

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 22, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.
This meeting was held remotely on Webex**

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=36250

President Covington called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Commission President	Francee Covington	Present
Commission Vice President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Commissioner	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Tony Rodriguez	Excused

Victor Wyrsh	Deputy Chief -- Operations
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration

Dawn DeWitt	Support Services
Joel Soto	Training Division
Sandy Tong	EMS
Mark Johnson	Airport Division
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention
Natasha Park	Health and Wellness
Michael Cochrane	Homeland Security

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 Special Meeting on June 23, 2020.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve and Vice President Feinstein Seconded. The motion was unanimous. There was no public comment.

- Minutes from Special Meeting on July 8, 2020.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve as amended and Vice President Feinstein 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 July 8, 2020, 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 July 8, 2020. She mentioned that 14 members have tested positive for COVID 19, seven who were symptomatic with mild to moderate symptoms and seven were asymptomatic. She acknowledged how wonderful Dr. Brokaw and Nurse Practitioner Stephanie Phelps from the Physician's Office and Tony Boone and Chief Parks are in terms of updating staff daily, as changes come from the CDC and DPH that change department procedures and it allows instant messaging to the field. She stated that she has spent a significant amount of time participating in virtual meetings, discussing various issues that arise daily with the virus surge as well as internal department meetings once a week. She added that they also have daily discussions with EMSA because as things change with the virus, it changes regulations and directives and with Healthy Streets Operations Center where EMS-6 is running HSOC this week. She mentioned that they have not finalized budget negotiations with the mayor's budget office, but they are working hard, and she does not want the budget to have any impact on Operations in any way, shape, or form. Chief Nicholson announced that they reported to the Civil Grand Jury to update them on the Emergency Firefighter Water Supply System. She acknowledged how proud she was of Fire Suppression over the last two weeks as they were busy with many fires and did a great job. She mentioned that EMS and EMS-6 have also been busy, as well as the Bureau of Fire Prevention, especially with all the extra asks that have been asked from them because of COVID. She thanked the Commission, command staff, Mark Corso, Olivia Scanlon, and Jesusa Bushong for all they are doing.

Vice President Feinstein stated she appreciates how hard everyone has been working and acknowledged their courage and dedication day after day under what are becoming very wearying and trying circumstances. She also confirmed that K rails are barriers that usually separate traffic lanes and the ones they will use for the Tenderloin slow streets project will most likely be the orange ones that are filled with water. She also confirmed that the contract tracing that the department does is internal and does not include external contacts, they leave that up to the members.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Nicholson for her straightforward report and that he appreciates all the details on the membership in terms of COVID-19 and confirmed that 14 members have tested positive. He confirmed they have a very thorough process of notifications and very strict protocols for the members who test positive. Commissioner Nakajo suggested that it's pure justification for dollars from the budget process with the extra work the Department is tasked with such as safe streets and the other inherited responsibilities.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the problems in Tenderloin's slow streets issues were that it's one of the busiest corridors for the Fire Department and with taking away lanes of traffic, the Department needed to make sure that they still had access to buildings in case of an emergency. The project has been approved and the Fire Department will go back periodically to make sure our response times are not impacted. They now have a process in place and are working more closely with MTA on these issues as public safety is always the department's

number one priority. President Covington stated that she wishes good health to every member of the Department, and especially those who have tested positive. She added that we were doing so well for so long and for some reason people don't seem to get how serious this pandemic is and that no one is immune until there is a vaccine.

She stated that she is flabbergasted that she still sees people sauntering in the streets without masks and it's irresponsible and firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs have to touch people so our members are at risk and she wishes people would understand that. She suggested that the Department should have discussions on getting the word out about how important it is that people follow the guidelines and science because firefighters, EMT's and paramedics are respected members of the community and it would be wonderful to be able to use that cachet to speak for the people who are doing the heavy lifting, and maybe working with SFGOV TV doing public announcements that highlight these professions. Regarding the budget, President Covington stated that there is an increasingly heavy portfolio of things that are not traditional for the Fire Department without any additional resources and that it is an untenable position for the Department that all of these other responsibilities are being added to an already heavy load and she asked her fellow commissioners' to raise their voices in support of the Department for as little impact on the budget as possible. She also confirmed that the unions are still in negotiations as of today.

Martin Munoz spoke in support of slow streets in the Tenderloin and asked the Fire Commission to think outside the box when it comes to slow streets.

Michael Sven, a resident of District 2 also spoke in support of slow streets in the Tenderloin.

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 report for June. Highlights of his report included the Division of Training, which has been quite busy and he's been working with Chief Sato and all the committees and workgroups in trying to revise all the manuals and operating guidelines which he hopes by December to have their first draft and a final draft in February 2021. He announced that due to COVID, their annual wildland training has been done virtually and only current members who have previous wildland fire experience can take that course. He touched on EMS training, stating that EMSA adopted a new protocol for the Lucas device which allows the crews to perform high-quality CPR without being so close to the patient and lessening the potential exposure risk that CPR creates on our members, especially with COVID. Regarding NERT, he stated teams have been extremely busy with COVID and how pleased they are with the amount of work they've been doing for the community at food banks and testing sites. He acknowledged the leadership of Captain Arteseros which leads to these teams being so efficient. He touched on Chief Parks, Chief of the Health, Safety, and Wellness, who has been working on the antibody testing and enhancing programs for the Stress Unit and Peer Support Unit; the Physician's Office, the ISB Bureau which is helping the Physician's office with promotional and end-of-probation physicals and random drug and alcohol testing of members, which all tested negative; the Research and Planning Bureau, and Support Services under Chief Dewitt and they have been working hard and are expecting an aerial truck next week which they will test on the terrain of the city and if it passes the test, they have four more that are

almost completed and will be arriving soon. He stated that Station 49 is on track and looking at December for finalizing the project and that Station 35 is looking at a March 2021 completion date. He announced that Human Resources are busy with retirements and that they had 27 in June and a total of 65 for the fiscal year. He concluded by stating he was going to miss Father Greene.

