

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 12, 2015 – 4:00 p.m.**  
698 Second Street, Room 102

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The audio file has been uploaded onto the Fire Commission Website at.  
[http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=133&clip\\_id=22072](http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=133&clip_id=22072)

President Stephen Nakajo called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM and made a change to the order of the agenda items, moving item 6 to follow item 7.

**1. ROLL CALL**

Commission President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commission Vice President	Andrea Evans	Excused
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Commissioner	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Chief of Department	Joanne Hayes-White	Present
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief – Operations	
Ray Guzman	Deputy Chief – Administration	
Dale Carnes	Airport Division	
Ken Lombardi	Support Services	
Shane Francisco	Homeland Security	
Michie Wong	Prevention	
Raemona Williams	Division of Training	
Assistant Chiefs		
Robert Postel	Division 2	
Tom Siragusa	Division 3	
Staff		
Clement Yeh	EMS Medical Director	
Mark Corso	CFO	
Jesusa Bushong	HR	

**2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Michael Petrelis objected to the changing of the agenda. He stated he specifically came to the meeting for Item 6 and that the Commission should respect the public and the agenda should be kept as is. He stated that fire reports are not posted online and that means the dozen of people who were displaced at the end of January in the fatal fire at Mission and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, are going to have to file a request for the report. He added that he has been advocating since 2012 that the Department come into the modern age and post all fire reports on the website.

John Darmanin spoke as a private individual, but for the record stated he is the Captain of the Arson Task Force. He stated he has concerns about his staff. They go above and

beyond working very hard and are being forced to work overtime because there is not enough staff to maintain a proper level at the Arson Unit. He added that the Department has been very responsive, but they have fallen short of that is needed. He stated that they need help now.

Fred Walsh, retired captain of SFFD, now teaches the high-rise fire safety class with Tom Murray and Jim Cavallini. He spoke about all the good things that don't make the paper, such as the 1100 building engineers in the City that have taken the course. He said the building engineers are on top of their game because the three of them come from a suppression background. He acknowledged the Fire Marshal has been real helpful on making sure they're up to snuff and making sure their curriculum in the book is up to current standards. He concluded by thanking Chief Hayes-White and members of the Department for supporting them out in the field.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES *[Discussion and possible action]***

Discussion and possible action to approve meeting minutes.

- a. Minutes from the Special Meeting on January 20, 2015
- b. Minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 22, 2015

Commissioner Hardeman Moved to approve the Minutes. Commissioner Cleaveland Seconded. Motion to Adopt Minutes of Special Meeting on January 20, 2015 was unanimous, Motion to adopt Regular Meeting on January 22, 2015 as amended, was unanimous.

**4. PRESENTATION BY THE BUREAU OF EQUIPMENT**

Presentation by Captain Anthony Rivera on the Bureau of Equipment

The Power Point Presentation is attached: <http://sf-fire.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=3864>

Chief Hayes-White introduced Captain Tony Rivera. She noted that Captain Rivera has done a phenomenal job and he takes his job very seriously at the Bureau of Equipment. She added that she was happy to report that all 19 ambulances are here ahead of schedule and are on the street because of the good work of Chief Lombardi, Captain Rivera and his crew.

President Nakajo added that the request to have Captain Rivera come from the Bureau of Equipment is probably the first time they have presented and he thinks it's really important for the Commissioners and the Department to understand the important nature and contributions of the Bureau of Equipment, as well as Central Shops.

Captain Rivera stated he's been with the Department for 23 years, and spent most of his career in the field working in the district stations and parts of the Tenderloin and North Beach areas. He started at the Bureau of Equipment approximately a year and a half ago, and one of his main concerns was to try and streamline the BOE, which affects every firefighter in the Department and make the BOE more efficient and user friendly. He went on to describe the Department organizational chart. He stated that he manages over 300 apparatus. They also do research and development of new equipment that they test within the Department. He went on to explain in detail the responsibilities and duties

required by the BOE. He concluded by stating with new technology and innovations, they have implemented certain adjustments to reduce the size of the vehicles and they will continue to research ways to reduce the vehicles profile.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Captain Rivera for his presentation and thought it was very good and something he thought we all need to be aware of. He asked Captain Rivera what the Department's equipment needs are. Captain Rivera stated he would like an additional mobile mechanic and an officer manager. Commissioner Cleaveland asked for clarification on the SAFE boat and Captain Rivera explained it's the brand name and is part of the rescue fleet and is the larger boat of the fleet.

