



Mayor
Daniel Lurie

City and County of San Francisco
Department on the Status of Women



San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 | 5:00 pm
San Francisco City Hall, Room 408

COMMISSION ROSTER

Commission President	Sophia Andary
Commission Vice President	Ani Rivera
Commissioner	Cecilia Chung
Commissioner	Diane Jones Lowrey
Commissioner	Dr. Shokooh Miry
Commissioner	Dr. Anne Moses
Commissioner	Dr. Raveena Rihal

I. CALL TO ORDER: *DISCUSSION*

President Sophia Andary called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm. Ms. Dominique Blakely performed roll call and confirmed 7 of 7 Commissioners were present (quorum). Ms. Blakely read the land acknowledgment.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *ACTION*

The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the regular Commission meeting on March 26, 2025.

(Roll Call Vote) Miry/Rivera – 7 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

No Public Comment.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: *DISCUSSION*

Acting Director Linda Yeung provided a recap of her discussions with the Controller's Office and noted that Department on the Status of Women (DOSW) would still be participating, as the Department had the Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) grant beyond June 30, 2025. DOSW will continue to share and learn alongside other departments on how to improve our non-profit contract monitoring.

Regarding the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) portfolio, Acting Director Yeung stated that the Department remained committed to a smooth transfer to MOHCD and planned to share additional information about MOHCD's grants as it becomes publicly available at a future meeting.

She mentioned that the Department had reviewed its internal fiscal processes and explained how the process worked, noting that invoices were due 37 days after the end of the month. While some groups submitted invoices earlier, the timeline remained the same.

She also emphasized that the BVRADV contract had been initiated in February, and the Department remained committed to following through with the new fiscal sponsor. She explained that the assignee and assumption agreement had been signed in March, and both HRC and DOSW had completed their internal billing agreements. DOSW had worked with city departments to close the old contract according to citywide rules and to open the new one with the new fiscal sponsor with the help of our Deputy City Attorney. She also acknowledged how hard the Grants Administration Manager and Acting Finance and Administration Manager, Febbie Valderrama, had worked and that we are awaiting an invoice from the fiscal sponsor. She also expressed her appreciation for the entire staff, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Jones Lowrey thanked the staff and asked for clarification on communications around invoices and if any were outstanding.

Acting Director Yeung shared that the staff is supporting one another and helping with tasks as needed to process invoices as quickly as possible and according to accounting rules. Staff are in regular contact with grantees if questions arise or documentation may be missing. She added that she can usually turn around approvals in 24 hours once sent to her and no outstanding invoices are pending approval.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey and Vice President Rivera expressed their appreciation for the Department's quick work and collaboration internally and with other departments. Commissioner Rivera asked about documentation of the processes for grantees, and Acting Director Yeung noted it is included in information provided to contractors and that the staff communicates with grantees regularly to address any questions or concerns.

Vice President Rivera asked for further clarification on the changes to the BVRADV grant and the type of agreement.

Commissioner Moses noted that it was an internal process and a transfer from Human Rights Commission (HRC) to the Department and that the Commission approved a sole source to expedite the money on their behalf.

Ms. Valderrama approached the podium and confirmed that the agreement is a sole source grant and that in February, HRC and DOSW agreed to transfer the funding from HRC to DOSW.

Vice President Rivera asked Ms. Valderrama to confirm whether the paperwork was all in order and approved. Febbie noted that the documents are currently in process with the City Attorney and will be routed for signature once approved. Acting Director Yeung added that the Department paid close attention to ensure all agreements including HRC, the Department, and the new fiscal sponsor were properly approved.

Commissioner Miry noted that the prior meeting minutes did not reflect the invoicing concerns she had been hearing from the public at the last two meetings. She asked if there is a mechanism for communication between grantees and the Department. Acting Director Yeung responded that grant managers are in regular contact with grantees.

Commissioner Miry added that it sounded as though the concerns had been addressed, but she is also open to the Commission discussing invoicing needs further.

Commissioner Chung noted that the Department is stepping away being a grantor. Acting Director Yeung confirmed this, but clarified that the Department will continue to administer the BWRADV grant through the next year, while the remainder of the GBV portfolio moved to MOHCD.

Commissioner Chung asked whether the Department would have the necessary support, and Acting Director Yeung confirmed they would. She added that the Department must determine its next steps and identify what the programmatic opportunities it wants to pursue in FY2024-2026.

