

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020 – 5:10 p.m.
This meeting was held remotely on WebEx**

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=36697

President Covington called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

Commission President	Francee Covington	Present
Commission Vice President	Katherine Feinstein	Present
Commissioner	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commissioner	Tony Rodriguez	Present
Chief of Department	Jeanine Nicholson	Present
Victor Wyrsh	Deputy Chief -- Operations	
Jose Velo	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Dawn DeWitt	Support Services	
Joel Soto	Training Division	
Mark Johnson	Airport Division	
Dan DeCossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Erica Arteseros	Homeland Security	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
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 September 9, 2020.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Rodriguez Seconded. The motion was unanimous. There was no public comment.

There was no public comment.

4. 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 September 9, 2020, including budget, academies, special events, communications, and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Nicholson reported on activities since the last meeting on September 9, 2020. She stated that concerning COVID, the department has had 28 COVID positives since the pandemic began and not all of them have had symptoms, with currently seven of those are still off work or in quarantine, much of it due to the wildland fire deployments. She announced that they are working on a FEMA grant for 13.7 million dollars that will fund an academy class of 35 people and pay for their salaries for three years. This will also reduce overtime. She thanked Mark Corso and his team for working on this. She also mentioned the Department will be receiving a grant for over \$600,000 for three new mini pumpers, which are the small vehicles that they use to put out grass fires.

She acknowledged Chief De Cossio who has been working hard on shared space platforms, outside dining, and parklets as well as his involvement in extensive meetings on getting businesses open as safely as possible. She acknowledged the EMS 6 teams for the incredible work they are doing in terms of getting people into the treatment programs that they need. She added that they will also be ramping up a Critical Response Team in the next month. She announced that Chief Tong was off this week and that Chief Tangherlini is in the house if anyone has any questions. She welcomed Assistant Deputy Chief of Homeland Security, Erica Arteseros who was attending her first commission meeting as Homeland Security Chief. Chief Arteseros stated that she was honored to be selected for the position and she will work hard at Homeland Security.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked Chief Nicholson for her report and congratulated Captain Arteseros on her appointment as Chief of Homeland Security. He also congratulated Mark Corso and his team for the work they are doing in securing grants.

Commissioner Rodrigues also gave a shout-out to the grant writers and mentioned that he has two daughters that are nurses and how they have faced shortages of PPE which brings morale down so he is glad to see the work Mr. Corso and his team are doing for the Department.

Commissioner Cleaveland also added his commendation to Mark Corso and his team for securing the grants. He confirmed that FEMA is also funding the \$600,000.00 mini pumper grant. He congratulated Captain Erica Arteseros on her new deputy chief status of Homeland Security. He confirmed that the policy changes that were made to wildfire deployments to prevent COVID were before deployment, temperatures are checked and questionnaires filled out and making sure everyone had the proper PPE while riding in the apparatus going to the incidents and during deployment they make sure that not only do they adhere to the Cal Fire or Forest Service policies but that they adhere to our policies. Chief Velo added that post-deployment, everyone that gets back from deployment gets tested regardless of the exposure and if members are exposed or they get in direct contact of exposure, they get quarantined for five days and require two negative tests before returning to work. Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that the difference between EMS 6 and Critical Response Team is that EMS 6 deals

with the frequent users of the 9-1-1 system and they work one on one with those callers to get them into services and help them get the stability they need, whereas Critical Response Team will be a partnership with the Department of Public Health with an advanced healthcare practitioner, and a peer support person, someone who has been through homelessness, addiction or the like and they will be responding to many of the calls that typically police were sent to and where it's not a law enforcement issue. He also confirmed that there was a two million dollar line item in the budget for this program, however, it's the intent that in conjunction with the work of DPH, this program and the related expansion of it will be funded by some of the Prop C revenues that was recently approved. They anticipate having the first CRT up and running by December 2020.

Vice President Feinstein welcomed Chief Arteseros and stated she has heard great things about her and knows she will do a phenomenal job and looks forward to meeting her in person. She also commended Mark Corso and his team for the important money they have secured. She confirmed that Chief De Cossio has a team in place to address the safety concerns of the numerous parklets that are being installed as the city begins to reopen the economy in a safe way following all fire codes. She expressed her concerns about the Critical Response Team responding to situations that they may not be equipped to handle. Chief Tangherlini explained that it's a concern for the Department as well and they are going to take several approaches to it, during the ramp-up phase they will be looking at having the crisis response team still co-responding with police. He added that there is data and experience that there is a significant amount of the 20,000 calls they receive where crews will not face any danger and as the program ramps up, they will be able to gather a lot of data about which ones require an absolute co-response from the police and which ones are safe without them.

President Covington expressed her excitement about the grants, especially the one that allows for a new academy class, as it will reduce the amount of potential overtime without that class. She gave kudos to everyone who worked on the grants and all the follow-up. She welcomed Deputy Chief Arteseros and trounced on all the good work she has done through NERT. She wished Chief Cochrane a speedy recovery with his surgery. She confirmed with Chief De Cossio that the move to the one-stop-shop at 49 South Van Ness is going well and they are changing the way intake and processing the applications are handled so the Fire Department has control of fire only applications, and that should help speed things up. She welcomed Chief Tangherlini and confirmed that the Critical Response Team will eventually consist of six teams with the first rolling out in December and the remaining 5 in March of 2021.

