

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

## FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 8, 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=33069](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=33069)

President Nakajo called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

### 1. ROLL CALL

Commission President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commission Vice President	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Excused
Commissioner	Joe Alioto Veronese	Present
Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present.
Victor Wyrsh	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Sandy Tong	EMS	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Tony Rivera	Support Services	
Michael Cochran	Homeland Security	
Joel Sato	Training Division	
Assistant Chiefs		
Brook Baker	Division 2	
Denise Newman	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
Clement Yeh	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 April 24, 2019

Commissioner Hardeman Moved to approve the above meeting Minutes. Commissioner Veronese Seconded. Motion to approve Minutes was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

**4. PRESENTATION AND UPDATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT *[Discussion]***

Director Mary Ellen Carroll to present an update and status on the Department of Emergency Management.

President Nakajo welcomed Director Carroll.

Director Carroll explained that the Department of Emergency Management leads the planning preparedness, communication, response, and recovery for daily emergencies, large-scale city events, and major disasters. She added that their job is to manage the every day and not so everyday emergencies in the city. She gave examples of everyday emergencies which included police, fire, and medical emergencies for which they provide the 9-1-1 dispatch, basic traffic disruptions, and power outages. For not so everyday emergencies she gave examples such as earthquakes, tsunamis, human-made emergencies like terrorism or communicable diseases. She also mentioned that they have been experiencing extreme weather emergencies, such as last year during when they had hazardous air quality, extended air quality events due to the fires in different parts of the state. She added that one way they accomplish their mission is through emergency communications, and that the 9-1-1 dispatch operation is combined dispatch for Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services and last year their public safety dispatchers answered and responded to over 1.4 million calls and non-emergency calls. She explained the attached PowerPoint in detail: <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/DEM%20Overview%20Fire%20Commission%20050819.pdf>

Commissioner Veronese asked Director Carroll if she could explain the partnership between DEM and Uber. Director Carroll responded that they are currently piloting a program with RapidSOS which allows them to be able to utilize some of their technology and so far, it is going incredibly well. Commissioner Veronese stated that he has been in contact with Google about putting digital markers on Cliffs in response to the many cliff-rescues the department gets called out to and that he would be happy to share that information with DEM. There were brief discussions on wireless emergency alerts and the subscriber based alert system. Mr. Zamora added that the City has multiple layers of alert warning system to get information out to the public, such as the sirens, wireless emergency alerts, social media, the police and firefighters going out on a PS system and getting out in the community, or NERT going door to door.

Vice President Covington confirmed that out of the 1.4 million calls DEM receives, only 4 percent are fire related and Director Carroll stated that was because of the good work of the Fire Prevention team. Director Carroll confirmed that they have the ability to communicate with people in 170 different languages and that they contract with a company called Voyance. Vice President Covington also confirmed that DEM works closely with NERT, in different deployments, especially during care and shelter exercises, such as if folks are displaced from their home due to flooding or an earthquake, and they need a place to be sheltered.

President Nakajo thanked Director Carroll and Francis Zamora for their presentation. He confirmed that DEM has a total of 168 dispatchers currently with the goal of getting to 175, and that Director Carroll wants to make sure that they maintain those numbers of FTE as they look

at attrition and retirements. He confirmed that morale is improving for the dispatchers. They also discussed when to call 3-1-1 for non-emergencies, and how getting that message out to educate the public is very important. President Nakajo confirmed that DEM, Police, and Fire have a joint full-scale exercise preparing for fleet week, along with the Navy, Marines and some of the state reserve folks. They also exercise on a lower scale throughout the year on different parts of their functions that includes training and exercise plans.

Commissioner Hardeman stated he enjoys watching the Disaster Council meetings and caught the end of it the other day where they were discussing the problems with the auxiliary water supply in the western part of the city, and he heard some good ideas come out of that meeting. He asked what the relation between Uber and Lyft is with DEM. Director Carroll explained that they are working on an agreement that will provide rides post-emergencies, as well as Airbnb where they would provide housing, as they did during the north county fires.