Commissioner Chung said she believes Acting Director Yeung is doing great, but added the Commission and Department are stuck at a standstill without clarity on the Department's budget.

Commissioner Moses asked if Febbie is the Department's budget person. Acting Director Yeung confirmed that Febbie is currently serving as the acting fiscal lead. She reiterated that due to the hiring freeze, the Department has not been able to backfill the 1823 Senior Analyst position.

Vice President Rivera and Commissioner Miry inquired about the budget and the impact of the 50 or so grants that were previously administered by the Department. Acting Director Yeung and Hannah Cotter provided clarification, noting that there are 39 grantees in the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) portfolio, though some organizations receive multiple grants. There are also a small number of external grants, all of which end by June 30th, with the exception of the BVRADV grant, which will continue into the next fiscal year.

Vice President Rivera asked for confirmation regarding the transfer of the GBV portfolio to MOHCD. Acting Director Yeung confirmed that the agreement to transfer to MOHCD was made in May 2024. She added that, as part of the transition, two new positions were created at MOHCD, and they have issued RFPs and are in the process of making selections. She added that the Department must be very careful to not interfere with another Department's contracting process.

Vice President Rivera asked if it was clear to GBV grantees that the Department is no longer in the position to support that. Acting Director Yeung confirmed DOSW has the GBV portfolio until June 30th, and grantees are all aware of the changes.

Vice President Rivera stated that she did not recall any concerns about the portfolio being raised previously. Commissioner Jones Lowrey added that while the Commission was aware the funds were being moved, she too was unaware of any concerns related to the transition of the portfolio.

Commissioner Miry shared that she reviewed the prior meeting minutes and found no mention of such concerns. She also did not recall hearing any concerns from the public. She asked what mechanisms exist for that type of feedback and how it can be shared with Commissioners, while still adhering to the rules and regulations they must follow. Acting Director Yeung replied that staff have been in constant communication with grantees, and that grantees are welcome to ask questions or raise any concerns they may have.

President Andary asked for any additional comments. Seeing none, she added that, like Commissioner Miry, she was unaware of the concerns raised by the GBV grantees. She said that while they knew the GBV portfolio was being moved, it was their understanding that the move would be beneficial for the grantees. She said that the conversations around the portfolio would continue.

Commissioner Moses added that she remembered the original plan was for the portfolio to go to the Department of Public Health (DPH), considering that GBV is a public health issue and that DPH has the largest budget in the City.

President Andary echoed that the hope had been for the portfolio to go to DPH. She added that the Department and Commission need to develop a strategic plan moving forward and asked how they might begin that process.

Acting Director Yeung asked whether the Commissioners wanted to hold a retreat before January. President Andary inquired if anything was already in the works, and Vice President Rivera reminded the group that all proposed contracts were frozen. She asked for guidance on the process and whether it would be approved in the budget. Acting Director Yeung said she would explore the options and report back at the next meeting.

Public Comment:

Emberly Cross, from the Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic (CROC), shared that she has attended Commission meetings for years to discuss CROC's impact and to express concerns about the GBV portfolio being transferred. She expressed frustration with the Commissioners, stating that she had never seen a group of women so willing to follow the rules of men, choosing to adhere to Robert's Rules of Order rather than show a scintilla of compassion for what they have been hearing over the past four years. She further noted that her comments have been sanitized in the minutes and are not reflective of her actual statements.

Beverly Upton, from SF Domestic Violence Consortium, shared her frustration and disappointment regarding the move to MOHCD. She talked about her fear of retribution if she spoke out and highlighted that the GBV portfolio had not appeared on the Commission's agenda for several months.

Mary Martinzez, from WOMAN Inc, stated that the organization supports the signing of the BWRADV grant and requests the immediate release of funds. She said that she treaded lightly in her advocacy due to fear of losing funding.

Dr. Paméla Tate expressed deep frustration and disappointment over the lack of communication and transparency between grantees and the department. She shared that grantees have felt excluded and unsupported, particularly after being shifted from the Department of Public Health to MOHCD, which

she described as disorganized. Dr. Tate highlighted severe funding cuts—receiving far less than expected despite prior successful grant applications—and explained the financial strain this has caused, including delayed pay and inability to support survivors or maintain operations. She strongly emphasized the urgent need for better communication and suggested holding a town hall to address these ongoing issues.

