

Fire Code Technical Advisory Council (TAC) Regular Meeting

Minutes

Friday, October 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 400, San Francisco, California 94102

The video of the [Fire Code TAC Meeting, 10.2.26](#) is now available.

Supervisor Sherrill called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

1. Roll Call

Fire Code TAC Seat Number	Name	Seat Description	
1	Robert Eaton	Property owner or building manager of a building	Absent
2	Gayle Geary	Non-owner tenant of an affected building	Present
3	Catherine Ann Miller	Duly authorized homeowners' association representative of an affected building	Present
4	Christopher Ingram	Person who holds an active C-16 fire protection contractor license issued by the California Contractors State License Board	Present
5	Brandon Bracamonte	Construction professional with experience in either general labor or skilled trade	Present
6	Nicholas Tsuk	Professional architect who holds an active license issued by the California Architects Board or a professional structural engineer who holds an active license issued by the California Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists	Present
7	Ben Becker	Employee of the Controller's Office appointed by the Controller	Present
8	Captain Tracy O'Keeffe	Employee of the Fire Department appointed by the Fire Chief	Present
9	Mark Walls	Employee of the Department of Building Inspection, appointed by the Director of the Department of Building Inspection (DBI)	Present
10	Bill Teahan	Employee of the Public Utilities Commission, appointed by the General Manager of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	Present
11	Supervisor Stephen Sherrill	Member of the Board of Supervisors, appointed by the President of the Board of Supervisors	Present

Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement

Supervisor Sherrill read the land acknowledgment.

2. Approval of the minutes [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to approve meeting minutes.

- Minutes from Inaugural Meeting on September 18, 2026

Council Member Geary commented that public comment from the meeting minutes on 9.18.26 were hard to interpret. Supervisor Sherrill responded that the transcribing process would be examined.

Supervisor Sherrill moved to approve the minutes from September 18, 2026, and Council Member Teahan Seconded. Council Members Geary, Miller, Ingram, Bracamonte, Tsuk, Becker, O'Keeffe, Walls, Teahan, and Sherrill voted in favor of the motion. The Motion passed.

Supervisor Sherrill reminded Council members that they can bring forward any documents for discussion into the record, especially when future meeting agendas are discussed.

There was no public comment.

3. Fire Code TAC Bylaws [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to adopt the Council's Bylaws. The Bylaws are available on the [Council web site](#).

Supervisor Sherrill asked Council members if they had any questions about the Bylaws. Captain O'Keeffe commented that the Bylaws state the purpose and responsibilities of the Council, including establishing clear criteria, evidence and definitions. She commented that all points of view should be heard.

Council Member Miller asked Captain O'Keeffe to clarify her comment. Captain O'Keeffe responded that the Bylaws states the TAC's responsibilities which include making recommendations to the Mayor, Board of Supervisors (BOS), Fire Department and Fire Commission. The Council does not have the authority to overturn Sprinkler Ordinance. Data is broken into five categories that need to be defined to approve alternate methods and whether to waive specific requirements. Council Member Miller inquired if recommendations are limited to defining the five categories. Captain O'Keeffe responded no.

Supervisor Sherrill moved to approve the Bylaws, and Council Member Walls Seconded. Council Members Geary, Miller, Ingram, Bracamonte, Tsuk, Becker, O'Keeffe, Walls, Teahan, and Sherrill voted in favor of the motion. The Motion passed.

There was public comment from a female speaker asking if the Council could recommend overturning the Sprinkler Ordinance.

There was public comment from a female speaker regarding the abridged public comment in the meeting minutes from September 18. She asked that the meeting minutes be amended to include a full compilation of comments from that meeting.

There was public comment from a female speaker asking for the meeting minutes to reflect more detail in public comments. She also asked for a better definition of the scope of the recommendations, and was in favor of repealing the Sprinkler Ordinance.

4. Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) Report [Discussion]

Discussion regarding the BLA report.

