

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

Currently set for adoption on 3/13/24  
**AMENDED RULES OF ORDER**

## **CHAPTER I – DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Brown Act" shall mean the Ralph M. Brown Act, California Government Code §54590 et seq.
- B. "Charter" shall mean the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco.
- C. "Chief" shall mean the Chief of the San Francisco Fire Department.
- D. "Commission" shall mean the San Francisco Fire Commission.
- E. "President" shall mean the President of the Commission.
- F. "Presiding Officer" shall mean the President of the Commission, or in the absence of the President, the Vice President of the Commission. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, the Presiding Officer shall be the longest-serving member of the Commission present.
- G. "Secretary" shall mean the Fire Commission Secretary.
- H. "Sunshine Ordinance" shall mean the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance, San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 67.

## **CHAPTER II – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **Rule 1. Open Meeting Policy**

It is the policy of the Commission to conduct all official business through open and public meetings consistent with the Brown Act and the Sunshine Ordinance.

### **Rule 2. Public Participation Policy**

It is the policy of the Commission to encourage and permit public comment on matters within the Commission's jurisdiction.

### **Rule 3. Public Comment**

**3.1. General Public Comment.** The Commission shall include general public comment as an agenda item at each regular meeting of the Commission. During general public comment, each member of the public may address the Commission on matters within the Commission's jurisdiction that are not specifically agendized for that meeting. Each member of the public may address the Commission once during general public comment, for up to three minutes. The Commission will apply this time limit uniformly to members of the public, although the Commission will extend additional time as an accommodation to a member of the public with a disability that impairs his or her

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ability to speak or to a non-English speaker with a translator. The Presiding Officer may limit general public comment to less than three minutes per speaker, depending on the number of speakers during general public comment and the number and anticipated duration of other agenda items.

The Commission will not discuss or take action on a matter raised during general public comment, but may ask questions for clarification, ask staff for factual information on the matter, or request staff to report back to the Commission at a later meeting. The Commission will calendar a matter raised during general public comment for a future meeting before engaging in substantive discussion or taking action on that matter.

**3.2. Public Comment on Agenda Items.** The Commission will provide for public comment on each item on the agenda, whether scheduled for discussion or action. Public comment on a discussion item may take place at any time during consideration of the item, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. Public comment on an action item will take place before the Commission takes action. Persons addressing the Commission during public comment on an agenda item shall confine their remarks to the particular agenda item. For each agenda item, each member of the public may address the Commission once, for up to three minutes. The Commission will apply this time limit uniformly to members of the public, although the Commission will extend additional time as an accommodation to a member of the public with a disability that impairs his or her ability to speak or to a non-English speaker with a translator. The Presiding Officer may limit the public comment on an agenda item to less than three minutes per speaker, based on the nature of the agenda item, the number of anticipated speakers for that item, and the number and anticipated duration of other agenda items.

**3.3. Speaker Identification.** Individuals making public comment may be requested, but not required, to identify themselves.

**3.4. Designated Public Comment Area.** Members of the public wishing to address the Commission must speak from the public comment area designated by the Secretary. This area is near the front of the Commission Room on the Commission's right side and the audience's left. A microphone is located in the designated public comment area.

**3.5. Addressing the Commission.** Individuals wishing to speak during public comment must approach the public comment area on the side of the room where the designated public comment area is located. Speakers should form a line starting at the second row of chairs next to the designated public comment area. No one may interfere with another person who is addressing the Commission or in line to address the Commission. Individuals in line to address the Commission must remain behind the second row of chairs until it is their turn to make public comment, and only then may they approach the microphone to speak. Individuals should speak clearly into the microphone.

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

Currently set for adoption on 3/13/24

**3.6. Speaker Conduct During Public Comment.** The Commission will not tolerate disruptive or inappropriate conduct during public comment. Speakers who use profanity or who engage in yelling, name-calling, or other disruptive or inappropriate behavior will be directed to cease any such conduct and may be asked to leave the meeting room.

**3.7. Audience Activity During Public Comment.** Although the Commission welcomes public comment, persons in the audience shall not express support or opposition to statements by Commissioners or persons testifying through their words or actions. Applause and booing are prohibited. The Presiding Officer may request that audience members refrain from any conduct that causes unreasonable distractions or disruptions during the meeting.

**3.8. Policy Prohibiting Discriminatory or Harassing Remarks Made at Public Meetings.** The Commission follows the City and County of San Francisco Policy on Discriminatory or Harassing Remarks Made at Public Meetings of City Boards and Commissions. If any person makes discriminatory or harassing remarks at a Commission meeting that violates City policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment on the basis of specified protected characteristics, the Presiding Officer shall read the City's policy against discrimination and harassment into the record and state that comments in violation of City policy will not be condoned and will play no role in the Commission's decisions. The Presiding Officer shall further state that any City employee in the room who is offended by the discriminatory or harassing remarks is excused from attendance at the meeting, and that no City employee is compelled to remain in attendance where it appears likely that speakers will make further discriminatory or harassing comments. If speakers continue to make discriminatory or harassing remarks that violate City policy, the Presiding Officer shall remind the speaker of City policy, and then may recess the meeting temporarily. After this temporary interruption, speakers engaged in public comment shall be permitted to finish their allotted time.

**3.9. Comment, Not Debate.** During public comment, speakers shall address their remarks to the Commission as a whole and not to individual Commissioners, Fire Department personnel, or the audience. Commissioners, Fire Department personnel, and other speakers are not required to respond to questions from a speaker. Commissioners shall not enter into debate or discussion with speakers during public comment, although they may question speakers to obtain clarification. The Presiding Officer or the Commission may ask staff to investigate an issue raised during public comment and later report to a committee or to the Commission. The lack of a response by the Commissioners to public comment does not necessarily constitute agreement with or support of comments made during public comment.

