

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 13, 2016 - 9:00 a.m.**

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

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The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=25782](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=25782)

President Covington called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**1. 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	Present
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief – Operations	
Ken Lombardi	Support Services	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Richard Brown	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Jeff Myers	EMS	
Rudy Castellanos	Airport Division	
Assistant Chiefs		
Kevin Burke	Division 2	
Dave Franklin	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	CFO	
Clement Yeh	Medical Director	

**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 June 8, 2016

Vice President Cleaveland Moved to approve the June 8, 2016 regular meeting Minutes. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. Motion to approve above Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment:

**4. 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 June 22, 2016, including academies, strategic planning, 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary update, RC-4/Station 49 update, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Hayes-White's report covered the period following the Commission meeting on June 22, 2016. She mentioned that the 120<sup>th</sup> academy is in their fourth week and were joined by 12 members from Station 49 two weeks ago and that there was a bump up academy for Level 1 EMT's to become Level 2 paramedics. She announced that the 121<sup>st</sup> academy class is scheduled to start at the end of the year.

In regards to the Strategic Plan, Chief Hayes-White stated that it continues to be a work in progress and she will share the current working draft with the Commission and that the project manager assigned to compile additional information from the subject matter experts has taken a leave unexpectedly. She added that the target date for a final plan is sometime in the fall. With regards to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, she mentioned that there is discussion about having a volunteer appreciation day some time in August and that venture is being headed up by Guardians of the City. Also planned is a 9/11 commemoration with every station participating in the ceremony and hopefully combining that with the unveiling of the World Trade Center artifact that recently arrived in the City as well as an event on the weekend of 9/24 where the Department will display apparatus and participate in a parade at Fisherman's Wharf. She touched on the new Fireboat which is expected to arrive this month and possibly commissioning it in conjunction with Fleet Week. She announced the fire boat naming contest that has been offered to SF school children to participate in, and a panel consisting of 6 members will make a final selection. Other events planned for the 150<sup>th</sup> include a film festival, Fire Prevention week and a final celebration on December 3, 2016, possibly at the Zoo.

Chief Hayes-White touched on the new H-23 admin position and the ongoing discussions involving the supervisory model for Station 49. She mentioned that she was selected by Mayor Lee and Mayor Schaff to present at the Bay Area Women's Summit at Moscone Center, she attended the Pride Parade, presented before the Board of Supervisors Public Safety Committee relating to the fires in the Mission District and attended a community meeting in the Mission to discuss concerns with community members. Chief Hayes-White spoke of the counter-terrorism awareness workshop in the Presidio that she and command staff attended and mentioned that it was an excellent presentation.

Chief Hayes-White thanked the Commission for their advocacy and support with the budget process and was happy at the outcome after many meetings and phone calls and was pleased to announce that they have a fleet plan that will carry the Department through the next several years.

Vice President Cleaveland thanked Chief Hayes-White for her comprehensive and positive report. He asked Chief Hayes-White when she selects candidates for the academy does she pick more candidates than she thinks will actually attend the class. Chief Hayes-White explained that because issues come up, medical issues, resignations, etc., she usually has 12 to 15 people on reserve and if she can't use them for the current class, they usually get picked up for the next class.

Vice President Cleaveland also stated that during Fire Prevention Week, he thinks it's really important to get comprehensive information out to the public on fire prevention, considering the recent concerns members of the public have about fires. Chief Hayes-White responded that there have been very successful public safety announcement campaigns during the month of June for the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration and they will do the same for Fire Prevention Week and every station has an open house where information can be given out in every neighborhood during that week. Vice President Cleaveland suggested getting fire prevention information out in multiple languages and that it needs to get out to the public, such as at street fairs and other civic events throughout the City. Chief Hayes-White agreed and stated that there is information on the Department's website which is published in five languages, including English and that they

received funding this fiscal year for an additional fire investigator and fire inspector and their roles will be to literally be out canvassing and interacting with the community. Vice President Cleaveland complimented the Chief, Mark Corso, Olivia Scanlon and Chief Gonzales for putting together the fleet plan.

Commissioner Nakajo welcomed Chief Hayes-White back and expressed his concern for her son and was glad to hear he was doing well. He also agreed with the comments from Vice President Cleaveland in terms of his positive comments toward the budget process and echoed the appreciation of all the players that were able to accomplish the budget process. He also acknowledged former Commissioner Paul Conroy for his contributions in terms of the vehicle replacement plan that was promoted during his tenure. He touched upon the reinstatement of Battalion 5 and how it will be a major contribution to the neighborhoods it serves.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked the Chief for her outstanding report. He asked about how fires are measured by alarms. Chief Hayes-White explained that each jurisdiction has different rules and staffing levels to what makes up an alarm. The SFFD Rules, Regulations and Procedures state that they don't exceed a fifth alarm. If they feel staffing would be compromised, and because not only are they dealing with the issue at hand, but making sure the other areas of the city are well protected, then they would contemplate the request for additional resources come from outside the city. She added that in her career, she has not had to do that.