There was no public comment.

**5. CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT [Discussion]**  
**REPORT FROM CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT, JEANINE NICHOLSON**

Report on current issues, activities and events within the Department since the Fire Commission meeting on April 24, 2019, including budget, academies, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Nicholson gave her first report as Chief of Department and it covered her first 48 hours in office. She welcomed Deputy Chief Victor Wyrsh and Deputy Chief Jose Velo and Assistant Deputy Chief Sandy Tong to the command staff and thanked former assistant Deputy Chief Zanoft for his assistance in the transition with Chief Tong. She mentioned that they have hit the ground running and she is looking forward to seeing what they can do together. One plan she has is to send out their schedule and go out to the field to open up a conversation with the members. She added that at the moment she is heavily focused on the budget. She touched on ESER 2020, by mentioning it passed through Capital Plan and is now at the Board of Supervisors. She stated that the MOU with the Port has been completed and would like to present that to the commission at the next meeting, on May 22, 2019. She mentioned that Chief Cochrane has been heavily involved with the DEM and with disaster preparedness as well as Chief Velo and Chief Wyrsh who are working on an internal Incident Management Team, which will need to be in place for when the big one hits. She announced that she met with the new head of Department of Public Health, Dr. Colfax, and that they are also on board with disaster planning and operations, because DPH will play a large role in patient care afterward, as well as having really good conversations with him about the Healthy Streets Operation Center and how they can partner to assist with the homeless and opioid crisis throughout the City. Chief Nicholson thanked everyone who attended her swearing-in ceremony and stated what a wonderful experience it was for herself and her family and that she is really heartened at all the support that she has gotten.

There was no public comment.

**REPORT FROM OPERATIONS, DEPUTY CHIEF VICTOR WYRSCH**

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

Chief Wyrsh thanked Chief Nicholson for bestowing the honor of appointing him Deputy Chief of Operations. He also thanked former Chief Hayes-White and the Commission, for a time in his career where he needed a lot of support and help, and they were there for him 100 percent. He also thanked Former Chief Gonzales for his help in the transition.

Chief Wyrsh stated during the reporting period, there were seven working fires in April, but because of their quick response and aggressive extinguishment, they kept them all to a single alarm. He added that there were no major injuries or incidents to report on those fires. He touched on the PIO outreach efforts through positive social media, and he reminded folks to text ALERTSF to 888777 and to visit the website at SFFIRE.ORG. His report is attached: [https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/ops%20report\\_1.pdf](https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/ops%20report_1.pdf)

Chief Wyrsh acknowledged and thanked Mayor Breed for her assistance in the construction of the flagship firehouse, Station 5, and that she had helped strengthen the resilience of the SFFD. He touched on upcoming events, including EMS Week, and a multi-agency ocean rescue drill. He mentioned that the Bureau of Fire Prevention continues to do a good job with community outreach and with continuous training with the high-rise fire drills. He added that Captain Attica Bowden at the Bureau of Fire Investigation has her backlog down to 43 open active reports.

Public Comment:

Sylvia talked about issues that were important to her.

Vice President Covington thanked Chief Wyrsh for his report and told him to keep up the good work.

Commission Veronese congratulated him on his new position.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Chief Wyrsh for his report and complimented him and Chief Velo on their smiles and appearance as being approachable. Commissioner Hardeman asked about the ocean drill that will be held on Friday. Chief Wyrsh stated that the ocean drill will take place at 10:00 a.m. at Ocean Beach. He also acknowledged the great work being done by Chief Cochrane at Homeland Security.

President Nakajo thanked Chief Wyrsh and stated he appreciated his presentation and comprehensive report. President Nakajo acknowledged Chief Wyrsh's proactive approach of putting out information and he thought the way he acknowledged various units underneath his command was very important. He also welcomed Chief Velo and Chief Tong to the Command Staff.

## **6. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]**

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on April 24, 2019.