**3.10. Approaching Commissioners or the Chief During Proceedings.** Members of the public may not approach the Commissioners or the Chief during Commission proceedings, unless invited to approach by the Presiding Officer or Chief. If a member

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

Currently set for adoption on 3/13/24

of the public wishes to make an inquiry or provide correspondence or other materials to the Commission or the Chief, he or she shall present the inquiry or materials to the Secretary before or after the meeting, during a break in the meeting, or after requesting and receiving permission to do so during public comment.

**3.11. Recording Commission Proceedings.** Members of the public may record Commission meetings with an audio or video recorder or still or motion picture camera. Members of the public wishing to record Commission proceedings should position their equipment so that any noise or light from the equipment does not disrupt the Commission proceedings, and so the equipment does not obstruct any member of the public's view of or ability to participate in the proceedings. Generally, members of the public should keep recording equipment and cameras on the sides of the Commission Room, behind the second row of audience seating. Audio recorders may be placed on the Commission table before the meeting starts. The Presiding Officer may request that members of the public reposition their equipment to minimize disruption or obstruction of the meeting. No person may intentionally block or impede a member of the public's recording of Commission proceedings.

## **Rule 4. Written Communications**

The Commission encourages members of the public to write to the Commission concerning issues within the Commission's jurisdiction. The Secretary shall list the following written communications in the next agenda: (1) written communications from members of the public addressed directly to the Commission; and (2) commendations and letters of recognition received by the Chief, if the Commission becomes aware of such communications. Communications shall also be kept and made available pursuant to the requirements of the Sunshine Ordinance.

## **CHAPTER III – MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATION**

### **Rule 5. Regular Meeting Location and Times**

The Commission shall hold its regular meetings at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. The 2nd Wednesday will start at 9:00 a.m. in Room 416 and the 4th Wednesday will start at 5:00 p.m. in Room 400 and in accordance with the adopted annual meeting calendar.

### **Rule 6. Special Meetings**

The Commission may hold a special meeting at any time at the call of the President or a majority of the members. Special meetings may be held at the Commission Room or elsewhere at Fire Department headquarters with 72 hours notice or at an alternate location other than at Fire Department headquarters with 15 days notice.

### **Rule 7. Closed Session**

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

Currently set for adoption on 3/13/24

The Fire Commission may meet in closed session during a regular or special meeting, as authorized under the Brown Act and the Sunshine Ordinance. The Secretary shall post any action required to be reported after a closed session pursuant to the requirements of Administrative Code Section 67.12.

## **Rule 8. Meeting Procedures**

The Commission shall conduct all meetings in conformance with the Charter, Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance. The Commission will act by motion or resolution.

## **Rule 9. Commission Agenda**

Before each meeting, the Secretary shall prepare an agenda that satisfies the requirements of the Brown Act and the Sunshine Ordinance. Each agenda shall specify the time and place of the meeting and contain a meaningful description of each item of business to be discussed and transacted. The Secretary shall post all agenda in compliance with the requirements and timelines of the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance.

For discipline cases heard by the Commission, both appeals from Chief's discipline and charges filed by the Chief, neither the agenda nor the minutes shall identify the accused member by name, but shall list the Commission's File Number for the matter, the rank of the member, and the Rules allegedly violated.

## **Rule 10. Order of Business**

Commission meetings shall proceed as set forth in the agenda, except that the Presiding Officer may call items out of order for any reasonable purpose. The Presiding Officer shall announce any change in the order of business as soon as possible.

## **Rule 11. Commission Action**

The Commission will not discuss or take action on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as permitted under the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance.

## **Rule 12. Voting**

Commission business shall be conducted only when a quorum is present (three Commissioners). Every official act of the Commission shall be adopted by majority vote of the Commission (three or more Commissioners), except that matters of procedure may be adopted by majority vote of the members present at a meeting, so long as the members present constitute a quorum.

## **Rule 13. Minutes**

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

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The Secretary shall prepare draft minutes of each meeting in conformance with the requirements and timelines in the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance. The Secretary shall present the draft minutes for approval at the next regular meeting to the extent practicable. Once approved by the Commission, the Secretary shall post the minutes on the Commission website.

## **Rule 14. Officers**

The Commission shall nominate and elect a President and Vice President at the second meeting in January of each year. The term of those officers shall commence on the first meeting in February. They shall serve a one-year term, or until a successor is elected.

## **Rule 15. Commission President**

The President shall set the agenda for Commission meetings, call Commission meetings to order and preside at those meetings, and perform all other duties necessary or incidental to the office. The President may create committees to perform such advisory functions as the President shall determine, and may appoint and remove members from such committees at his or her pleasure.

## **Rule 16. Commission Vice-President**

In the absence or inability of the President to act, the Vice-President shall take the place and perform the duties of the President.

## **Rule 17. Secretary**

The Secretary shall prepare and post agenda for all regular and special Commission meetings, attend all meetings, call the roll and agenda items at each meeting, and call and record all Commission votes. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all Commission proceedings and shall prepare draft minutes of the meetings. The Secretary shall assist the Presiding Officer as necessary to assure that meetings are orderly. The Secretary shall maintain a file of all written communications received by the Commission, and perform other duties as assigned.

Amended at the Regular Meeting on March 13, 2024

Ayes:

Nays: