

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

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=32645

President Nakajo called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Commission President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commission Vice President	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Joe Alioto Veronese	Present
Chief of Department	Joanne Hayes-White	Present.
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jeanine Nicholson	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Andy Zanoft	EMS	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Tony Rivera	Support Services	
Michael Cochran	Homeland Security	
Khai Ali (left early)	Airport	
Joel Sato	Training Division	
Assistant Chiefs		
Nicol Juratovac	Division 2	
Bill Storti	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
Clement Yeh, M.D.	Medical Director	
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 Regular Meeting on February 27, 2019

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the above 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, JOANNE HAYES-WHITE

Report on current issues, activities and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting on February 27, 2019, including budget, academies, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Hayes-White reported on activities since the last meeting on February 27, 2019. She mentioned that Mayor Breed announced her selection of current Deputy Chief of Administration Jeanine Nicholson as her successor as Chief of Department. She added that many in the room were there to support Chief Nicholson and thank Mayor Breed for her selection and that she realizes that the Fire Commission was instrumental in the selection process and she thanked them and wished Chief Nicholson well and stated she will always be available if she needs anything from her. Regarding the budget, she stated that they submitted their budget with a cover letter signed by her and President Nakajo. Regarding academies, she stated the 125th academy is in their seventh week with 51 members and graduation is anticipated to be on June 14, 2019, and will be held at the Scottish Rite Temple. The 126th academy start date has not been set but it will be sometime in the fall with 54 members. She announced that Chief Sato and his staff will be hosting the state fire marshal tomorrow for re-accreditation of the training facility. She mentioned that on February 28, 2019, she, President Nakajo, Vice President Covington, Fire Marshal DeCossio and Captain Patt, attended a press event with Mayor Breed on ADUs, where the Mayor announced the progress being made collectively with other city agencies that are involved in getting those approved, have worked. Chief Hayes-White also attended the ribbon cutting for the new California Pacific Medical Center located at Van Ness and Geary, which was the former Cathedral Hill/Jack Tar Hotel. She touched on other notable events she attended during the reporting period, including two read aloud events at Sunset Elementary and Alamo Schools, the memorial service for public defender, Jeff Adachi, Mayor Breed's Women's History Month celebration and an AWSS Management Oversight Committee meeting to discuss where the funds will be anticipated to be placed for the ESER Bond. She mentioned that on March 5, 2019, the Board of Supervisors, specifically Supervisor Catherine Stefani and Supervisor Sandra Fewer acknowledged all of the agencies, including the SFFD that responded to the Geary and Parker fire where miraculously, there were no injuries or fatalities given the magnitude of the event and she added that it was very well attended and they appreciate the acknowledgment. She also met with Supervisor Mar on budget items, attended the Hotel Heroes event, the Irish flag raising event, the Commonwealth Club luncheon honoring International Women's day, and the historical photo event with Mayor Breed, also honoring International Women's Day. She announced that her executive assistant, Kelly, would be leaving the department after 16 years to take a job in the private sector and stated how proud she is of her and that it has been an honor to work with her and she wished her the best of luck. She acknowledged the passing of Chief Rivera's mother, Mrs. Guadalupe Rivera and asked that the meeting be adjourned in the memory of retired Firefighter Donald Wilson, Retired Battalion Chief Jack Bogue and retired Chief's Aid, David "Doc" Lavelle.

Commissioner Veronese thanked Chief Hayes-White for her service as Chief for 15 years and with the department for 29 amazing years. He also congratulated Chief Nicholson on her appointment as Chief of Department and that she will have tough shoes to fill as she's filling the shoes of a legend.

Vice President Covington echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Veronese and asked Chief Nicholson to say a few words. Chief Nicholson stated she felt a little speechless at the moment and that it is an incredible honor and responsibility and that she will continue to work hard and collaborate with all sorts of different stakeholders to move the Department forward.

Commissioner Cleaveland also congratulated Chief Nicholson and stated how pleased he was that she was unanimously selected by the commission as the top candidate that should be the next chief and he looks forward to working with her. He also mentioned that when he joined the Fire Commission in 2013, he was the first member of the LGBT and added it is with deep pleasure that Chief Nicholson is the first LGBT Fire Chief.

Commissioner Hardeman stated that it is a great time to be a Fire Commissioner and mentioned that different roads get you to the same place. He talked about the chief of the department hiring process and his experience of going through the selection and interview process and every person he had talked to had hoped the new chief would be somebody from within the Department. He added that the department is full of talented, brilliant, and wonderful people. He welcomed Chief Nicholson and was happy the Mayor made the tough decision and picked the right person.

President Nakajo congratulated Chief Nicholson on her appointment as Chief of the Department and he thanked Mayor Breed in terms of her process and her awesome responsibilities of her selection of Chief Nicholson. He also acknowledged the remarkable career that Chief Hayes-White has accomplished. He touched on the interview process and thanked each of the applicants for applying for the position and that they each brought out the best in terms of what they perceive as the most important concepts and elements of the Department. He let Chief Nicholson know that she has the commissions support and he looks forward to a smooth and orderly transition.

There was no public comment.

REPORT FROM OPERATIONS, DEPUTY CHIEF MARK GONZALES

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

Chief Gonzales reported on activities for the month of February. He mentioned that there were two greater alarms, a third alarm at Geary and Parker, where a PG & E pipeline exploded. There were no injuries, and Rex Hale was the incident commander and the fire was determined to be accidental. He described the incident in detail as well as the line of attack to put that fire out. The second greater alarm was a second alarm at 1230 Paige where companies did a great job under incident commander Brook Baker. He touched on other notable incidents, including the landslide at Fort Funston where one woman was buried and unsuccessfully recovered. Assistant Chief Nicol Juratovac was the incident commander. Chief Gonzales explained the rescue and recovery efforts and the challenges the members faced during these efforts and what a great job the members did. He touched on other notable incidents during the reporting period including a reported active shooter at the Orpheum Theater which turned out to be panic due to circumstances revolving around a possible medical emergency and there was a mass uncoordinated exiting that occurred and resulted in three injuries, none life-threatening, a motor vehicle accident Near Highway 101 and Alemany with nine victims and two fatalities, and a first alarm fire at 206 Blythedale Avenue. He read social media comments, touched on outreach efforts and showed a quick PowerPoint presentation which included photos of various events throughout the reporting period. He gave an EMS update, including the transport of

patients from the old CPMC to the new hospital on Van Ness and Geary. He stated his concern that the ambulances will now have to transport to the center of the city now that the old CPMC campuses are no longer operating as hospitals and that could affect some of the response times. He touched on the H-8's, Bureau of Fire Prevention, and the Airport Division.

Commissioner Veronese confirmed that with the opening of the new California Pacific Medical Center, two hospitals closed and he suggested that the city should better publicize the closing of those two hospitals as people are still showing up with emergencies and finding those doors to be closed and if the Department can help in spreading that message, the public will be better informed.

Vice President Covington thanked Chief Gonzales for explaining the high-profile incidents that happened some time ago and she thanked everyone who responded and coordinated those efforts. She mentioned that she was glad he explained all the reasons for the delay and steps. PG & E had to go through internally to make sure that things were safe because there's been a lot of criticism regarding that. She suggested that it would be helpful to put a panel of speakers together on how the Department responded to the Geary and Parker incident and invite the public and members of the Department to hear firsthand the planning, the operation, the cleanup and all of the aspects about this particular incident so that the firefighters who may have been off duty will have that information for future use.

