the Strategic Planning subcommittees met several times during the month to format the document and will reconvene on Monday, May 2, 2016.

Chief Gonzales touched on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events, and thanked the Commissioners that attended the kick off at Union Square that included the 65-foot ladder raise and Firefighter Bomani climbing to the top which he thought was very impressive. He added that there are many events scheduled from now through December 3, 2016 including the upcoming Chief Engineers Speaker's Panel at the Main Library on May 4, 2016. He stated that the NERT drill that was held at the Marina Greens and Marina Middle School was very well attended and thanked Lt. Erica Arteseros. He also thanked Commissioner Nakajo for marching with him at the Cherry Blossom parade that took place on April 17, 2016. He asked that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of Firefighter Denise Elarms, who was a devoted member of the SFFD from 2002 to 2014; as well as Firefighter Steen Rascon who served the Department from 1977 to 2012.

Commissioner Nakajo and Commissioner Hardeman thanked Chief Gonzales for his comprehensive report.

President Covington also thanked Chief Gonzales for his report and asked if in regards to the article she read in the Chronicle about the City receiving reimbursement funds for Super Bowl 50, if any of those monies would be forthcoming to the Department. According to CFO Mark Corso, the Department is not anticipating reimbursement from those funds.

#### REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION

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

Chief Raemona Williams reported for the month of April. She started with the Division of Training, under Assistant Deputy Chief Jeff Columbine by stating last week the Recruitment and Outreach Committee held a meeting and there was a large attendance.

Chief Williams mentioned they are continuing the below grade training on Yerba Buena Island with positive feedback from the members. They are working with SFPD and are in the planning process for the Active Shooter Training Module and are nearing completion on the construction of the BART station prop.

She announced they have concluded the H-3 Level 2 bump up academy and began the H-3 Level 1 EMT academy. She mentioned that EMS training staff continues to provide online and in service training to all Department members and that NERT, under Lt. Arteseros, continued to provide emergency preparedness training and advanced command operations to members of the NERT committee members' along with neighborhood outreach presentations.

Chief Williams stated that Captain Sheila Hunter of Investigative Service Bureau has been busy with numerous background and testing of potential candidates, as well as the random tests that took place throughout the reporting period and all test results have been negative. She stated that under IT, upgrades of various equipment and products throughout the Department are in progress with some upgrades that have been completed.

Chief Williams touched on the countless meetings and workgroups Chief Francisco has attended in preparation for training exercises and planning for upcoming events including the Bay to Breakers Race, several triathlons, Alcatraz swim and Fleet Week. She also mentioned that the Department now has four K-9 handlers certified with FEMA USAR.

Chief Williams stated that Chief Lombardi of Staff Services has also been busy attending numerous meetings and workgroups and he has also been working with the Port on Pier 26 for relocation of the fireboats during construction of Station 35, as well as the ESER projects. In regards to Fleet Management, she mentioned that engine specifications are being finalized and include additional enhanced safety and profile reducing features and additional sedans have been ordered for the staff of Bureau of Fire Prevention as well as nine new ambulances have been ordered.

Vice President Cleaveland asked what the Fire Department is doing to get the June Health Bond issued. Chief Lombardi explained they have been doing several things including meeting with the editorial board of the Chronicle and Examiner and that the Chief and Olivia Scanlon have been working very hard on the issue, including attending community meetings with the battalion chief's to answer any questions the community might have. They cannot campaign for this Bond in uniform or on duty but they can answer questions. He added that BMW Consultants are handling the campaign.

Commissioner Nakajo asked what the formal name of the Health Bond will be listed in the June Ballot. Chief Lombardi answered it will be listed as Proposition A – Public Health and Safety Bond.

President Covington asked for more information concerning the exhaust extractors now that they are installed in all station. Chief Lombardi explained that the new exhaust extractor systems that have been installed is activated with a remote that's on the vehicle and as soon as the ignition is triggered, the exhaust system automatically kick in so it's much more efficient and effective and they are hoping it will help in the health and safety of the members so they don't get more diesel exhaust inside the firehouses.

There was no public comment.

President Covington announced that in anticipation of the meeting in the Mission, she was very happy to be there and thought it was a good idea to show the community some other aspects of the Department and invited them to visit the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team table, with Lt. Arteseros, the Recruitment table with Firefighter Keith Baraka and the Los Bomberos Employee Group.

**Recess was taken at 5:45 p.m.**

Agenda Item 6 began at 6:00 p.m.

President Covington again announced that it was the Commissions pleasure to be in the Mission and thanked the Mission Neighborhood Center and Mr. Sam Ruiz, the Executive Director. She acknowledged being invited to the Mission by Supervisor Campos and stated that she and Vice President Cleaveland had suggested that they have a more casual meeting so that everyone could get together and talk without limited time, but that Supervisor Campos preferred a more formal meeting with all the Commissioners which precludes by law and statute to having a dialogue with people that give public comment.

