

SAN FRANCISCO FIRE COMMISSION

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2018 – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 400, San Francisco, California, 94102**

The Video can be viewed by clicking this link:

http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=180&clip_id=29793

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

1. ROLL CALL

Commission President	Ken Cleaveland	Present
Commission Vice President	Stephen Nakajo	Present
Commissioner	Michael Hardeman	Present
Commissioner	Francee Covington	Present
Commissioner	Joe Alioto Veronese	Present
Chief of Department	Joanne Hayes-White	Present
Mark Gonzales	Deputy Chief – Operations	
Jeanine Nicholson	Deputy Chief --Administration	
Dan De Cossio	Bureau of Fire Prevention	
Andy Zanoft	EMS	
Tony Rivera	Support Services	
Khai Ali	Airport Division	
Jeff Columbini	Division of Training	
Assistant Chiefs		
Kevin Burke	Division 2	
Bill Storti	Division 3	
Staff		
Mark Corso	Deputy Director of Finance	
Olivia Scanlon	Communications and Outreach	

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

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

Discussion and possible action to approve meeting minutes.

- Minutes from Regular Meeting on January 24, 2018.

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

There was no public comment.

4. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF STATION 49 – AMBULANCE DEPLOYMENT FACILITY [Discussion]

Assistant Deputy Chief Anthony Rivera and Samuel Chui and Kathleen O'Day of DPW to present on the progress being made with the construction of the new ambulance deployment facility.

Chief Rivera stated that he and Chief Zanoft from the EMS side, have been working very diligently, to ensure that the new facility is going to meet the current needs and growing needs of the Department. He introduced the DPW team, Samuel Chui and Kathleen O'Day who have also been working diligently to make the project come to fruition. They provided an overview of the attached PowerPoint presentation: <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/ADF%20Project%20Update%2020180214.pdf>

Mr. Chui described the project in detail which will be located at Jerrold Avenue and McKinnon Avenue and is budgeted to cost 48.6 million dollars and is on schedule to be completed in August of 2020. He touched on several challenges and risks on the project including hazardous soil conditions and planning, designing and constructing a building with a very narrow street frontage.

Vice President Nakajo thanked them for their presentation and stated that this project is very exciting and he would like to see more pictures of what the facility will look like as the design phase develops. He mentioned that for the time he's been on the commission, he has seen the growth of Station 49 which is a big old building within the neighborhood converted to an ambulance service facility, to a clothing department to the arson squad, and he's glad the men and women that serve in that capacity are finally getting a state-of-the-art-facility.

Commissioner Covington asked what the top three differences are from the current Station 49 to the new facility. Chief Rivera answered that the current facility is a warehouse which was never designed as an ambulance deployment facility and the new building will be designed as a medical facility, with the ability for four ambulances to get fuel at one time as opposed to currently they can only fuel two at a time. The new building will be more efficient. He also mentioned that the new facility will have multi-purpose rooms where they can do in-service training and more convenient parking for vehicles so the paramedics will be able to reload the ambulances. He added that they got a lot of input from the EMS side, as well as Local 798 and everyone seems very pleased with the outcome. Chief Zanoft added that it is designed for rapid turnaround of the vehicles. He added that the supervisor's office is going to have views of the yard and the ambulances and while they're restocking they can figure out who is next due to go out, how they can move the units along much faster and the repair facilities for the gurneys and Biomed to repair the defibrillators, which are very important pieces of equipment on the ambulances, the area is being designed for repair of those devices. It's going to be fantastic for the membership and it has room to grow. Mr. Chiu added that the facility will be designed and constructed to meet current seismic codes for an essential services building in California, which is a very high standard if you look across the nation and it's designed to achieve LEED Gold in terms of sustainability. He stated that the project is currently 5 million dollars over budget and Commissioner Covington asked where that money will come from. Chief Rivera explained that the extra money will come from the current neighborhood fire station fund.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked them for their presentation and stated the facility is a great morale booster for all the folks that work at Station 49.

President Cleaveland thanked them for the report and stated it's a long time coming. He also went on to remember and thank former Mayor Ed Lee who put this project on the Health Department's bond a few years ago, and that's why they have the money to build the new facility.

There was no public comment.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE CITY'S EARLY WARNING SYSTEM [Discussion]

Presentation from Deputy Director Michael Dayton of the Department of Emergency Management on the current Early Warning System and future warning systems.

