

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

Wednesday, February 8, 2017 - 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=180&clip\\_id=27080](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=27080)

President Cleaveland called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

**1. ROLL CALL**

|                           |  |         |
|---------------------------|--|---------|
| Commission President      | Ken Cleaveland                         | Present |
| Commission Vice President | Stephen Nakajo                         | Present |
| Commissioner              | Michael Hardeman                       | Present |
| Commissioner              | Francee Covington                      | Present |
| Chief of Department       | Joanne Hayes-White                     | Present |
| Mark Gonzales             | Deputy Chief – Operations              |         |
| Raemona Williams          | Deputy Chief – Administration          |         |
| Dan DeCossio              | Bureau of Fire Prevention              |         |
| Tony Rivera               | Support Services                       |         |
| Jeff Myers                | EMS                                    |         |
| Shane Francisco           | Homeland Security                      |         |
| Rudy Castellanos          | Airport Division                       |         |
| Jeff Columbini            | Division of Training                   |         |
| Assistant Chiefs          |  |         |
| Kevin Burke               | Division 2                             |         |
| Tom Siragusa              | Division 3                             |         |
| Staff                     |  |         |
| Mark Corso                | CFO                                    |         |
| Olivia Scanlon            | Communication and Outreach Coordinator |         |
| 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 January 25, 2017.

Commissioner Hardeman Moved to approve the January 25, 2017 regular meeting Minutes. Vice President Nakajo Seconded. Motion to approve above Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

- Minutes from Special Meeting on January 25, 2017.

Commissioner Covington Moved to approve the January 25, 2017 special meeting Minutes.  
Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. Motion to approve above Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

**4. DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET – FISCAL YEARS 2017-2018/ 2018-2019 [Discussion and possible action]**

Discussion and possible action to adopt the Fire Department’s Operating Budget for Fiscal Years 2017-2018/2018-2019.

Mark Corso presented an overview of the Department’s budget proposal for the 17-18 and 18-19 budget years. He gave a brief overview on the instructions and timeline from the Mayor’s Office that included February 21, 2017 for the budget submissions due from all Departments, June 1, 2017 for the Mayor’s submission to the Board of Supervisors, a June hearing date at the Budget Committee and a July 2017 hearing date for the budget to be considered at the Board of Supervisors. He added that the City is looking at a projected cumulative deficit over the next two fiscal years of approximately \$400 million, with deficits increasing in subsequent years. He further stated that all Departments are instructed to propose on-going reductions to general fund support equal to 3% in each year, cumulative 6% in the second year with no new net positions to be added. He explained that the budget before the Commission includes the baseline of what was passed last year as part of the FY 16-17 budget process, with any salary and benefit rate changes incorporated into the budget, that it incorporates current assumptions pertaining to the hiring plan for both H-2 and H-3 academies. He mentioned that the numbers will change over the next two weeks as the staffing model is finalized in addition to other technical adjustments, but no large operational changes will be incorporated if approved. He announced that the Department is also proposing to continue to work very closely with the Mayor’s Budget Office over the next few months in advance of the budget submittal and the Budget Committee will continue to meet to address Department priorities, potentials for cost savings and in addition, justifications for current funding that the Department has as well as other initiatives. He continued to present the following presentation: <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/budget-2.pdf>

Commissioner Covington thanked Mr. Corso for his presentation and asked him to define “utilities”. Mr. Corso stated that the line item covered under utilities would be broken out into work orders such as PG & E, sewer, and water. He explained that many of the utility rate line items will be negotiated over the next couple of months by the Mayor’s Office on a total city-wide allocation and depending on what each individual department’s perspective would be, the rate would be adjusted by the Mayor’s office. She asked how much the Fire Department’s PG&E bill was and Mr. Corso stated he would get that information to her. Commissioner Covington suggested inviting Mohammed Nuru to a future meeting to provide information about green roofs as opposed to solar roofs and see if there is a way to save money.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Mr. Corso for his efficient report and commended him for the great job he does in his analysis and recommendations. He asked if any of the positions in the department were in jeopardy because of potential lack of federal funding. Mr. Corso stated that it is still unknown at this time but he didn’t think that anything that has been currently allocated would be at issue. Commissioner Hardeman was happy to see the savings on overtime and assumes it will keep decreasing as new academy classes’ graduate. Commissioner Hardeman