**7. PRESENTATION FROM BUREAU OF FIRE INVESTIGATION [Discussion]**

Presentation from Fire Marshal Daniel DeCossio, Captain Lou Russell and Captain Attica Bowden on recent fires, including 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission, 16<sup>th</sup> and South Van Ness and 24<sup>th</sup> and Treat and the status of investigations except where prohibited by law.

Fire Marshal DeCossio started by reading the Departments' Mission Statement and acknowledged that the Division of Fire Prevention the Mission is to prevent fires and focus on code enforcement and community outreach through public education and the Bureau of fire Investigation is to investigate fires. He presented the attached PowerPoint presentation:

[http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/Mission\\_Review%20of%20Working%20Fires-Structure%20Fires\\_042516.pptx](http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/Mission_Review%20of%20Working%20Fires-Structure%20Fires_042516.pptx)

Chief DeCossio explained that the data on his chart on page 11 in the far right column shows that from 2005 to 2015, the Mission District has an average of about 17.2 fires a year, with last year having 17 structure fires, which is right in line with the average since 2004, compared to the entire City, consisting of 11 total supervisorial districts. He mentioned that out of the 17 structure fires in the Mission for 2015, 13 were determined as accidental, six of them were caused by electrical fault, two by spontaneous heating, one by discarded ashes, one by roofing operations, one related to fireworks, one was caused by a vehicle inside the garage and one caused by discarded smoking materials. He added that it was worth noting that national statistics show the number one cause of fires in homes is cooking equipment and the number four cause is electrical fires. In the Mission District, the number one cause of fires are electrical fault. He concluded by stating that his goal was to provide a complete comprehensive review of the fires in the Mission and data through the years so everyone could better understand what's going on and identify the needs for the areas for improvement.

Captain Bowden spoke about the role of the Bureau of Fire Investigation within the Fire Department. She added that Fire Investigators are required to have specialized training before they are assigned to the Bureau and once assigned, they are required to have continued educational training and they are also qualified as armed peace officers with arrest capabilities. They are required to respond to all second alarm and larger fires as well as fire fatalities, suspected arson fires, bombings, explosives, fires in Government Buildings, places of worship, domestic violence, family planning centers and when requested by the San Francisco Police Department. She went on to describe the recent fires in the Mission District.

- 3222 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, on January 28, 2016 there was a fourth alarm and that fire was determined to be an accidental fire due to an electrical fault or failure.
- 3044 24<sup>th</sup> Street, on March 11, 2016 there was a second alarm and it was determined to be an accidental fire due to an electrical fault or failure of a power strip.
- 2860 16<sup>th</sup> Street on November 11, 2016 there was a third alarm and that fire was determined to be an accidental fire due to either unspecified electrical fault or failure or improperly disposed smoking materials.
- 2874 16<sup>th</sup> Street, on February 26, 2016 there was a single alarm that was deemed undetermined with accidental electrical ruled out as all power supply had been disconnected after the previous fire at the adjacent tire shop with evidence of trespassers and improper use of open flame warming or cooking devices.
- 3222 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, on March 13, 2016 a third alarm fire that was determined to be trespassers using open flame warming or cooking devices improperly within a vacant structure.
- 3515 17<sup>th</sup> Street, a third alarm fire that was determined to be accidental due to improperly discarded smoking items in the rear yard.
- 141 Poplar Avenue on April 22, 2016 there was a second alarm that was determined to be an accidental fire due to a dryer fire.
- 2592 Mission there was a single alarm which was found to be undetermined due to the extreme fire damage from the previous two fires at 3222 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.

She concluded by stating that it is not without the assistance of interviews and useful information from the public that they would be able to come to the determination of the causes of the fires they investigate and encouraged everyone "if you know something say something" and she provided the SFFD anonymous tip hotline (415) 575-4444.

Captain Russell, from Fire Prevention gave a brief review on preventive measures and how the public can together work to keep their homes safe. She encouraged everyone to leave with the fire safety information sheets (attached to Chief DeCossio's presentation above) both in Spanish and English that she brought to the meeting. She went over some very important safety tips that included having working smoke alarms that should be located inside and outside every bedroom and every level of the home including the basement. She encouraged members of the public to take the smoke alarms that were being given away at the meeting. She talked about the importance of electrical safety and that major appliances should be plugged directly into the wall outlet, not extension cords. She also advised against overloading power strips and if you're not using them, unplug them. She also suggested that anyone having electrical work done on their home should use a qualified electrician. She also provided safety tips when using heating equipment by keeping anything that can burn at least three feet away from any heating equipment like a furnace, fireplace, wood burning stove or portable space heaters.