President Nakajo asked for clarification on the numbers of H-8 that are needed and the overtime of suppression members working on the ambulances. Chief Gonzales explained that H-2 firefighter's volunteer for EMT shifts and get paid overtime. He added that the H-8 program, was designed to fill in gaps and the assignment office is holding them more accountable to sign up for the number of times required and make sure they work the shifts they signed up for. President Nakajo also confirmed that the H-8's wear an SFFD uniform but do not have badges. He acknowledged Chief Zanoft and Chief Cochrane for attending Jeff Adachi's memorial celebration. He also expressed his concerns with the closing of the two hospitals as well as emergency access to the new hospital. President Nakajo acknowledged Lt. Baxter for the great job he does as the PIO officer.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the H-8 requirements are that they must be a paramedic and licensed in California and certified in the county, and they prefer people to have experience as a paramedic, not right out of the academy.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked him for his excellent report and was glad to see that he thanked all the folks that responded to the major incidents outlined in his report.

5. RESOLUTION 2019-01 [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action regarding proposed Resolution 2019-01, recommending that the Mayor's Office create a task force focusing on the creation of a safer San Francisco Coastline for the enjoyment of its residents and visitors with the hopes of preventing an increase in cliff, sea and beach rescues.

Commissioner Veronese stated that since he has been on the commission, they have been talking about a dedicated marine unit and it's on the budget request every year and it needs to be addressed in a way that they can put resources towards the cliff and marine unit. He mentioned that on June 22, 2017, a day he will never forget, is when Victoria La Rocca fell from Lands End and died. He acknowledged his niece, Chiara Mia Veronese Lind who was a close friend of Victoria and was also the President of the Youth Commission at the time of the

incident. He mentioned that there is an increase in surf and cliff rescues that also put the members in danger and he thinks as a commission and a department, they have a responsibility to the public and members of the department to minimize those dangers and risks as much as possible and that is why he created the resolution.

Public Comment:

Ms. Veronese Lind stated she was in support of the resolution and confirmed that Tori La Rocca was one of her best friends and she will remember June 22, 2017, for the rest of her life, not only because she lost her best friend, but she lost a lot of confidence in the coastline and she urged the commission to support it.

Mike Coleman, retired firefighters stated he worked out at the cliff and surf rescue for 15 years and was always amazed that you were allowed on the beach with a dog if it was leashed, but above at Fort Funston, your dog can be off leash and a majority of their calls were dog rescues. He suggested adding a leash component to the resolution requiring dogs to be on a leash.

Chief Hayes-White thanked Chiara for commenting during public comment and applauded Commissioner Alioto Veronese for putting the resolution forward as the continuation of this important dialogue would serve this city very well. She is aware of the nine agencies that need to come together and that she is fully supportive of the idea. She referenced the good news on statistics, stating that they are moving in the right direction, that cliff rescues in 2016 were 22, in 2017 were 41 and in 2018 there were 30 rescues, and with surf rescues, in 2016 there were 41, 2017 there were 28 and in 2018 there were 26. She attributed the decrease in part because of the good work Lt. Baxter does through his efforts working collaboratively with the other agencies with aggressive public outreach, as well as some new signage that has been put up.

Commissioner Covington was pleased to be having the conversation and asked Chief Juratovac, who was the incident commander at the landslide incident to speak to the issue. Chief Juratovac stated she was in complete support of the resolution and described the incident in detail as she witnessed the efforts of the members that day. She explained that this incident was a high-risk/low-frequency event and the members of the San Francisco Fire Department, the men and women, did a phenomenal job. She added that she was not dispatched to the incident. She heard on the tactical channel that the incident was operationally going fairly well, but because this is a high-profile event, she wanted to put herself on the call to provide any support in the operation and once she arrived she immediately put Battalion 8 as operations while she placed herself as beach command. She named a safety officer, along with a rescue group supervisor in the illustrious rescue squad, Rescue 2, from Station 7 who was also there and when she arrived, the first question asked was "is there any possibility that victim was pulled out into the water?" and the conclusion was, she was not. She added that once they ruled that out, they continued their digging operations and unfortunately, they recognized the secondary tertiary collapses that was putting the members in harm's way and the entire operation was always something they had to maintain situational awareness on. She stated that it was about two hours into the incident where she called for a recap of the incident action plan with the stakeholders that were there and they set up unified command with National Park Service, along with the geologist, DPW, and everyone else that you can imagine to have responded and once they called for the second IAP, which was two hours and 45 minutes into the incident, is when they decided to switch from a rescue to a recovery effort. She added that they felt very confident about that, certainly because they didn't want to have any life hazard issues and the only life hazard issue at that point was the life and safety of the members. Vice

President Covington asked her to explain the pecking order of the involved agencies during high profile cases such as this. Chief Juratovac responded that the SFFD employs the Incident Command System immediately and because it was an allied agency operation where they have allied jurisdictions, they immediately set up a unified command and within that unified command, there is one incident commander and it's the Fire Department who employs that incident commander.