There was no public comment.

REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATION, DEPUTY CHIEF JOSE VELO

Report on the Administrative Divisions, Fleet and Facility status and updates, Finance, Support Services, and Training within the Department.

Chief Velo presented his report for August. Highlights of his report included the mutual aid response where 37 members are deployed, 36 at the Creek Fire along with eight engines and four leaders, and one member deployed to the North Complex Fire. He added that crews have been rotated multiple times over the past month. He reported that they just launched a new single resource deployment pilot program where they run an incident management team and

camp and it prepares and trains the team management members through the state which allows the department to get reimbursed for their salaries when they're being deployed. It also allows when there is a big event, to tap into them to use as a resource for the Department's own Incident Management Team. He stated that New Jersey Forest Service sent 10 firefighters, three fire apparatus and a Chief's vehicle arrived at SFO to help California in their time of need with the wildfires. He acknowledged Chief Johnson for his support in this effort. He provided an update on training where they are preparing for an academy class given the grant funds that were announced. He touched on drone training, the addition of 2 new K-9s to the Department, Jax and Cassie along with their handlers Firefighter Lee and Firefighter Sandigo; NERT; Peer Support Unit, with 40 members and 20 of those members who became CIRT members; the Physician's Office, the Investigative Services Bureau; Research, Planning and Assignment Office, and Support Services where all the new Chief's vehicles have been delivered and they have been awarded a rescue boat, bid on the hose tenders and EMS-6 buggies have been delivered. He added that all the hose towers have been removed from the appropriate fire stations.

Vice President Feinstein thanked Chief Velo for his report and expressed her amazement at the number of projects that are being carried out and overseen at the same time and she thanked him for his leadership.

Commissioner Nakajo thanked him for his comprehensive report and stated he enjoys reading them. He confirmed with Chief Johnson that red cap drills at the airport are essentially the Airport's version of battalion drills.

Commissioner Cleaveland confirmed that a General Order went out that the Department is looking for candidates with desired qualifications for NERT Coordinator, to submit applications, and from there, interviews will be conducted until a replacement is found for that position. He confirmed that the SFFD currently has 4 K-9 partners and can be deployed during mutual aid when requested by California Task Force 3 in Menlo Park. He also confirmed that flu shots are not mandatory for members of the SFFD, but highly recommended. Commissioner Cleaveland stated he thinks flu shots should be mandatory for all members of the Department.

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked Chief Velo for his report and mentioned that he is still learning and continues to be amazed at all the different hats that Chief Velo wears and issues he deals with. He congratulated Chief Arteseros for accepting the position of Deputy Chief of Homeland Security and for stepping forward and he looks forward to meeting her in person soon.

President Covington thanked Chief Velo for his report and confirmed that the 37 members who were deployed to the wildfires, led to the high numbers of infections of COVID as it's difficult to space yourself in a wildland fire environment. She confirmed with Chief Nicholson that Assembly Bill 2147 allows formally incarcerated individuals who were firefighters while incarcerated to petition a judge to have their record expunged. Chief Nicholson mentioned that she has met of few of these individuals and she would have hired anyone of them. President Covington suggested that Firefighter Baraka should get the word out about this.

There was no public comment.

5. RESOLUTION 2020-01 [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action regarding proposed Resolution 2020-01, recommending that the Board of Supervisors authorize the San Francisco Fire Department to retroactively accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$883,145.45 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to Purchase Personal Protective Equipment related to its COVID-19 response efforts.

Mark Corso introduced the Resolution and provided some history and context about the FEMA program and how the resolution if approved will benefit the Department.

Commissioner Cleaveland Moved to approve the Resolution. Commissioner Rodriguez seconded. The motion was unanimous.

There was no public comment.

6. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on September 9, 2020.

Commissioner Cleaveland stated that he participated in a Zoom meeting, hosted by firefighter Keith Baraka focusing on the Department's recruitment and he thought it was very educational.

Vice President Feinstein stated that she had her first COVID safe field trip since she's been a member of the Commission and was escorted by Chief Wyrsh, Chief Cochrane, and Rescue Captain Smith where they visited Fire Stations 5 and 3. They also paid a visit to the fireboats, the Chief's residence, pump station, and the Airport. She looks forward to visiting the rest of the fire stations and once COVID is not a threat, she would like to ride along with EMS-6.

Commissioner Nakajo wished a speedy recovery to Chief Cochrane and acknowledged the nice letter from Sheriff Paul Miyamoto thanking the Fire Department for their efforts on fighting the five-alarm fire where the members protected the Sherriff's facility.

President Covington announced that she has revived the tradition of meeting with the Chief of the Department before the Commission meetings.

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion regarding agenda for the next and future regular meetings.

- EMS-6 update
- Protocols for blasting horns
- Meet grant writer

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURNMENT President Covington adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.