Fire Marshal DeCossio concluded by stating their goal is to reach out to all communities in San Francisco and present fire safety talks and take feedback from the community and discuss the concerns. He described the efforts being done to strengthen the fire codes and improve fire safety including working with Supervisors Campos on fire alarm maintenance requirements legislation, working with Supervisor Weiner on code enforcement legislation and Supervisor Tang on posting fire safety information at all apartment buildings and common areas. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to present in the Mission District.

President Covington combined item 8, below with item 7. She called Supervisor David Campos forward and thanked him for being at the meeting and helping with the meeting.

**8. THE FIRE COMMISSION WILL INVITE SUPERVISOR DAVID CAMPOS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION (10 Minutes)**

Supervisor Campos thanked Commission Secretary Conefrey for helping with the logistics in putting the meeting together as well as the staff of SFGOV. He acknowledged the heroic work from the men and women of the Fire Department. He expressed his disappointment in the Fire Commission for taking so long to come and meet in the Mission District and would strongly urge legislation be drafted to require the Fire Commission to meet in various communities once a month. He also mentioned that he thought there was disconnect between members of the community and the Fire Commission. He spoke briefly about the legislation he introduced to address the very real crisis for the Mission Neighborhood and concluded by saying he was looking forward to hearing from the Community.

Public Comment: Unidentified female expressed her concerns regarding fires in the Mission compared to other places. She mentioned that she went to the Planning Department and found out that they have a different standard before they put their stamp on approval of plans for senior and low income housing. She gave examples of different things she was concerned with.

Tommi Mecca, with Housing Rights Committee spoke in regards to recommendations they would like the Commission to approve and urged the Department to adopt them. Those recommendations included having the Department perform adequate fire code enforcement in San Francisco's apartments and SRO hotels to include buildings with nine units or less, issue citations and notices of violations consistently, set up a complaint system similar to DBI and create a system that will keep track of any and all violations of housing code without dismissing some complaints as standard, train inspectors to know the fire code and write up violations and follow up on them, and to integrate a penalty process.

Deanna Flores continued with the list of recommendations which included transparent criteria and policy, not discretion. She added that there has been recent introduction of legislation that supports the San Francisco Fire Department to determine what a priority and what is a standard complaint is and they want all complaints to be investigated, and any violations cited to be put through the process that Tommi outlined above. She suggested that all tenants be kept informed of what is happening with their buildings, and should be given information regarding any fire within 24 hours. She concluded by stating it was a shame in the way it took hurdles in order for the Commission to meet in the Mission and that there was an interest for the Commission to be accountable to her community and they are definitely going to continue to show up.

Leticia, tenant counselor and organizer with Causa Justa stated it needs to be acknowledged that there are a lot of old building in the Mission, with rooms that have only one or two outlets and many of the units don't have adequate and functioning heating system and she wants to make sure blame is not being placed on the tenants, because at the end of the day it's the property owner's responsibility to ensure that the unit and the building is up to code. She also stated that she was concerned to see how many of the fires have been deemed accidental.

Gabriel Medina, policy manager for Mission Economic Development Agency shared a PowerPoint and spoke on behalf of a coalition called United to Save the Mission. She talked about how their agency was personally involved in helping tenants and business get services after devastating fires. She mentioned that they are disturbed by the data presented because the data can lie. She explained her set of data prepared by the community, the Ani-Eviction Mapping Project. She concluded by asking the Commission to work on the recommendations with the Committee and Supervisor Campos.

Aaron Bustamante, also with United to Save the Mission shared information taken from data in a visual form. He described what his data meant and reiterated recommendations they would like to see implemented.

Spike Kahn, Good Samaritan who is a small landlord and is housing fire victims that were displaced in the Mission last November because there is no other housing to support the people who are getting displaced because of these fires. She went on to acknowledge the violations that were reported during inspections at the 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission fire with no corrective action, citations issued or penalties and thought the Commission should be ashamed of that..

Joshua Arce, community liaison for Labors Union Local 261 spoke about the problem of irresponsible property owners/landlords. He gave an example of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission Street fire when they found out that a very irreputable contractor was brought in to do work, and they think may have even possibly contributed to the most recent fire because of poor labor standards and certifications involved. He suggested it's time to send a message to this landlord and they have requested Mayor Lee and Department of Building Inspection require the owner to sell the building and put it in the community's hands and asks that the Commission and Department join in this request.