Fred Brousseau and Alex Thibodo of the Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) office prepared a report on the estimated costs of compliance with fire code requirements for retrofitting high-rise buildings in San Francisco. Mr. Brousseau reported that they worked

with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD), and other professionals such as C-16 contractors and professional associations involved in fire prevention efforts and sprinkler installations. Ms. Thibodo reported that approximately 129 buildings could be subject to the Sprinkler Ordinance. About 40% of these buildings are condominiums, while 60% are rental apartments. 76 of the buildings are at least 120 feet tall, with full compliance estimated by January 1, 2035. After working with Bay Area C-16 contractors; SFFD; the Public Utilities Commission (PUC); and reviewed retrofit costs and publicly available documents, the BLA office reported that due to the large scope of a retrofit project, it was more appropriate to survey estimates of key cost drivers and present possible scenarios, rather than estimate the cost of a retrofit project. The BLA office examined factors such as sprinkler design; hydraulic testing; water line flow; permitting; engineering installation; and inspection. There were also municipal infrastructure considerations such as electrical wiring, architectural complexity, and asbestos mitigation. Consequently, these factors increase the costs of the actual sprinkler installation, adding up to \$50,000 per unit for a standard 50-unit 14-floor high rise building. Ms. Thibodo reported that the 2016 BLA report which stated retrofits would cost \$300,000 per building does not take into account the variable factors in any given building. Ms. Thibodo reported three different cost scenarios: baseline (\$17,000-50,000/unit); mid-range (\$27,000-30,000/unit); and fully concealed system (\$10 million-11 million/building). Any financing program should use a tiered approach to address the differences between condominium and apartment complexes. The BLA office reported that after analyzing fire incidents since July 2016, they found no fatalities in the 86 incidences which originated on at least the seventh floor. 36 incidents had an operating wet pipe sprinkler system, while 46 had no suppression system. However, they did not determine which of these buildings would be subject to the Sprinkler Ordinance. The BLA office reported that other jurisdictions such as San Jose achieved full compliance, while cities like San Antonio had full compliance after exempting condominiums. San Diego repealed its ordinance after multiple compliance extensions. The Pennsylvania state legislator is working on a property tax abatement financing program to install retrofit projects in Philadelphia. The BLA office offered four options for BOS consideration: repealing the Ordinance; modifying the Ordinance; improving cost estimates; and offering financial assistance. The BLA office's report is attached: [BLA report](#).

Council Member Ingram thanked the BLA office for their report. He commented that a fourth cost category, "high optional," should be added to reflect a concealed system which incurs higher cost but is optional. Council Member Ingram commented that Salesforce Tower, the tallest building in San Francisco, would be a different cost in terms of scale and would not be considered a retrofit, but rather new construction. Ms. Thibodo responded that retrofits have difference procedures/costs from new construction.

Council Member Tsuk commented that a new building like Salesforce Tower cannot compare to retrofits of buildings that are 50+ years old.

Council Member Miller commented that choosing exposed or concealed pipes is a personal choice. She asked Council Member Ingram if he knew how many homeowners chose Deck-O-Shield installations. Council Member Ingram responded personal residences sometimes choose Deck-O-Shield installations, but it is optional.

Council Member Tsuk commented that property could possibly lose value and advocated an approach that yields equal home value.

Council Member Miller commented that the BLA report was lacking in terms of cost analysis; fire statistics related to the affected buildings; and pump rooms. Ms. Thibodo agreed with Council Member Miller. All buildings would need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and that the report estimated costs for a 10-by-10 concrete room.

Council Member Geary thanked the BLA office for their report and commented that the BLA report did not take into account variables such as ceiling height, and specific examples of retrofits.

Council Member Tsuk inquired if repealing the Ordinance was the BLA office's primary recommendation. Ms. Thibodo responded that there was no hierarchy in the options presented. Rather, the options are policy options rather than recommendations. Mr. Brousseau responded that their reports always include every option, including repealing policies.

Council Member Miller inquired how infrastructure costs were analyzed. Ms. Thibodo acknowledged this was a complex issue. She responded that the BLA office included main variable drivers such electrical panels and rewiring which affects cost.

Supervisor Sherrill commented that given all the variables, it would be nearly impossible to determine a cost for each building.

Council Member Ingram commented that SFFD waived several requirements including a backup tank and generator. Ms. Thibodo responded that these waivers were not considered in the BLA report.

Council Member Tsuk commented that these buildings do not have the infrastructure.

Council Member Miller expressed concern that SFFD waived the requirement for backup generators.