Commissioner Hardeman acknowledged the great day he had at the ribbon cutting at Station 5 and commented on what a wonderful facility it is with all the nice amenities. He also

mentioned that he was at the Chief's swearing-in ceremony and congratulated Chief Nicholson and let her know she had the support of the Commission. He also stated he was at many parties for retiring Chief Hayes-White.

Vice President Covington echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Hardeman and repeated that Chief Nicholson has the support of the Commission and she was also very happy to be at the swearing-in ceremony. She mentioned that she was happy to hear that Chief Nicholson and her team will be visiting the fire stations and engaging members of the Department in conversation regarding the future of the Department. She encouraged anyone watching the meeting, to take a look at the swearing-in ceremony on SFGOVTV to get a good sense of Chief Nicholson's trademark sense of humor as well as her background. She mentioned that she was also at the ribbon cutting at Station 5 and thought it was a beautiful station and well worth the wait.

President Nakajo announced that he attended the beautiful swearing-in ceremony and was taken aback by the grand scale of the event and he really enjoyed her speech. He also mentioned that he attended Chief Hayes-White's retirement party at the Irish Cultural Center which was attended by some 700 supporters and friends. He added that deserving to Chief Hayes-White, but equally deserving to Chief Nicholson, was the smooth transition within the administrative ranks as she starts her new era as the Chief of the Department.

Public Comment. Sylvia spoke on matters that interested her.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

- MOU with the Port of San Francisco
- Update on Peer Support Unit
- Update on PPE's without cancer-causing chemicals in them

Public Comment. Sylvia spoke on matters that interested her.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED [Discussion]**

- Email dated 4/23/19 from Daniela Ponce

There was no public comment.

**9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CHANGES TO DISCIPLINE APPEALS PROCESS [Discussion and possible action]**

City Attorney, Brad Russi to explain the process and changes that will apply to the San Francisco Fire Department's Discipline Process.

This matter was continued to a future commission meeting.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 11**

Public comment on all matters pertaining to Item 11 below, including public comment on whether to hold Item 11(b) and (c) in closed session.

Public Comment: Sylvia spoke on matters important to her.

**11. POSSIBLE CLOSED SESSION REGARDING PERSONNEL MATTERS**

- a. **VOTE ON WHETHER TO CONDUCT ITEMS 11(b) and (c) IN CLOSED SESSION [Action]**

The Commission may hear Item 11(b) and (c) in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b) and Administrative Code Section 67.10(b).

*Commissioner Veronese made a motion to conduct item 11(b) and (c), in Closed Session. Commissioner Covington seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. (4-0; Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Veronese)*

*The Commission went into closed session at 10:46 p.m.*

*Also present was Deputy City Attorney, Lisa Berkowitz, and Deputy City Attorney, Brad Russi.*

**b. CASE NO. 2018-07 – COMMISSION TO CONSIDER AND POSSIBLY APPROVE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN MEMBER AND DEPARTMENT [Action item]**

On December 3, 2018, Chief of Department filed a verified complaint with the Commission alleging the member violated the following Rule:

Section 3927 – Attendance, Tardiness and Failure to Report

*Commissioner Hardeman Moved to approve the settlement. Vice President Covington Seconded. The motion was unanimous.*

**c. CASE NO. 2018-06: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL [Action item]**

The appeal is from a two-calendar day suspension for violation of the Rules and Regulations as follows:

Section 3928 – Unauthorized Leaves of Absence

*Vice President Covington Moved to deny the appeal and uphold the two-day suspension. Commissioner Veronese Seconded. The motion was unanimous.*

**12. REPORT ON ANY ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION [Discussion and possible action]** as specified in California Government Code Section 54957.1(a) and San Francisco Administrative Code section 67.12(b).

*The Commission reconvened in Open Session at 11:03 a.m. The Commission had nothing to report.*

**13. VOTE TO ELECT WHETHER TO DISCLOSE ANY OR ALL DISCUSSIONS HELD IN CLOSED SESSION**, as specified in San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.12(a). **[Action]**

*Vice President Covington Moved to not disclose discussions held in closed session. Commissioner Hardeman Seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. (4-0; Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Veronese)*

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

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