

Minutes of Fire Commission Special Meeting/Retreat Tuesday, September 25, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

South Beach Harbor, Pier 40 A, The Embarcadero, First Floor Conference Room ■ San Francisco ■ California
■ 94102

President Cleaveland called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Item No.

1. ROLL CALL

President	Ken Cleaveland
Vice President	Stephen A. Nakajo
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman
Commissioner	Francee Covington
Commissioner	Joe Alioto Veronese
Chief of Department	Joanne Hayes-White
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief – Operations
Jeanine Nicholson	Deputy Chief --Administration
Dan De Cossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance
Olivia Scanlon	Communications and Outreach
Dr. Julianna Hynes	Meeting Facilitator

2. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS [Discussion]

President Cleaveland to provide welcoming and opening remarks.

President Cleaveland welcomed the attendees and stated that this meeting is going to be a unique opportunity for the commission to look to the future by looking at some of the things that have recently taken place with the Mayor's Transition Committees and their recommendations and to compare the things that the commission has been doing and providing an opportunity to be the most effective commission possible. He introduced Dr. Julianna Hynes, who is an executive coach and she gave an overview of her credential and qualifications.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. ICEBREAKER [Discussion]

Facilitator Julianna Hynes asked each of the commissioners to state one thing about themselves that the no one else may not know about. Commissioner Veronese responded that he owns a vineyard in Sonoma. Commissioner Covington responded that she started

writing in high school and she is finishing up her collection of short stories that will hopefully be published next year. President Cleaveland stated that he was a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 70's in India working on irrigation projects in central India. VPN answered that he used to be an altar boy and always took the first mass because he always got a breakfast out of it. Commissioner Hardeman stated that he wanted to be a professional football player, but that never happened.

5. OVERVIEW OF MAYOR'S POLICY SUMMIT *[Discussion]*

VPN gave an overview of the Public Safety Team he was on. He said he filled out a survey and was put on the Public Safety Team with 23 other members, three from the Fire Department, himself, Retired Chief Jeff Columbini and Battalion Chief/Local 798 President Tom O'Connor. He mentioned that after the initial meeting there was an internal Fire Department meeting with members of the Department, including Mark Corso, Chief Nicholson, Chief Postel, Jeff Columbini, Chief Rivera and he conferenced in on the phone and noted that it was a free-flowing meeting with identifying issues and priorities and his biggest concern was how they were going to try to put it together in some kind of format. Tom O'Connor added that they had the fortunate advantage that they don't have all the difficulties that the Police Department has so a lot of the phone calls on the PD side generated into community and the police officers find out what the public safety should look like in the community, whereas on the fireside, they were fortunate enough to have the backing of the community trying to present the vision of the Department going forward and what sort of change do they want and how to implement that change that is best for the Fire Department. He continued by stating that they broke it down into five categories; Organization of Administrations; Operational changes; financial changes; facilities and equipment; and legislative. He added that one of the most important things they came to recognize is that the organizational structure of the SFFD has been the same for roughly 50 years and in that period of time the Department has absorbed all the EMS responsibilities, fire prevention and permitting workloads. He compared the structure of the LAFD to the structure of the SFFD. He stated he thinks going forward, the best thing for the SFFD is to try and expand the administrative capabilities so they can divide up the workload into adequate and digestible chunks of work so that each person in their respective department can advance the interest of the Fire Department and express that to the decision makers so not always trying to catch up and explain that they have 24-year-old fire engines and red tagged firehouses. He added that he thinks the Department needs to get ahead of all the different issues and make sure that Room 200, the Board of Supervisors, Capital Planning, and everybody involved in governance understands what the Fire Department needs to do to address the needs of San Francisco as the city has changed dramatically in just the last 10 years. He concluded by stating the Department seems to be chasing change instead of being ahead of change and that was the brunt of the discussions at the summit meetings and that's how they came up with the rudimentary thumbnail sketch that was submitted in response. President Cleaveland thought it was a very worthy conversation to expand the administrative staff, noting the budgetary costs of course. There was robust discussion pertaining to restoring the incident support specialist and the role of that position. Battalion Chief Mark Hayes spoke in support of having more experienced administrative staff such as captains to support the workload of the current command structure. Chief Gonzales gave his opinion on

having Incident Support Specialist and is in support of restoring them. Commissioner Covington confirmed that in order to restore them, City Hall needs to fund the positions and he has suggested bifurcating the way the Department gets funding and added that changing the funding process is the only way, in his opinion, to fix things in the Department so they can thrive as opposed to survive. President Nakajo confirmed that there was a lot on the table for these discussions, as there always has been and the budget always comes into play and suggested figuring out what the priority is in terms of operations and where and how to get there.

6. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SAFETY/SFFD POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE (Discussion)

Dr. Hynes thought the above discussion was very forward thinking and engaging and stated they needed to put into some type of order and make a list of priorities to each of the below categories. Commissioner Veronese added that he thinks what everyone wants is a state of the art Department. He commented on ways of how to get there and he looks forward to a constructive conversation in regards to these issues. Chief Hayes-White made it clear that her response was a direct request from the Mayor's office, which had seven specific bullet points specifically relating to the Fire Department. She added that she certainly thinks they can always do better, the difficulty is the reality versus utopia. Without funding, and she agrees that they certainly need more resources and where they fall short is during the budget process which she competes for very vigorously. She mentioned that she provided that context and a little balance, recognizing that there's certainly a lot of things they would like to see in place and priorities and that her number one priority at this point is the identification of a new training facility.

a. Organization and Administration.