An unidentified female asked about antibody testing and why the Department was spending time on it. President Covington tried to explain that this was public comment for anything near or dear to your heart, not for asking and answering questions or engaging in discussion.

Vice President Feinstein appreciated all the effort that Chief Velo put into his report.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Velo for his comprehensive report and was happy to hear that they were updating the training manuals and he also appreciates the work that's being done with the peer support group and the committee members that have been recruited and how important it is to support the mental health of the members. He confirmed that there are two SUV type vehicles for the EMS-6 program but there is hope for more as the division expands.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Chief Velo for his comprehensive report and asked what the status was on the hose tenders. Chief Velo responded that the city had to balance the books as of June 30th and based on that, an agreement with the city which involved two of the hose tenders that were allocated be removed from the budget for this year but they still have three more that are unallocated and that the negotiations with the budget are not completed, and the Chief and Mr. Corso have said they are still going with those three. Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the Grand Jury recommended that the Department have 20 hose tenders. He also confirmed that the Department uses many social media platforms for recruitment and before COVID, they set up recruitment booths at job fairs, high school programs, and those sorts of events. He stated that he thinks it is important to combine the messages of safety with the message of recruitment.

President Covington thanked Chief Velo for his comprehensive report and gave a shout out to all the Nert volunteers who are stepping in and doing so much great work. She commented that for some time, the academies were quite large and that was at her insistence because she thought that when they had this gray wave that was going to turn into a tsunami and she didn't want the Department to be in a position of having mandatory overtime once again.

There was no public comment.

5. OVERVIEW OF AIRPORT DIVISION *[Discussion]*

Assistant Deputy Chief Mark Johnson to provide an overview of the Airport Division.

Chief Mark Johnson thanked the commission for the opportunity to present and talked about the Airport Division and he stated he felt very fortunate to work with a great team of professionals. He started by telling a little bit about himself which included he's a San Francisco native, grew up in the Lakeview district and he joined the Army a week after he graduated from high school where he learned to fly airplanes. He added that when he got out of the Army, he used GI Bills to learn to fly helicopters and he got his commercial license at

age 21 and became a flight instructor. He was hired by the SFFD in 1991 and has been stationed at the Airport Division since 2015. He went on to give a brief overview of the airport which opened in 1917 and is the 10th busiest airport in the United States and the 25th busiest airport in the world, during normal times, they handle over a half a million passengers each week and about a thousand flight operation per day. He mentioned that COVID has drastically scaled back the operations at SFO. He stated that the airport is approximately 13 miles south of the city of San Francisco and covers about five square miles and the International terminal is the largest in North America. He added that the airport generates over 10 billion dollars in revenues and 46,000 jobs just on the airport campus itself. His comprehensive report is attached: <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/SFO%20Fire%20Commission%20Presentation%20Final.pdf>

He announced an open invitation for the commission to tour the facility.

President Covington stated she thinks it's very helpful to have people come and present to the commission to give the new commissioners a fuller idea of what it is that the Department has in its portfolio and also to refresh the memories of the longstanding commissioners and get an update.

Vice President Feinstein welcomed Chief Johnson and told him his presentation was excellent.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Johnson for his comprehensive presentation and welcomed him.

Commissioner Cleaveland stated Chief Johnson's report was impressive, very comprehensive, and educational. He confirmed that they staff two medics at all times and they go on a variety of calls, be it cardiac arrest, passenger anxiety, pinned underneath something, and things of that sort. He also confirmed that the Airport budget is mostly paid for by the airport and the airline industry.

There was no public comment.

6. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on July 8, 2020.

Vice President Feinstein announced that she was delighted to attend the graduation at Treasure Island and that it was her first visit there and the graduation was quite dear, and it was a pleasure to be there.

Commissioner Cleaveland also announced he was at the graduation and commended Vice President Feinstein for her excellent comments, and he thinks they touched everyone that was in attendance.

President Covington stated that on July 15th, she attended at Zoom meeting where they honored the first African American firefighter with the San Francisco Fire Department, Earl Gage, junior by renaming a section of Willow Street after him. She added that Supervisor Preston and the Black Firefighters and other entities worked to make this happen.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for the next and future regular meetings.

- Budget allocation
- Employee Groups update

There was no public comment.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 9

Public comment on all matters pertaining to Items 9(b), below, including public comment on whether to hold Items 9(b), in closed session.

There was no public comment

9. POSSIBLE CLOSED SESSION REGARDING PERSONNEL MATTERS.

a. VOTE ON WHETHER TO CONDUCT ITEMS 9(b), IN CLOSED SESSION [Action]

The Commission may hear Item 9-(b) in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b) and Administrative Code Section 67.10(b).

Commissioner Cleaveland moved to conduct items 9(b) in closes session. Vice President Feinstein Seconded. The motion for unanimous.

The meeting went into closed session at 7:35. Also present was Deputy City Attorney Cecilia Mangoba.

- b.** Commission to discuss on how to proceed with Performance Evaluation of Chief of Department, Jeanine Nicholson. *[Action item]*

10. REPORT ON ANY ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION [Discussion and possible action] as specified in California Government Code Section 54957.1(a) and San Francisco Administrative Code section 67.12(b).

Back in open session at 8:20.

Nothing to report.

11. 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 Cleaveland Moved to not disclose. Vice President Feinstein Seconded. The motion was unanimous.

12. ADJOURNMENT President Covington adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.