Rebecca Jackson, from Community Forward, expressed heartbreak that the Commission was unaware of the domestic violence community's concerns, despite those concerns being raised publicly since the beginning of discussions around moving the portfolio.

JM Jaffe, from Lyon-Martin Community Health Services, shared that they serve the trans community and had taken on the St. James Infirmary project after it closed. They have seen an over half million-dollar reduction from their \$5 million budget and emphasized the need for the Department's support to continue their work.

Celestina Pearl, Late Night Van Outreach, shared that MOHCD did not renew funding for their outreach programs serving the trans community, which were intended to continue the legacy of the St. James Infirmary. They emphasized the urgent need for Department support and said this is not the time to abandon women and trans individuals.

Anastasia Freeman, from BWRADV, spoke about working directly with survivors and how harmful the funding cuts will be to services and to the lives of those they support.

Andrea Jackson, from BWRADV, called out the ongoing trend of defunding programs for women and stated that survivors have nowhere else to turn. She urged the Commission to stand up for the community and recognize the critical importance of this work.

IV. NEW BUSINESS :

A. Presentation on Charter Section 4.102, Boards and Commissions- Powers and Duties, and Charter Section 4.119. Commission on the Status of Women. *DISCUSSION and ACTION*

Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark provided an overview of the roles and duties of boards and commissions, highlighting several key responsibilities in her presentation. She encouraged Commissioners to reference the City Attorney's Good Government Guide, which contains a wealth of information and should be reviewed thoroughly.

Acting Director Yeung read Charter Section 4.119 which pertains to the Commission on the Status of Women. She also provided information about the role of the department head, stating that the Director serves in this capacity and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the department, as outlined in Section 4.126 of the Charter. She offered numerous examples of these responsibilities.

Deputy City Attorney Clark added a reminder that the Charter places responsibility with the full Commission body—not with individual members.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Miry asked about the Commission's role in setting the budget. City Attorney Clark responded that the Commission reviews the budget and helps set policy, but the degree of involvement is up to the Commission. They may request details, including line items, from the Department as they see fit. Some departments present when requested, while others use consent calendars. She added that typically, commissions do not get into the minutiae, but they can request presentations and clarification on budgets, contracts, costs, and reports. The Commission can also set policies and thresholds for when they want fiscal oversight—for example, requesting detailed presentations on contracts over a certain amount.

Commissioner Miry then asked how the Commission can be alerted to concerns about fiscal items.

Deputy City Attorney Clark stated that Commissioners have the power of inquiry and can call any member of the Department before the Commission to ask questions about any aspect of the Department's operations, and may request that such matters be placed on the Commission meeting agenda.

Commissioner Chung added that the Commission has the power to set agenda items and request reports from both the Department and grantees.

Commissioner Chung shared that she served on the fiscal committee for the DPH board. She expressed concern that the Commission had not heard about the devastating impact the move to MOHCD would have and emphasized that the body can make recommendations for the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to consider.

Vice President Rivera stated that she wanted the public and media to understand what is happening and to have a way to see and hear the concerns being raised.

Deputy City Attorney Clark noted that the Commission does have oversight powers and that what it approves is at the discretion of the Commissioners. She added that all contracts—whether grants or RFPs—go through a specific review process. She said that, in general, the Commission approves the budget while the department head approves contracts. She further explained that the approval of individual contracts is generally up to the Commission—some Commissions approve them, and others do not.

Vice President Rivera suggested they create a governance committee and Commissioner Chung should be the chair.

Commissioner Chung added that this is the first commission she has served on that does not have a working committee.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey and Vice President Rivera suggested identifying what types of committees they can establish and incorporating that structure into the Commission and Department's strategic plan.

Commissioner Rihal reminded everyone that their bylaws are in their binders.

President Andary added that the Commission has not operated with working committees during her five years of service.

Deputy City Attorney Clark stated that she did not believe the Commission needed to amend its bylaws in order to create a committee.

Commissioner Moses asked about the current status of the Department's budget and whether it would be within the Commission's purview to restructure or amend the budget to help GBV grantees recover lost funds.

Deputy City Attorney Clark said she would research the question and report back.

Vice President Rivera asked when the Board of Supervisors' budget hearing for the Department is scheduled to take place.