President Covington mentioned that the Strategic Plan is tremendously important to the department because it will be a snapshot of where the Department is now, where they want to go and how they are going to get there in the future and she recommended that the Commission receive a first draft so they have time to review it and chime in on anything that may have been overlooked or compliment it.

President Covington invited Fire Marshal DeCossio up to the podium to talk about his presentation before the Board's Public Safety Committee, referenced in the Chief's report. Fire Marshal DeCossio stated that the last fifth alarm was in Bernal Heights. He mentioned that focusing on the Mission, they went back as far as 2004 and looked at all the fires and what they found was the overall fires fluctuates as few as 10 and as many as 28 in one year. If you take an average through the current day, it's roughly 17 a year and that is on par with what they had last year. He said, not discounting that every fire is a concern of the Department, he thinks the focus right now from the feedback they are getting are the people being displaced, which is a great concern, so they looked at the greater alarms last year and they have had more greater alarms than they typically would have but they didn't have more fires. He added that they also spoke briefly on code requirements and Captain Bowden, of the Arson Task Force spoke to the committee. He gave an explanation on how his team investigates fires and comes to one of four conclusions/determinations which consists of accidental, incendiary, natural or undetermined. He mentioned that the Arson Task force is comprised of a Captain, a training lieutenant and nine investigators that are on 24-hour shifts. He added that they will be getting an additional inspector to track data neighborhood by neighborhood and the goal would be to compare each neighborhood to other neighborhoods throughout San Francisco and see the trends, track that data nationally, and see if there's anything that sticks out, any red flags. He added that the other part of the community outreach team will be a fire inspector, which will gather fire prevention materials, fire safety information, geared towards each specific neighborhood so they can go out and speak to citizens, and inform them what of what we're seeing in their neighborhoods and the best ways to prevent the fires. President Covington announced that she called the Fire Marshal up on the spur of the moment and she thought it was important for the public to know that the backlog is being cleared up and that there are many partners in determining next steps in the investigations. Chief Hayes-White added that in conjunction with the team approach, not only do they work closely with the San Francisco Police Department, but they also work very closely with the assigned deputy district attorney.

REPORT FROM OPERATIONS

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

Chief Gonzales' report covered the month of June 2016. He described the one greater alarm during the period which was a fifth alarm at 29<sup>th</sup> and Mission involving six buildings. Assistant Chief Siragusa was in command and he gave a comprehensive report on this fire last commission meeting. He added that the members did an excellent job considering the heavy fire conditions and wind conditions they experienced when they got on scene, along with the challenge of the building that was under construction. He added that unfortunately 58 people were displaced and hopefully we can all work together to help those displaced occupants. The use of Alert SF, social media outlets and 3-1-1- were all used to communicate evacuation orders, shelter in place orders in both English and Spanish and the SFFD, Red Cross, Salvation Army, and DPH all worked together at the Safeway parking lot to put immediate services together for the displaced victims.

Chief Gonzalez reminded members of the public to sign up for emergency notifications by texting "Alertsf" to 888-777. He also described the discussion on Ocean Safety Prevention and Education on June 8, 2016 that was sponsored by the SFFD, SFPD, Coast Guard and National Park Service. He went on to describe working fires and a cliff rescue that occurred through the reporting period.

He announced that last month the Department made the 10 minutes, the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, Code 3 ambulance response and this month, even though the call volume is up, probably the highest in six months, the response times were under 10 minutes and he feels good that EMS is making great strides. He mentioned that there are nine new members that are qualified to work at radio and that the controlled substance policy is in review phase. He and Dr. Yeh have a meeting scheduled with COD to discuss the final approval of the policy. Regarding the Station 49 supervisory update, discussions continue.

He invited Captain Balmy from Fire Prevention to give a Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) update which is attached: <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/TASC%20PPT%2007%202016.pptx>

He described TASC as an inner departmental committee that has the responsibility of vetting any change to public streets or legislation regarding public streets before a required hearing at the SFMTA Board, it essentially reviews proposals from different agencies and organizations. The proposals are sponsored by an SFMTA member and that member provides the documents to the committee for review at least five business days before the TASC meeting. He went on to discuss the challenges and recommendations as well as proposed legislation on proposed street changes.