Mr. Dayton introduced himself and his co-worker Anna Sop who oversees the Duty Officer Program at DEM and is also responsible for implementing the policies and procedures of the Early Warning System. He gave an overview of the alert and warning procedures and policies in San Francisco as well as described some of the recent incidents where warnings have gone out, such as the tsunami watch warning and the warning about the East Bay earthquake. He presented the attached PowerPoint: <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/2018%2002%2014%20Fire%20Commission%20Presentation%20Alerts%20and%20Warnings.pptx>

He explained that the current systems they have in place are the primary ALERTSF and it relies upon DEM to reaching out to the public to sign up by texting ALERTSF to 888777. Currently, they have about 90,000 users. They are in a supporting role and take the lead from incident commanders in the field. He added that the City has about 120 sirens located across the city with multiple languages programmed into the sirens. He explained how they are used. He went on to explain the slides in detail

Commissioner Veronese asked Mr. Dayton if he thought the early warning system that San Francisco has is a state-of-the-art system. Mr. Dayton responded that he thinks it is. He explained that for an earthquake early warning system, the farther away the epicenter is, the more warning you get, and unfortunately, in San Francisco the epicenter usually occurs close by, limiting the warning to mere seconds. With regards to the recent tsunami warning, they discussed in detail, if there had been an imminent threat, they would have pulled out all the stops, including using the outdoor public sirens to notify all of the public. It was recommended that folks have a personal preparedness plan in place for when a disaster hits. Chief Gonzales added that there was a follow-up text message sent at 4:39 cancelling the tsunami watch, but if there was something that indicated that it was going to come to San Francisco, the Department would have started deploying assets, and they would go door to door with the Police and mobilized as many boats and put them in a safe area, and he confirmed they have a plan in place. Commissioner Veronese suggested figuring out how to force this information onto the public so that they have it and are not confused like he was when the tsunami warning happened.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Mr. Dayton and Ms. Sop for their presentation. He confirmed that the ALERTSF is a free service to members of the public. He confirmed that heat advisories are part of the alert system and are coordinated between involved city departments and the duty officer at EOC who works in close proximity to the dispatch center. Mr. Dayton confirmed that their employees get a lot of training and they have a lot of security measures in place that would prevent an incident like they had in Hawaii.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked them for their report and confirmed that in the event of a tsunami, less than 5 percent of the City would be affected and it should be easy to reach that small percentage of people that might be affected.

There was no public comment.

6. DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET – FISCAL YEARS 2018-2019/ 2019-2020 [Discussion and possible action]

Discussion and possible action to adopt the Fire Department's Operating Budget for Fiscal Years 2018-2019/2019-2020.

Mark Corso, Director of Finance and Planning for the Department presented the attached slideshow outlining the budget submittals, timeline, and enhancements. <http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/budget%202-14.pdf>

The supporting document to his presentation are attached hereto: http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/SFFD%20FY19%20FY20%20Budget%20Draft%20Feb%2014%20Commission_0.pdf
http://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/COMMISSION/Fire%20Commission%20Support%20Documents%202015/SFFD%20Enhancements%20180206_0.pdf

He mentioned that the City is projecting about a \$260,000,000 deficit over the next two fiscal years and all city departments have been requested to submit reductions to their general fund to the extent of two-and-a-half percent in each year, so five percent cumulative in the second year and for the Fire Department, that means one-and-a-half million dollars in the first year, and three-million dollars cumulative in the second year. He highlighted the time frame and instructions from the Mayor's office. He mentioned that they have adjusted the overtime to reflect current activity since what was seen last year and there's additional fire prevention staff allocated both to the Port of San Francisco as well as the airport. He added that operationally, to date, salary and benefit rates have been adjusted with known information. He stated that the budget highlights the continuation of the fleet and equipment plan in fiscal year 2019, so the Department was allocated over \$5,000,000 as part of last year's allocation for the first year and they will be working with the Mayor's office on that allocation in the second year, fiscal 2019-2020 and he anticipates that the hiring plan will continue through fiscal year 2020. He gave a brief update on the status of the Budget Committee which reconvened for the current year process and they have met multiple times and will continue to meet through the next few months as the budget process continues.