also recognized the increase in call volume, and that now is not the time to put at risk the life, health and safety of the residents and visitors with budget cuts to the Department.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Mr. Corso for his report and asked how many personnel work in the SFFD. Mr. Corso answered, approximately 1,650, 75 of whom are civilian employees. Vice President Nakajo asked for clarification on specific line items included in the budget report. Mr. Corso explained that 91 percent of the budget goes to salaries and benefit for personnel, about 6 percent to for materials and supplies and things of that sort. He confirmed that the capital budget is separate from the operating budget. Vice President Nakajo asked for clarification on the challenges of a three percent cut to the department's general fund. Mr. Corso responded that the goal of the three percent is to reduce the Department's dependency on the general fund support and the two ways of doing that is to reduce your cost in some manner and to add and supplement the revenue received through additional revenues. Vice President Nakajo suggested looking at areas of increasing fees to offset the requested budget cuts.

President Cleaveland thanked Mr. Corso and stated that he was glad that the public got to hear that in terms of ambulance fees, that if you're a Medicare or Medi Cal patient, there's a limitation to fee increases. He asked Mr. Corso, why Fire Prevention is not allowed to increase fees on certain categoricals. Mr. Corso explained that they are not allowed to recover more than what the costs of providing the service are, essentially, you can't profit from the services provided. President Cleaveland also stated he was glad to see overtime costs going down significantly. There was brief discussion on the flexibility of minimum staffing levels. the DHR Worker's Compensation Division, the general fund support from the Airport, the Port of San Francisco, and tax revenue from the State.

Mr. Corso described the proposed language for a letter he would like to submit jointly with the Commission to the Mayor's Budget Office.

Chief Hayes-White acknowledged Director Corso for putting together an excellent report. She added that he's been working very hard, as has the Budget Committee and she echoed the sentiments about being a team player and being appreciative of the good working relationship with the Mayor's Office. She added that given the realities of the call volume and the population increase in the City, they want to commit to making sure they can provide the same level of service and she feels it would be irresponsible to offer further reductions given the fact they are working harder than they've ever worked before and they will commit to continuing that dialogue.

Commissioner Covington Moved to adopt the Operating Budget for Fiscal Years 2017-2018/2018-2019. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. Motion was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

## **5. 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 January 25, 2017, including budget, academies, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Hayes-White's report covered events since the last meeting on January 25, 2017. She announced that the current budget is on track for both revenues and expenditures. She announced that they are in their third year with the Budget Committee and that it has worked out

well. She stated that the 121<sup>st</sup> Academy is in its 11<sup>th</sup> week, with 52 members and the anticipated graduation date is April 14, 2017. She announced that they are on track for the 122<sup>nd</sup> academy on April 24, 2017. She touched on the H3- Level 1 academy that are due to graduate February 24, 2017, the H-8 per diem paramedics, seven who will crossover to fulltime EMT's and eventually they will become H-3 Level 2's.

Chief Hayes-White and the Deputies attended the Mayor's State of the City address on January 26, 2017. She met with Supervisor Jeff Sheehy on January 26, 2017, on January 27, 2017 she attended the Chinese New Year kickoff event with the Mayor, Former Mayor Brown, the new Police Chief and a number of city leaders and department heads. She stated that on January 21, 2017 she had the opportunity to meet with the 10 members of the Department that went through the 154 hours of training for the Community Paramedicine Program. She stated that it was added value that they are working even closer with their partners at Department of Public Health regarding a certain population that they respond to often and don't necessarily need 9-1-1-services, but can receive other services that would be more in tune of their needs. She stated that on February 3, 2017 she and Deputy Chief Williams attended the Black History Month celebration at City Hall, along with Commissioner Covington. She concluded her report by stating they will be reconvening the EMS workgroup, to take a look and talk about the future and different trends that they're seeing so that they can be responsive in the months and years to come. She added that it was important to note, that even with the increased call volume, and the specific challenges, they are very close to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile 10-minutes for the transport unit on scene for the month of January.