Some of the ideas and comments that came out of this topic were:

- Succession plan, use lieutenants, captains, chief officers, in particular positions, administrative positions.
- Professional educational opportunities
- Limited amount of resources
- Top-down reorganization
- Health and Safety
- Planning and research chief
- Special operations chief

b. Operational.

- Restore Incident Support Specialist
 - Reinstate incrementally, start with the busiest battalion
- 24/7 staffed Marine Unit
 - Grant writer to fund unit and alleviate the burden on the general fund
- Increase EMS staffing
 - Offshore some of the budget to the new Homeless Department, including costs of QRV's

On point Tom O'Connor made to adjust the broader concern in the room is that we're poised right now at a very unique time in San Francisco history where we have a budgetary largesse, a Mayor who is perhaps one of the most pro Fire Mayors in decades and he thinks now is the time to act. He mentioned that they also have a Strategic Planning document which lays out the blueprint for the future. He added that he thinks they are poised in every way, shape, and form to go to the decision makers and say, "Look, this is what we need for San Francisco at this point in time right now."

Adrian Sims, an Incident Support Specialist, supports bringing back the position of an Incident Support Specialist and added that education and educating the Board of Supervisor is key in any ask.

c. Financial.

- Approval and funding for a grant writer
- Specific contracts
 - Exemptions on procurements
- SFFD in-house repair staff
 - Sell the story to the Mayor's office
 - Cost savings for the City
- Exemptions on procurement

d. Facilities and Equipment.

- Secure location for a modern training facility
 - 8 acres needed
- Funding for Facility Maintenance
 - Provide proper indoor storage for historic vehicles & equipment
 - Fundraisers
 - ESER Bonds
- Institutionalize a vehicle replacement policy
- Allow for adequate funding from budgets for facility maintenance

e. Legislative

- Create a seat for public safety representation on the Capital Planning Committee
 - Send a letter from Commission to Mayor asking for a seat on the Committee
 - Explore ways to better integrate various city departments for increased efficiency and interoperability
 - Revise processes for OCA for public safety
 - Allow limited exceptions to purchasing rules to accommodate the 24/7/365 needs

Commissioner Cleaveland stated that we need to be a united front, the Commission, Local 798 and the Administration when discussing these issues with the Board of Supervisors and

Mayor's office with the same priorities so that they get the message loudly and clearly. Chief Gonzales suggested asking the San Francisco Fire Firefighters Chief Association to should also be invited to the table on this issue.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment on items 5 through 6 (e), above.

There was no public comment.

LUNCH BREAK

A lunch break was taken at 12:08 and ended at 12:40

8. OVERVIEW OF HOUSING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, "SOLVING SAN FRANCISCO'S HOUSING CRISIS" [Discussion]

Commissioner Covington stated that an e-mail went out to the various people asking them to join the transition team for the area of interest and the categories were Arts and Tourism; Children, Youth, Seniors & Family; Education; Equality and Equity Committee; Healthcare (mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS); Transportation; Women's issues; Homelessness and clean streets, Housing; Immigration; Public safety; and Small business and jobs. She stated that she has had for quite some time, a great interest in housing and how housing is developed in the city. She mentioned that they had two meetings which were attended by developers, housing advocates, and the YIMBY folks, along with people who were architects and a wide variety of housing folds. She added that what came out of those meetings is the document entitled Solving San Francisco's Housing Crisis. She talked about her interest in getting housing more quickly because the city is growing so quickly and in that committee, people continued to say if we had the plans ready today, it would take five to eight years for a building to be created and she thought with that kind of thinking, there is going to be a greater crisis than we have now. She touched on reusing recycling shipping containers, modular housing, and additional in-law units, which are now called auxiliary dwelling units. Chief DeCossio gave an update since the Mayor's initiative to decrease the backlog of the 900 applications for ADU's. He described the process and the different departments that are involved in the process and the goal of the Mayor's initiative. He confirmed that the new "information sheet" that they put together have been very helpful to the applicants and have quickened the process and that the fee schedule has not changed, it based on the dollar value of the project and the Building Department collects those fee for the SFFD. Chief DeCossio stated that in his opinion, the enhancements they have come up with are actually making the buildings safer after the fact, then they were before. There was additional discussion about additional positions through work orders and a joint meeting with the Building Inspection Commission.

Mark Hayes suggested getting information out to the field about the ADU's

Fire Marshal DeCossio supports appointments for a one-stop shop for the ADU permit process as well as an electronic review process for larger projects.

President Cleaveland explained that the Accela program is a multi-million dollar software package that the Building Department has been implementing for years and is a permit tracking system.

It was mentioned that there should not be any type 4 heavy timber construction in San Francisco.

They discussed an extension to proposition F which would give the department monies to cover a mandate that they have to maintain all the firehouses, have fully equipped fleet and be fully staffed.

Creative Use of Air- Rights

Commissioner Covington stated that some time ago, she had suggested to Mayor Lee that she thought every new firehouse should have housing above for beginning firefighters and for teachers. There was a discussion on how building housing on top of firehouses could raise money to pay for the department's fleet and things of that sort, but actually, the money would have to go into the general fund. Many ideas were shared on how the Department could supply air rights and the benefits to the department.

Commissioner Veronese suggested that the use of air-rights in firehouses the Fire Department should be thinking about their own people.

Chief Gonzales suggested also adding commercial space and one would be for a revenue stream and one would be for the community.

Olivia Scanlon mentioned that everyone needs to be on the same page as it relates to the messaging about Fire getting in at the very beginning of the process, they need to be at the table from the get-go.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:51 p.m.