Captain Captain O'Keeffe thanked the BLA office for their report, and recommended that the Council evaluate existing buildings to determine feasibility and define criteria.

Supervisor Sherrill inquired how costs would be passed on to tenants, and if there was a cap on costs passed to tenants under rent control. Mr. Brousseau responded that potential rent increases would help recoup costs, and that he was not aware of a cap. Supervisor Sherrill inquired if the 86 fire incidents included the 126 buildings subject to the mandate. Ms. Thibodo responded that the report did not have that information. Supervisor Sherrill inquired how many buildings were wood frame versus concrete and steel. Ms. Thibodo responded that the report did not have that information. Supervisor Sherrill inquired if San Jose offered financing options, and why condominiums in Houston were exempted. Mr. Brousseau responded no for San Jose. There were feasibility issues in Houston and Florida. Supervisor Sherrill inquired if there were any comps in San Francisco to the proposed tax abatement program in Philadelphia. Mr. Brousseau responded that such a program in San Francisco would require changes to property tax and state laws. City officials could lobby state officials to make these changes. Ms. Thibodo responded that City officials could

partner with private companies to help finance retrofits, which does not require State approval.

A female speaker commented that costs estimates will not be respected and will be at the mercy of contractors. She also commented that Salesforce has more negotiating power than individual citizens.

A female speaker commented that a retrofit would take longer than the 16 weeks referenced in the BLA report and believed at least a year would be a more realistic timeline. Ceiling heights and an aging water system will be issues.

A female speaker commented that retrofits would lower flooring levels which impacts public transportation, specifically cable car operations.

A female speaker made public comment regarding the cost of retrofit and its impact on property values. She was concerned about the infrastructure needed for retrofits, and the cost of temporary housing.

A male speaker made public comment regarding how costs vary based on unit count, and that cost is always an issue when covered by the public sector.

A male speaker commented that affordability could increase the cost of a building, and that there were two fire fatalities in San Francisco last year.

A female speaker made public comment regarding the differences between mid-range and high range estimates, and inquired if each unit would vary in estimate.

A female speaker made public comment regarding ongoing construction in her building. She would decline any offer from the City to finance a sprinkler retrofit.

A male speaker commented that the BLA report was too simplistic, and that estimates can change once construction begins.

A male speaker commented that the BLA report implied that fire casualties in San Francisco were low, and that each building had a right to make its own decision regarding sprinklers. He was not opposed to sprinkler retrofits in new construction.

A female speaker commented that the BLA report did not address three data points the Council should consider: AI data centers driving up demand for skilled tradespeople; possibility of sprinkler failure; and impact on large multi-family buildings. She recommended revoking the Ordinance.

A female speaker commented that the BLA report's estimates were too low; that no interest loans would still require repayment; and that displacement is a hardship.

A female speaker commented that the Ordinance is another example of San Francisco's onerous building requirements, and was in favor of finding reasonable safety measures.

A female speaker commented that insurance companies are most concerned about water damage above all.

Supervisor Sherrill moved to make a motion that public comment would be modified to one minute person. Council Member Miller Seconded. Council Members Geary, Miller, Ingram, Bracamonte, Tsuk, Becker, O’Keeffe, Walls, Teahan, and Sherrill voted in favor of the motion. The Motion passed.

5. Discussion Regarding the Five Terms in 1103.5.4.4 [Discussion]

Discussion regarding the five terms 1103.5.4.4. including "reasonable degree of fire protection" "alternative protection"; "not physically possible"; "disproportionate effort"; and "undue hardship."

Chair, Supervisor Sherrill asked Council members to email Clerk Aguas-Aclan their feedback on factors to consider in defining the five terms.

Council Member Tsuk inquired if defining the five terms was necessary. Supervisor Sherrill responded yes, and that the list of factors would be made publicly available.

There was no public comment.

6. Resident Data Presentation [Discussion]

Presentation by Daniel Rabinowitz analyzing SFFD data regarding fire-related deaths or injuries.