James Ahn thanked the Commission, the public, Supervisor Campos and the Fire Department's first responders. He explained his experiences with the fires at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission and dealing with the Fire Department and said nobody is taking overall comprehensive holistic approach to providing information to him. He wanted to know who in the Department is leading with a vision, a plan and accountability and he hopes that they can come up with a mutual plan because nobody wants these fires.

Robert Hernandez, representing Our Mission No Eviction gave an explanation on how he thinks these fires play into evictions. He went on to say they are angry and concerned. He expressed his frustration in working with the Fire Department, getting a meeting with the Commission in the Mission and that the Chief was not in attendance.

Calisto Robles spoke about the fire in his apartment last year and thanked the firefighters who put the fire out. He also suggested that the City has to put pressure on the landlords to fix the problems causing the fires.

Iris Pbilowitz has lived in the Mission for 40 years and is a nurse and concerned about the health and safety of tenants in San Francisco, both because of all the evictions and fires. She talked about violations and asked how landlords are held accountable and the Departments investigations into the fires are.

Unidentified female (translated from Spanish to English) thanked the Commission and Supervisor Campos for meeting in the Mission. She stated that they have seen a lot a failure in the investigation of what's been happening and the response and didn't like hearing that if they had working smoke alarms it would helped save people when really that responsibility falls on the property owners that are profiting from what they pay them in rent. She added that they can't keep pretending to be blind or deaf to the suffering that is happening in the community and suggested sanctions be served on the property owners.

Adam Wood, Executive Board of the Firefighters Union and worked for many years at Station 7 stated he does not dispute any of the figures in the Fire Marshal's report, but he doesn't think they paint the whole picture of the impact these fire have had on the community over the past two years. He stated he was concerned that the report is causing the loss of opportunity to make a partnership with the community between the Department and they need more inspectors with more authority to keep these fire from happening. He concluded by stating the message to the community should not be that their concerns are unfounded or exaggerated, but instead that we share their concerns and we should join forces, work together to made a better fire department and a safer Mission District.

Mr. Romero stated he thought the report was boring and expressed his concerns regarding the recent fire in the Mission and he doesn't see a plan from the Department doing more inspections, educating people and making landlords accountable for the things that they have to have in their buildings.

Steve Engler, Fire Investigator stated he's never been to investigate the cause of a fire fatality that had active and working smoke detectors. He encouraged the community to install and inspect their smoke detectors and do not use non GFI protected plug strips.

Vice President Cleaveland thanked Supervisor Campos for attending and for everyone who came and spoke and gave input on the problems of the fires in the Mission. He said that the Commission takes their job very seriously and the responsibility to the communities very seriously. He encouraged the members of the public to watch the televised Commission meetings so they can see what we are doing, there is nothing to hide, and he added that we have everything to gain by getting the publics input and he appreciates that. He stated that the Commission will take the recommendations that were suggested tonight and see how feasible they may be to implement. He agreed that there needs to be better enforcement and it's a matter of resources.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked the members of the Mission Community, Supervisor Campos, all the members who are part of the community, and Mr. Hernandez for coming and letting the Commission know what the issues are, how he's feeling and what he thinks of the recommendations that were provided during the meeting. He added that he thought it



was important for the Commission to be able to hear it firsthand what the communities' feelings are and take those concerns and recommendations back to the Chief and administration and come with answers to some of the concerns that have been raised. He looks forward to continued communication.

Commission Hardeman commented that meeting with the community is good and talked about experiences he had when he lived in the Mission District growing up. He added that after listening to public comment, the Commission will respond accordingly and he thanked the staff and the community leadership that attended the meeting.

President Covington stated that she was extremely glad to be in the Mission Community and to hear the comments and which helps them understand the frustration and tensions the community is experiencing and that she has heard the comments and suggested it might be a good idea to put an internal task force to look at the Mission and what's going on and put our best efforts forward to come up with a response to some of the questions that were posed throughout the evening and come back to the community and have a dialogue about what it is that we have in terms of possible things moving forward. She concluded by stating she looks forward to following up with the community.

**9. SFFD EMPLOYEE GROUP LOS BOMBEROS [Discussion]**

Update from SFFD Employee Group Los Bomberos

Department members Mariano Elias and Lester Lesavoy gave a presentation on the history of their group and their recent trip to Nicaragua with training ideas and equipment.

The Presentation is attached:

[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=25268](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=25268)

There was no public Comment.

All the Commissioners thanked them for their presentation and let them know how proud they were of all the work that Los Bomberos does.

**10. AGENDA FOR NEXT FIRE COMMISSION MEETING [Discussion]**

Discussion regarding agenda for the May 11, 2016 regular meeting.

- Bond update
- Meeting in the various Neighborhoods
- Update on developments at the Airport

There was no Public Comment.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

President Covington adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.