There was no public comment.

#### REPORT FROM OPERATIONS

Report on overall field operations, including greater alarm fires, Emergency Medical Services, Bureau of Fire Prevention & Investigation, and Airport Division and update on H-23 classification.

Chief Gonzales' report covered the months of January 2017. He mentioned that during the reporting period, there were 13 working fires, three of which were second alarms. The first second alarm was on January 5, 2017 at 622 Clarendon. Engine 20 was first to respond. They rescued a victim on the second floor. During the incident, a report was made that a firefighter's leg had penetrated through the top floor joist, luckily he was not injured. The responding units did a good job. The second greater alarm was another second alarm on January 13, 2017 at 3528 Fulton Street. Two firefighters were injured with minor burns. The cause of the fire was incendiary with a subsequent arrest. The third greater alarm was on January 22, 2017 at 1408 Cabrillo. The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental.

With regard to community outreach, Chief Gonzales thanked PIO Baxter, the suppression companies out in the field, the Prevention Bureau, Training Division, including recruitment and NERT. He added that the outreach from the Department has been phenomenal, and they have been busy doing many things including cliff safety messages, fire prevention tips and he encouraged everyone to go to sf-fire.org, follow the SFFD on Twitter @sffdpio and to sign up for emergency notifications by texting Alert SF at 888777. He went on to describe the two men rescued from the cliff near the Cliff House, the victim who was crushed between the platform and BART train, the woman who was rescued from the caves below the Cliff House, the first alarm fire at 1266 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, resulting in two adults being rescued with smoke inhalation and the water rescue that Rescue II dive team responded to at the City of Alameda with the Oakland Fire Department for a submerged vehicle under water. He also described the many calls they responded to during the storm the week of January 8, 2017 including down trees, a large

scaffolding collapse and many rescues. He stated that on January 26, 2017 they hosted members of the Tokyo Fire Service who were learning how to educate their public about disaster preparedness, NERT, and community outreach. On January 3, 2017 they attended a community event and gave out many smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Chief Gonzales stated that the Bureau of Fire Prevention and the PIO have been working with the NFPA and city agencies to publish a multi-page public safety handout to be printed in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese and Russian.

Chief Gonzales addressed the increase in call volume and how they are at 89.29 percent meeting the 10 minutes response time and they don't see call volume going down so they are addressing what can be done internally to streamline it and trying to come up with creative solutions. He briefly touched on the progress of finding a new ambulance deployment facility, and the SFFD transport paramedic training for alternative destination pilot. He mentioned that the H-23 classification is still being worked on, and they are committed to continuing to work with all parties involved, including Local 798. He stated that the Warrior Arena is currently under review by the SFFD team and the plans are very close to the approval stage. He touched on the Parkmerced, Moscone and Candlestick projects, and the Turk Street project, where SFMTA withdrew the park and protected bicycle lane proposal. He announced that BFI responded to 21 incidents in January, seven structure fires, one special outside fire, one homeless encampment fire, one portable toilet, one Christmas tree, and seven vehicle fires. He stated that the Bureau of Fire investigation has 108 open fire investigative reports.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Chief Gonzales for his comprehensive report. He stated that in regards to the H-23 classification, which has been the subject of negotiations, he believes and supports movement on the position and he thinks it crucial and essential, with call volume up as well as because it's a budgeted position. He mentioned that he is looking forward to the one year anniversary of the EMS-6 presentation and is happy the EMS/ambulance workgroup will be reconvening to address the increase of call volume and response times. He also looks forward to viewing the new fire facilities at the Airport.

Commissioner Covington thanked Chief Hayes-White and Chief Gonzales for their reports. She was glad to hear that the Department was making an effort to deal with the frequent callers/users on the 9-1-1 system and adding the 10 specialized members to support that effort.