Mr. Rabinowitz is a resident and building Treasurer of 1070 Green Street, and is on the board of the San Francisco Neighborhood Response Team (NERT). Mr. Rabinowitz reported that after analyzing SFFD data over the last 27 years, there were no deaths associated with fire risks in the 126 buildings covered under the Ordinance. 122 of these buildings had no fire related injuries during this time. Mr. Rabinowitz reported there were only four incidents overall with 10 fire-related injuries. He reported that there should be thoughtful consideration between this data and the burden of carrying out retrofits. Mr. Rabinowitz’s report is attached: [Mr. Rabinowitz report](#).

Supervisor Sherrill inquired if the data showed a total number of fire incidents in all the buildings since that period. Mr. Rabinowitz responded no, and said that he could work with SFFD to obtain that data. Supervisor Sherrill asked Captain O’Keeffe to collaborate on gathering data on the total number of fires. Mr. Rabinowitz commented that he is available to the Council for more discussion.

Council Member Geary inquired about where fires originated in these buildings. Captain O’Keeffe responded that data requested for TAC purposes is currently under review by the City Attorney’s office, and was not available at the time of this meeting.

Council Member Becker inquired if the spreadsheet provided as meeting materials could be provided in a more legible format.

Supervisor Sherrill thanked Mr. Rabinowitz for his report.

A male speaker commented that data should be organized by actual fire incidents rather than other incidents.

A male speaker commented that there was much work done on drones raising fire hoses to windows, and that future information would be changing.

A male speaker commented that the Ordinance is a solution for a non-existent problem, and favored another option that does not require a high investment.

A female speaker commented that most San Francisco fires originate in the kitchen, and that her building requires fire extinguishers within 10 feet of every kitchen. She commented that extinguishers were more effective than sprinklers.

7. Emerging Causes of Fires [Discussion]

Presentation by Captain Tracy O’Keeffe regarding data on current fire causes.

Supervisor Sherrill moved to continue this item to the next meeting. Captain O’Keeffe Seconded. Council Members Geary, Miller, Ingram, Bracamonte, Tsuk, Becker, O’Keeffe, Walls, Teahan, and Sherrill voted in favor of the motion. The Motion passed.

There was no public comment.

8. Fire Code TAC Absences [Discussion and possible action]

Per Council Bylaws, discussion and possible action to excuse any upcoming absences.

Council Member Becker requested to be excused from the meeting on October 30, 2026.

Supervisor made a motion to excuse Council Member Becker. Council Member Geary Seconded. Council Members Geary, Miller, Ingram, Bracamonte, Tsuk, O’Keeffe, Walls, Teahan, and Sherrill voted in favor of the motion. The Motion passed.

There was no public comment.

9. Future Meeting Agendas [Discussion and possible action]

Council members to discuss and approve items for future meeting agendas.

Supervisor Sherrill commented that important topics include emergent causes of fires, financing, and building standard compliance funding measures.

Council Member Geary inquired if Supervisor Sherrill would make an announcement regarding the Fire Commission meeting on October 14. Supervisor Sherrill responded that he was not planning on announcing a meeting of a different Commission.

Council Member Miller inquired if Captain O’Keeffe’s report would be on the next TAC meeting agenda. Supervisor Sherrill responded yes, and that it should be towards the beginning of the meeting.

There was no public comment.

10. General Public Comment

Members of the public may address the Council for up to three minutes on any matter within the Council’s jurisdiction that does not appear on the agenda. Speakers shall address their remarks to the Council as a whole and not to individual Council members. Council members are not to enter into debate or discussion with a speaker. The lack of a response by the Council does not necessarily constitute agreement with or support of statements made during public comment. The Council may reasonably limit public comment on an item to less than three minutes per speaker based on such factors as the nature of the item, the number of anticipated speakers for the item, and the anticipated duration of other agenda items.

A female speaker commented that fire alarm systems were replaced four years ago in her building’s elevators. This system would need to be replaced under the Ordinance.

A male speaker commented that affordability is a concern especially for seniors. He was also concerned about pollutants such as asbestos and lead.

A male speaker asked the Council to consider building age in relation to hardship.

A male speaker asked if the BLA report looked at all types of unions in terms of costs. He commented that unions would charge as much as possible for the longest time possible

A female speaker commented that she could not afford the cost of a sprinkler retrofit.

A male speaker commented that the BLA report had little validity in terms of costs.

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.