Vice President Nakajo thanked Mr. Corso for his comprehensive presentation. He stated that he pretty much supports the budget proposal as its being presented. He agreed that in terms of reductions, the Department cannot comply because of the growing demand for services that need to be provided to the citizens of the city. He also mentioned that reconvening the internal budget committee is very important and he feels very good about the process. He added that they need to deal with the hand that they are being dealt with and to be able to come into compliance and not to delay the process. He talked about the challenging political atmosphere of having the mayor in place only until June. He stated that he feels good about this budget and he thinks they should submit it as presented and he recommended that they move on it. President Cleaveland thanked Vice President Nakajo for his leadership on the budget discussions with the Department.

Commissioner Veronese thanked Mr. Corso for presenting the budget report. He inquired about the ambulance billings and asked for clarification. Mr. Corso explained that when crews respond, they generate an electronic patient care record for each encounter and that record is sent to a billing company where they run scans on the individual's insurance and if they are unable to find insurance, they work with Medicare, MediCal, and private insurers to get reimbursement. If they don't receive payment, it's then turned over to the city's Tax Collectors Bureau of Delinquent Revenue for follow up. Mr. Corso described in detail how reimbursement is allocated from a federal standpoint and there is no flexibility and the remaining balance is written off. Commissioner Veronese asked why they even bother billing people if we are not going to go after people to actually pay for the services received and he thinks a huge population of homelessness is the cause for this billing write-off. He added that

they wouldn't have to be going to the mayor's office and begging for extra things if they actually collected the unpaid ambulance bills. Mr. Corso explained that given federal and state rules regarding reimbursement on a Medi-Care and Medi-Cal accounts, there is no recourse for that but there are certain programs they are tracking at the state level, the Ground Emergency Medical Transport program (GEMT) that allows them to leverage federal funds to supplement the reimbursement to the tune of \$2,000,000 per year for those calls. Commissioner Veronese went through line items of the presented budget package asking for clarification which Mr. Corso was able to provide. He added that they have adhered to the instructions from the Mayor's office on no new net FTEs in the budget. Commissioner Veronese wants to make sure when they spend money on upgrading fire stations that they are giving the members of the Department refrigerators, utensils and all the stuff that they're going to need so that it is not coming out of their own pockets. Chief Hayes-White intervened and announced that the funding is for the fixed equipment not utensils and cable television and things of that sort. Commissioner Veronese confirmed that there was only one vacant 1823 position and they would like to fill it with someone who would work on contracts and grants. Commissioner Veronese stated that he wasn't put on the commission to waste his time and he's not here to go along and get along if he sees something that he doesn't think is right and to just rubber stamp what the Department is handing them and he thinks the commissions' job is to deliver a state-of-the-art fire department for the people of the City. He went on to advocate for many items on the "enhancement list" as well as a state-of-the-art Stress Unit.

Commissioner Covington thanked Commissioner Veronese for amplifying what she has been saying for years concerning the grant writer. She added that she doesn't think it is sufficient for the grant writer to be "part" of someone's job, it should be 100 percent dedicated to grant writing. She's willing to have the position filled with someone at least doing 50 percent grant writing. She added that there is a lot of money to be had from organizations whose missions are aligned with the Fire Department, and not just federal funds. She asked for more information on the 960 positions. Mr. Corso explained that it is used by departments, and allows employees who have retired from the city and that have expertise in certain categories to come back and work no more than 960 hours a year, without benefits. She thought it would benefit the department to have someone with that expertise come back and be a part-time grant writer. She also suggested that since Commissioner Veronese highlighted the amount of money lost over a 10-year period that the department spent on homelessness, which amounts to a billion dollars, she thinks it's important for the mayor, the mayor's budget analyst and the citizens of San Francisco to understand that these dollars are not reimbursed to the department. She added that pointing out how much money is spent on homeless services, and not getting more money from the general fund, then maybe funds from the Department on Homelessness and the Health Department can be given to us as we are a big part of that picture and safety net and not getting recognition for it.

Commissioner Hardeman thanked Mr. Corso for his diligence and for giving them the updated memos and information detailing the budget. He was glad to see that Mr. Corso followed up with some of the queries from the last meeting about grant writing and how he discovered that there is no job classification for grant writer in the City of San Francisco. He added that he thinks the department did pretty well getting federal funds without a dedicated grant writer and he appreciates that. He stated he is also looking forward to getting the drones up and running. He thanked everyone who worked so diligently on putting together a good budget and enhancement list.