Commissioner Hardeman also thought it was fantastic that they are expanding the EMS-6 module. He was also happy that the academy classes are on schedule and looks forward to the graduation on Good Friday and to the grand opening of the firehouses at the Airport. He mentioned that he would like the Fire Marshal of the Port to do a presentation at a future meeting.

Chief Gonzales added that he forgot to mention in his report that Battalion 5 opened up on January 14, 2017 and they put three Battalion Chiefs into that station on Grove and Baker and they have responded to some of the single alarms and one of the greater alarms.

Commissioner Covington stated that that Battalion 5 was excellent news and that it's good to have Battalion 5 back in service. She also mentioned that she was glad to see that the multiple page public safety handouts regarding prevention and education will be produced in multiple languages. She suggested that in addition to how they are currently being provided to citizens, she would like them included in churches, and synagogues. She stated that she was glad that things are moving along with MTA and that they are working more closely with them regarding the obstructions that can sometimes hamper the ability of members of the department when

performing their work duties. She read a response that the Department received on social media which stated: "My wife was home alone with our nine-month-old up two flights of twisty stairs. My wife fell while walking with the baby. Luckily, our baby is totally fine. However, my wife broke three bones in her right ankle. The firefighters who were first on the scene immediately helped my wife calm -- calm down by ensuring our baby was okay. One even washed a bottle to feed the baby. I believe they were from Station 23. Paramedics Jen Shikawa and Eric Thurston were incredible. They got my wife downstairs and helped me over the course of at least an hour while transporting her. Excuse me. My wife told me she was sad to see them go and wished she could have hung around with them a bit longer. Exclamation point, smiley face. As the recipient of my wife's initial hysterical panicked phone call right after her injury, the gratitude and relief I felt upon knowing the SFFD was taking such good care of her and our baby is too deep for words. Thank you so much."

President Cleaveland asked for a description of what the "crush syndrome" is as described in the Chief Gonzales's report about the incident of the man trapped between the BART train and platform. Chief Myers described the technical and medical maneuvers required when rescuing someone suffering from "crush syndrome". President Cleaveland mentioned that there seems to be a lot of cliff rescues behind the Cliff House and asked if there was enough warning signage. Chief Gonzales stated that there is signage but it could always be improved and that the National Park Service is responsible for that signage. President Cleaveland suggested we should contact the National Park Service and let them know they need more signage. He also asked if Alameda and Oakland had their own dive teams. Chief Gonzales answered that SFFD is one of the only dive teams in the region and they get called to go to other areas and it's their policy to only respond if the area is within a one hour radius and they take that into consideration before they send out units.. President Cleaveland acknowledged the great work that the Fire Prevention Division is doing in their outreach efforts to the community. He also announced his support for the H-23 position and would like to see it get posted and filled soon as it gives an opportunity to the EMT's a ladder of advancement and an opportunity for administrative duties. Commissioner Covington chimed in that she also supports the H-23 position and it's time to get the ball rolling.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Chief Gonzales for including the update on Battalion 5 as they fought hard to get that back into service.

There was no public comment.

#### **6. RESOLUTION 2017-01 [Discussion and possible action]**

Discussion and possible action regarding proposed Resolution 2017-01, that the San Francisco Fire Department require that all members, uniformed and civilian take the Biennial Harassment Prevention Training.

Commissioner Covington stated that she was happy to see this resolution come forward as she wanted to make sure that all of the members of the Department undergo this training and how important it is for the culture of the Department, and the due diligence to make sure this training happens. She asked Commission Secretary to read the Resolution into the record, which she did.

Commissioner Covington Moved to approve Resolution 2017-01. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. Motion was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

#### **7. COMMUNICATIONS**

Emails from James Corrigan dated January 22, 23, 24 30, and February 1 2017.  
Email from Christopher Wisniewski dated January 28, 2017.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for the February 22, 2017 regular meeting.

- Defer EMS-6 updated to meeting in March
- Emergency Communication presentation
- Port Fire Marshal presentation
- Station 35 update
- Fireboat update

**9. ADJOURNMENT 14. ADJOURNMENT**

President Cleaveland adjourned the meeting at 11:04 a.m.