Vice President Evans thanked Captain Rivera for his presentation. She added that she could tell that he takes a lot of pride in his work and that he has obviously gone to great lengths to get savings and extra equipment for the department.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Captain Rivera for his innovative report.

Commissioner Covington thanked Captain Rivera and stated that she thought his presentation was very comprehensive and wanted him to pass on her gratitude and compliments to the people who work with him and acknowledged how he has maximized the Department's dollars. There was discussion on the LED remote lighting for the Pelican.

President Nakajo thanked Captain Rivera and acknowledged how serious he takes his position and how much pride he shows. They touched on the BOE facility at 2501 25th Street, and Captain Rivera invited the Commissioners to visit the facility.

Public Comment:

Michael Petrelis thought it was a great report. He commented that the tax payers that are not at the meeting are not seeing this report because the meeting is not televised. He mentioned that he loved knowing the reusable ambulance body is kept and the back end only gets changed. He also has concerns about the decibel level and duration of sirens.

Shon Buford stated he thought it was a great presentation. He added that there is good dialogue between Captain Rivera and the station captains and a lot of officers are happy he's the Captain of BOE. He also thanked Support Services for allowing him to be able to be the officer he is down at BOE.

**5. OPERATING BUDGET-FISCAL YEARS 2015-2016/2016-2017 [Discussion and possible action]**

Discussion and possible action to adopt the Fire Department's Operating Budget for Fiscal Years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

Chief Hayes-White introduced CFO Mark Corso and acknowledged his diligence and professionalism through the budget process. She reminded the Commission that this is the first year in a number of years that the Department has not been asked to reduce their operating budget.

Mark Corso gave an update on the Department's budget proposal. Attached is the Presentation and supporting documents: <http://sf-fire.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=3874>  
<http://sf-fire.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=3873>  
<http://sf-fire.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=3872>

He gave a brief overview of the time frame related to the budget, and added that February 23, 2015 is the deadline for city departments to submit their budgets to the Mayor's office. He added that the total budget for 2015-2016 is 350 million dollars. He gave an overview of the major changes. He stated that the Mayor's public safety hiring plan is currently in effect and incorporated in the current budget is an August H-2 firefighter academy in both years and it's anticipated to continue into the 2020 fiscal year. In addition, as part of the Mayor's five-year financial plan that was released, there was approval for an additional second academy class for fiscal year 2016-2017. Also, the 2015-2016 budget annualizes the impacts to the staffing model of Fire Station 4, which is scheduled to open in March, which adds nine daily bodies working per day in a 24-hour capacity. He stated that the Mayor announced last week that an academy class of approximately 40 members will begin most likely in March. He touched upon the budget and how it incorporates additional needs of other divisions in the Department, including Investigations, Fire Prevention, IT, training, planning, Bureau of Equipment, Finance and other enhancements outlined in his presentation. He went on to explain the small fee increases required for cost recovery. He touched upon the recruitment and finance and he'll be requesting two additional uniformed personnel to assist with recruitment efforts, similar to what the Police Department has done with uniformed presence as well as assistance with contracts and procurement.

Commissioner Cleaveland thanked Mr. Corso for his very comprehensive budget presentation. He inquired regarding the enhancements for Homeland Security. Mr. Corso answered that they're looking to get funding from the Federal Government that could possibly back fill some of the costs. Commissioner Cleaveland liked the idea of having uniformed firefighters doing the recruitment for future recruits. He added that we need to make sure we have a very robust and healthy EMS division. He asked what an H-43 Section Chief does. Mr. Corso stated they are involved with supervising all aspects of Station 49, the day to day operations.

Vice President Evans thanked Mr. Corso and was heartened to see some additional requests for the Finance Department, as it's too much work for one person. She followed up on clarification on fees that the Department charges for planning and permits, can it only be used to support the Bureau of Fire Prevention? Mr. Corso explained that in theory, even though it's in the overall general fund budget, the Bureau of Fire Prevention is essentially an enterprise department where it essentially funds itself. She asked Mr. Corso if he was asking the Commission to approve the base budget including the enhancements or just the 2015-2016 budget. Mr. Corso answered that for sure it would be the request to approve the base budget and that would satisfy the February 23<sup>rd</sup> requirement, and if the Commission is in full support he can include the enhancements as well. Vice President Evans would support submitting the enhancements as well; she does not feel comfortable submitting just the base budget without the enhancements. Chief Hayes-White agreed. Vice President Evans touched on the community peer medicine that was going to be incorporated into one of the enhancement categories, and Mr. Corso

informed her that they are still trying to figure out whether it will be out of DPH's budget or the Fire Department's budget, but it's something the Mayor's office is absolutely interested and committed to pursuing. She was also advocating for the request for additional investigators, and that is another reason why Vice President Evans thinks it's good to the full budget request made public as it give an opportunity to others like the police and the DA's office who also benefit from these positions to advocate with us.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Mr. Corso and mentioned that the work he does fascinates him. He asked about the budget item for the 3 Airport Battalion Chiefs, if they would be starting in the fall and Mr. Corso stated that was his understanding.