Chief Hayes-White commented that in regards to the 960 program, she is a huge proponent of the program but there are some levels and layers of complexity that haven't been brought to the attention of the Commission and they have attempted in the past to endeavor that program, capitalizing on the great expertise of the members who have retired and it is subject to meet and confer with Local 798 and they have hit roadblocks. She also commented that in regards to

reimbursement of ambulance billing, it's not just a San Francisco issue, it is a nationwide issue and she thinks it warrants a much further discussion.

Commissioner Covington made a friendly amendment to include a new FTE Grant Writer and to fill the vacant 1823 classification with a person to work on Grants 50 percent of the time. Vice President Nakajo Moved to approve the budget as amended. Commissioner Covington seconded. The motion was approved 4-0. Yeas: (Cleaveland, Nakajo, Covington, Veronese); Nays: (Hardeman).

There was no public comment.

5. 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 January 24, 2018, including budget, academies, special events, communications and outreach to other government agencies and the public.

Chief Hayes-White reported on events since the last meeting on January 24, 2018. Chief Hayes-White stated what a valued member Mark Corso is to the team and she appreciates his expertise, his patience, and his professionalism 24/7. She announced the new Assistant Deputy Chief of Homeland Security, Michael Cochrane and asked him to say a few words. Chief Cochrane thanked the Chief and stated what an honor it is to be in the position. He mentioned that he was a third-generation San Francisco firefighter. She announced that Chief Columbini will be retiring at the end of next week and wished him well. Chief Columbini talked about how he has enjoyed his time in the department and how proud he is of his staff and it's been a great ride and he's looking forward to retirement. Chief Hayes-White continued with updates on the 123rd academy graduation, the start of the 124th class at the end of March, and the H-3 Level 1 EMT entry level class that is currently in training. She mentioned that she met with department heads at the DEM to provide an EOC policy group briefing for Mayor Mark Farrell to let him know what goes on in the event of a large-scale emergency and what his role would be. She touched on other events she attended over the reporting period.

There was no public comment.

REPORT FROM OPERATIONS, 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 January. He mentioned there were two greater alarms during this reporting period, the first was a second alarm on Nob Hill with Incident Commander Chief Postel. The second greater alarm was a 3rd alarm on January 23, 2018, at 36-40 West Portal under the command of Chief Juratovac. He touched on other notable incidents during the reporting period. He reminded the public to sign up for the ALERTSF texting the word ALERTSF to 888777. With regards to EMS, he announced that they are working on the quick response vehicles. He also mentioned that open fire investigations are down to 88.

There was no public comment.

8. COMMISSION REPORT [Discussion]

Report on Commission activities since last meeting on January 24, 2018.

President Cleaveland tabled this item as we were short on time.

9. AGENDA FOR NEXT AND FUTURE FIRE COMMISSION MEETINGS [Discussion]
Discussion regarding agenda for next and future Fire Commission meetings.

President Cleaveland tabled this item as we were short on time.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 11

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

President Cleaveland called for public comment. There was no public comment.

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 Hardeman made a motion to conduct items 11(b) and (c) in Closed Session. Vice President Nakajo seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. (5-0; Cleaveland, Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Veronese)

The Commission went into closed session at 11:51 a.m.

Also present was Deputy City Attorney, Brad Russi, and Department Physician Dr. Terrazas.

b. DEPARTMENT PHYSICIAN PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Pursuant to Admin. Code section 67.10(b); Govt. Code section 54957(b), Govt. Code section 54957.1(a)(5), the Commission may hold a closed session to discuss the performance evaluation of Department Physician, Ramon Terrazas *[Discussion and possible action]*.

c. CASE NO. 2016-06: COMMISSION DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON EMPLOYEE SUSPENSION APPEAL [Action item]

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

Section 3919 – Proper Behavior

Section 3920 – Unacceptable Language

Section 3923 – Acts Detrimental to the Welfare of the Department

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 1:14 p.m. Mr. Russi reported that on item 11(b) there is nothing to report and on item 11(c), the Commission voted unanimously to deny the appeal, but to only find a violation on one of the charges, and to reduce the suspension from six days to two days.

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]*

Commissioner Veronese Moved to not disclose discussions held in closed session. Commissioner Covington Seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. (5-0; Cleaveland, Nakajo, Hardeman, Covington, Veronese)

14. ADJOURNMENT

President Cleaveland adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m.