Lt. Baxter explained that they have increased their efforts to expand on an actual banner at Station 34 on high surf advisory days, they have pamphlets that they produce in house and distribute surf safety and coastal safety information to the public and local vendors to hand out. Commissioner Covington suggested getting this information to the high schools at the beginning of the school year, so they can educate the students of the dangers of the coastline and of surf dangers. She thanked Commissioner Veronese for putting the time in on this resolution, so it can move forward.

President Nakajo thanked commissioner Veronese for putting forth the resolution and knows that he's been talking about this issue for a period of time. He also thanked the members of the public that spoke and stated he fully supports the intention and spirit of the resolution and asked that the vote be put over to the next commission meeting in order to allow the Mayor and her staff time to digest the contents as well as making sure the nine agencies outlined in the resolution have knowledge of it and are supportive of it. He asked Chief Gonzales to make comments on any concerns he has on the operational end and Chief Gonzales stated he is supportive of the idea of the resolution and would suggest delving deeper into the stats and to wait on voting on the resolution. Commissioner Veronese reiterated his point of getting the resolution passed tonight, he was in GSD mode, "get stuff done" and that he is not willing to continue the vote. He added that it is an important issue the Fire Department is dealing with and if the Mayor's office does not feel the same way, at least the Fire Commission has done their job. Commissioner Cleveland confirmed that they did have discussions with the Mayor's staff many months ago about the resolution and supported adding the stars and added that they are just asking the mayor's office to initiate a task force to look into ways and means of reducing injuries and deaths along our coastline. Chief Hayes-White commented that she fully supports the resolution, but she would support a continuance as she has spoken to Mayor Breed's Chief of Staff, Sean Elsbernd and he confirmed he and his staff were not aware of the resolution.

Commissioner Veronese moved to approve Resolution 2019-01. Commissioner Cleveland Seconded. The motion passed 4 to 1. (Ayes: Hardeman, Cleveland, Covington, Veronese; No: Nakajo)

6. COMMISSION REPORT *[Discussion]*

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on February 27, 2019.

Commissioner Hardeman announced that he was at the function honoring Board President Norman Yee in the West Portal Neighborhood and he was able to talk to him and Supervisor Safai a little about the Department's budget. He also mentioned that his 96-year-old uncle, Commander Duke Hardeman recently passed away.

Commissioner Veronese stated that he attended the Peer Support Unit meeting and many stakeholders were there as well as members from the San Francisco Police Department's peer support group, which has over 300 peer support members that they rely on. He described the SFPD's Peer Support Unit and was in awe of what they are doing and he's looking at ways to

make the SFFD's Peer Support Unit better and he's hoping in the next five or six months, they'll have something really good to present to the Chief.

Vice President Covington stated that she attended the photo shoot at City Hall in honor of International Women's Day and the sisterhood turned out in full force. She added that the women members of the SFFD took up one whole half of the grand staircase and the other side was full of members from law enforcement. She also mentioned that she met the first woman of the SFFD Stress Unit, Dawn Rosales.

President Nakajo announced the assignments of Commissioners to the Board of Supervisors to advocate and support the budget process.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

- Fire Reserve Resolution
- Training Facility update
- Discipline Charter Amendments

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED *[Discussion]*

- Emails in support of Edna the Cat

There was no public comment.

9. ADJOURNMENT

President Nakajo adjourned the meeting in memory of retired Firefighter Donald Wilson, Retired Battalion Chief Jack Bogue and retired Chief's Aid, David "Doc" Lavelle at 11:23 a.m.