Commissioner Covington thanked Mr. Corso and asked for some prioritization on the list of enhancements. She hoped it would be a concerted effort. Commissioner Covington also touched on the need to increase fees as soon as possible in accordance with DBI and to pass those costs on to the end user. Mr. Corso explained the formula for increasing fees.

President Nakajo thanked Mr. Corso and asked for clarification on what he wanted approved. Mr. Corso explained the options.

Commissioner Covington moved to approve the budget. Commissioner Cleaveland Seconded. Motion to approve the budget with enhancements as presented was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

## **6. DISCUSSION ON OPTIONS FOR BUDGETING FOR TELEVISIONING FUTURE FIRE COMMISSION MEETINGS: (Discussion)**

Commissioner Cleaveland started the discussion by stating he was surprised that the meetings are not televised. He thinks the Fire Commission is one of the more important Commissions in the City. He feels that we should be an open government and the Commission meetings should be as widely available to the public as possible. He recommends that it's made a priority, for the installation of hardware that's necessary in the current Commission room so the meetings can be televised. He added that the cost should be added to the budget being submitted to the Mayor's office.

Vice President Evans stated she thinks the meetings are more accessible to members of the public at City Hall, particularly on game days when it's just a challenge to get to the current venue.

President Nakajo gave a brief history of his early days as a Commissioner and the different locations meetings were held. He brought up the fact that currently, SFGOV TV does not have many date and time slots available for live airing. He stated that in the 20 years that he's been a Fire Commissioner, they have tried to improve the minutes to reflect what happens at the meetings and post them online. And most recently, the secretary has been posting the audio recordings on the Commission Website in the spirit of transparency. He added that he is all for transparency, but he needs to be convinced as to time, place, locality and if you're going to be streamed with a tape delay, that isn't live. He stated that his vision is more on cost effect within the building and more

importantly, if emergencies come up, he knows that in this facility we can go upstairs to the second floor where the Department Operations Center is and deal with the emergency immediately.

Commissioner Covington stated when she looks at the cost to outfit the Fire Commission room with hardware, the figure is about \$203,000.00. She stated that when presentations are being done at the table, people can't really see them as their backs are to the audience and the speaker doesn't have a microphone. She added that with television equipment you have an incredible amount of built in obsolescence and the figure is not forever and it's not being shared by other departments. Whereas a move to City Hall, the costs are shared between all of the departments and we don't have to worry about mounting an effort to always have the state of the art equipment here. She added that it would be better at City Hall if we are serious about getting information out to the public, even if it's on tape delay because people can watch it. Commission Covington thinks that more citizens would be advocating for the Department and our budget if they were privy to the information that is presented at the meetings. She also stated that it's easier for the public to park in the garage at City Hall and there is no fluctuation in the price as there is around Fire Headquarters. She suggested that perhaps not all of the Command Staff and senior staff needs to be in attendance, and it's something to think about. She also commented that it's not feasible to come into headquarters with the option of setting up to shoot remotely, putting a TV studio in HQ's would be very challenging, and added that the lights would be an issue.

Chief Lombardi stated he thought Commissioner Covington brought up some very valid points and is absolutely correct. He continued that you have never walked into a TV studio with a ceiling this low. If you sat there for three hours you would be blinded by the end of tonight's meeting. It's not feasible to come in here with a package like they're talking about and shoot it remotely. You can do that day in and day out, but the lights would be an issue. He agreed with a lot of the points made by Commissioner Covington. He added we work hard for these budgets, and the people only read about this, some of the negative things in the paper. They don't hear what we're going through because it's not getting out into the public. Those are very valid points. But putting a TV studio in here would be very challenging. Not that it couldn't be done, it would be challenging, and you would be redoing it in five years. Chief Lombardi added that it would be a cost thing, whereas at City Hall they're going to update that technology every year and you're not going to feel that cost. You're only going to feel the operators cost.

Commissioner Cleaveland added that he was happy to hear the comments from his fellow commissioners on the viability and their interest in moving the meetings to City Hall because that is his first choice.