Vice President Cleaveland thanked Captain Balmy for his illuminating presentation and stated that he thinks it's a terrible idea to make 6<sup>th</sup> Street into a two lane road, one in each direction. He also commented that as far as the bulb outs, his concern is that responding to an emergency/fire, access is absolutely critical and design should not impede the response time. He also suggested that the City Attorney's Office should get their act together and tell the Department what codes prevail.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Captain Balmy for his report and mentioned how much he learned from it and how much the issues raised affect him and his community and he's glad the Department has a seat at the table to provide important concerns. He also mentioned that it is important for the public to know that the Department is not resistant of the changes, the concern is if it affects or delays the Department from doing the tasks and duties required to provide emergency services to the people that rely on the Department.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Captain Balmy for his report and stated that Cpt. Balmy has a tough job dealing with well intentions of the BOS, other City Commissions and Departments that are trying to narrow streets and increase the residential footprint at the expense of the Fire Department in some respects. Examples of how some of the changes cause damage to the apparatus and the cost to repair them were given.

President Covington thanked Captain Balmy and suggested that the proposed street changes presented at TASC should bear further exposure and dialogue at the Commission level. She acknowledged that it's very challenging for the Department and some of the changes have made it difficult for the members to do their job and suggested that some sort of agreement be made so that when plans for street changes are recommended that the Department has sufficient time to review and give suggestions. Fire Marshal DeCossio added that the challenges boil down to two causes, 1) Jurisdiction, and since the state fire marshal did not adopt a section in the fire code that regulates street calming fire department access, they leave it up to the local agency and the City adopted that specific section. He added that it doesn't carry the weight of the state, so they have competing ordinances at the local level. The second cause is that the other competing agencies, such as DPW and SFMTA have their own guidelines and they are not always in alignment.

Vice President Cleaveland thanked Chief Gonzales for his comprehensive report and congratulated him and Chief Myers on getting the EMS response times under 10 minutes.

Commissioner Nakajo also thanked Chief Gonzales for his report and commented on the EMS portion of getting the response time down where the ambulances averaged 6.08 minutes on scene for code 3 responses and were at 9.73 minutes 90% of the time, which was always the goal and he sees it as a very important historical accomplishment with the Department. Commissioner Nakajo also suggested recognizing the members who responded to the CHP Officer that was stabbed at an upcoming Commission meeting.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked the Chief for his comprehensive report and acknowledged Chief Siragusa for his wisdom and natural instincts which were once again shown when commanding the 5<sup>th</sup> alarm at 29<sup>th</sup> and Mission Street.

There was no public comment.

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

Update and overview from Mark Corso on the current budget

Mark Corso gave the attached budget presentation: <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/budget%20update.pdf>

Mark Corso discussed the budget timeframe since the last presentation on June 8, 2016. He mentioned that the Department began discussions and worked with the Board's Budget Analyst and began negotiation on a variety of departmental requests and provided justification to those requests and answered questions that they had. He announced that there were no reductions to affect any of the Department's project initiatives or fleet and equipment fund and no deletion of any positions. He added that working closely with Local 798, they were able to secure funding to restore Battalion 5, effective January and in addition they were allocated additional funding for youth firefighter training in conjunction with the Black Firefighters Association. He touched on additional positions funded for the Bureau of Fire Prevention. He added that although the process is not officially complete as it needs to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors and to the Mayor's office for the final sign off. He concluded by thanking on behalf of the Department, the Mayor's Budget Office, the Board of Supervisors, the Board's Budget Analyst Office, Local 798, the Budget Committee and the Fire Commission for their support.

Vice President Cleaveland thanked Mr. Corso for his excellent report and for shepherding the budget process through. He added that it's quite unusual to get into an agreement on the first go around and complimented Mr. Corso and the staff of the Budget Analyst's Office for coming to accord early on in the process.

Commissioner Nakajo also thanked Mr. Corso for his comprehensive summary and update and congratulated Chief Hayes-White, her administration, Local 798 and everyone else that worked on the budget and stated that in his 21 years on the Commission, this budget was the best budget that he has seen presented in terms of the process of working together and that it really is a great accomplishment.

Commissioner Hardeman echoed the words of Commissioner Nakajo and congratulated Mark Corso and complimented his style to negotiate.

President Covington also echoed the sentiment and compliments of her fellow commissioners and thanked Chief Gonzales who was very diligent in roaming the halls and speaking to everyone, all of the folks on the legislative side of the City to get the resources that are needed, along with Ms. Olivia Scanlon. She added that it really shows how when we all work together, including the Union, the Budget Committee, the Commissioners, the Administrative staff, the rank and file, a lot gets done. She also suggested that the Department would benefit largely if they had a grant writer to assist Chief Francisco with that task.

Chief Hayes-White explained in detail the description and function of the firefighter youth training.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for the July 27, 2016 regular meeting.

- Station 49 staffing issues

Unidentified mail was curious about the people displaced from the community and would like an update on what the Fire Department is doing to help those people stay in the city where they belong.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

President Covington adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.