Commissioner Hardeman expressed his concern of having the command staff near the Operations Center. If it is decided to move to City Hall, he thinks the time should be 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. for staffs' convenience. He suggested that the Commissioners should talk to staff and get their opinions on moving to City Hall.

It was suggested that Mark Corso add the more expensive option to the budget and once approved, further discussion and possible decisions can be made.

Public Comment:

Michael Petrelis thanked Ken for bringing this matter up and for Francee for advocating for moving these meetings to City Hall. He touched upon other commissions that have moved their meetings to City Hall. He talked about the benefits of moving to City Hall and they should do what members of the public desire.

**7. CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT [Discussion]**

**REPORT FROM CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT**

Report on current issues, activities and events within the Department, including Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget.

Chief Hayes-White acknowledged that it has been a very busy operational period. She touched on the fourth alarm at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Mission, the second alarm on Hyde Street and the fourth alarm on McAllister. She acknowledged the great work of the incident commander, Chief Postel and members both from the command staff and particularly members from the field did an excellent job in combating those fires. She confirmed that there was one fatality associated with the fourth alarm on Mission Street and one fatality at a single alarm fire at 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Rivera Street. She also touched on the hard work they have been doing on preparing the budget. She acknowledged Commissioner Cleaveland and his hard work on the budget. She stated that she appreciates the work of the volunteers rolling up their sleeves, trying to come up with some of the solutions and learning a lot about the budget process. It has been very valuable.

She stated she held two Department update meetings that were not well attended, but she thinks those that did attend got a lot of information because they had good access to her and her command staff.

She noted that all 19 new ambulances are on the street, which is ahead of schedule. She stated that she got good news during the last operational period that not only are they going to be getting 40 qualified candidates for the H-3 Level 1 EMT's, instead of 20, and the goal is to have that academy class starting around March 23<sup>rd</sup>. She touched on the August H-2 academy class that will hopefully have 54 recruits attend.

She acknowledged member Jason Cortez, receiving an award for Paramedic of the Year. He and his partner, Tim Finch, literally saved the life of a three-year old boy who was in respiratory distress.

She thanked the Commission for recently adopting the Vision Zero Resolution and touched on her recent trip to Washington D.C.

**REPORT FROM OPERATIONS**

Report on overall field operations, the Bureau of Fire Prevention & Investigation, Airport Division, Emergency Medical Services and the Division of Emergency Communications,

Chief Gonzalez described the recent fires at Mission and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, the Hyde Street fire and the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue fire. He commended the members of the Department and noted they did a very good job, along with Chief Burke and Chief Postel.

He touched on the developments of the hiring of the H-8 per diems and the H-3 Level 1's.

He mentioned some upcoming activities they are planning for, such as the President of United States visit to SF and next year's super bowl.

He mentioned that he and Chief Wong have been working closely with Supervisor Campos and Supervisor Kim related to the people that were displaced from the previously mentioned fires.

He touched on the online inspection program and how they're looking to be more technology friendly, and looking at modeling what the Department of Building Inspection has.

Commissioner Cleaveland asked what the cost of ambulance transport is. Mr. Corso answered it is currently \$1,859.00.

Commissioner Hardeman complimented the members at the above-mentioned fires. They all did a great job, including Chief Postel. Chief Hayes-White added that it means a lot to the members when they see the Commissioners at fires and acknowledged that this Commission is very active and they are appreciated.

Vice President Evans also acknowledged the great work of the members at the recent fires and how trained and professional everyone is and how the job gets done as effectively as it gets done. She touched upon the upcoming investigator exam and getting additional support in the meantime. Chief Hayes-White said she would look into that. Vice President Evans asked if Chief Carnes could update the Commission on the FAA annual inspection, and what has happened since the Asiana accident in regards to recommendations that have been implemented and where things stand.

Commissioner Covington also echoed the sentiments of her fellow commissioners regarding the incredible work that the members of the Department do. She also wanted to acknowledge the young man who put together the funding effort for the people who were displaced from the Mission Street fire and would like to invite him to be honored at a future Commission meeting.

Public Comment:

Michael Petrelis, expressed his dismay on moving item 6 following item 7 as well as taking so much time praising the members of the Fire Department. He asked for a little respect in terms of sticking to point of the agenda. He stated he thinks the Commissioners should have time limits of 3 minutes on each item.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for the February 26, 2015 regular meeting.

- Election of Officers

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

President Nakajo adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30 PM