Acting Director Yeung responded that, to date, the FY25–27 budget has not been approved, and that the Department is currently in the mayor's phase of the budget development process. She added that she can reach out to the Mayor's Budget Office to see what, if anything, they can share or discuss with the Commissioners. She clarified that she joined the Department after the budget process began and is not the one setting the budget.

Commissioner Moses agreed they would like to know more, and Acting Director Yeung reiterated that she would reach out and report back to the Commission.

No Public Comment.

B. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Grants Portfolio Update. *DISCUSSION*

Senior Policy and Program Analyst Hannah Cotter gave a presentation providing background on the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) portfolio and its transition to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD). She reviewed the past and projected budgets for the grantees and informed the Commissioners that while some grantees missed the RFP deadline, they will have an opportunity to reapply through another RFP.

Commissioner Comment.

Vice President Rivera asked for MOHCD's projections, and Hannah replied that \$6.8 million has been granted, compared to the Department's prior \$8 million in grants. Vice President Rivera inquired about the loss in funding and how many grantees were impacted. Ms. Cotter responded that she would follow up and noted that CROC lost all of its funding. The Commissioners requested that Ms. Cotter provide a detailed breakdown of the GBV grantees, the non-GBV grantees, the disbursements of add-backs from the Board of Supervisors, and their funding status with MOHCD at next month's Commission meeting.

Acting Director Yeung confirmed the details to be covered and reminded the Commission that the Department cannot interfere with MOHCD's contracting process.

President Andary said she appreciated the clarification but added that Commissioners believed the portfolio was being moved to avoid funding cuts. She asked whether MOHCD could be invited to participate in a hearing on the cuts. Acting Director Yeung confirmed that the Commission has the authority to make that request, but explained that once the portfolio was transferred to another jurisdiction, the Department no longer had control over funding decisions. Each department has its own RFP and award processes. She added that she personally would not have made the statement that the portfolio would remain whole.

Vice President Rivera replied that the heartbreak lies in the fact that this was not their understanding, adding that the way the data was presented did not reflect what they believed would happen.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey added that everyone is facing budget cuts and that is out of their hands. She emphasized that no one is ever happy when cuts must be made.

Commissioner Rihal suggested exploring advocacy options. Commissioner Jones Lowrey added that the Department's and Commission's vision and goals must be maintained and reflected in the budget.

Commissioner Chung stated that good governance requires having the full picture and shared that she feels the Commission was misled, although this occurred before her tenure.

Commissioner Rihal asked about the status of the Department of Justice grant. Ms. Valderrama informed the Commissioners that the grant had been closed with the Department and was not transferred to another department.

Acting Director Yeung stated that she will connect with MOHCD and report back, but will not speculate on any cuts.

Commissioner Miry expressed concern that with the cuts and reductions, the values of the Commission feel under threat and vulnerable. She added that how cuts are made is a moral statement, and she fears that those being targeted are the most vulnerable.

Commissioner Chung suggested holding a hearing, and Vice President Rivera asked when the Department would go before the Board of Supervisors. Acting Director Yeung said she would confirm and share that information.

Public Comment:

Unnamed Speaker: She spoke about the massive federal cuts to social services and programs and the impact on vulnerable communities.

Emberly Cross informed the Commissioners that the budget hearing is scheduled for June 11th. She explained the RFP process at MOHCD and shared that although CROC, Bay Legal, and JDC filed jointly as requested, MOHCD eliminated funding for both CROC and JDC. They appealed but were denied, despite CROC having been supported by the City for many years. She attributed the denial to the transfer and MOHCD's lack of familiarity with the organization's work. She thanked Ms. Cotter for her presentation.

Beverly Upton stated that the DV community never received any of the funds from the Board of Supervisors add-backs over the past two years

Dr. Paméla Tate shared that BWRADV also lost funding due to the transfer to MOHCD and that their appeal was unsuccessful. She noted that MOHCD is counting the unreleased \$265,000 grant against their RFP application.

Rebecca Jackson thanked the Commissioners for their concerns and commitment to advocating for the community where they can. She encouraged them to call a hearing and get more information.

JM Jaffe expressed gratitude and added, if you are under threat, we are your allies. You are important. Let's be in coalition together.

C. 2024 Community Needs Assessment Report Discussion. *DISCUSSION*

Dr. Alfredo Huante gave a presentation on the Department's 2024 Community Needs Assessment Report and shared key takeaways from the report.

Commissioner Comment:

President Andary noted how extensive the report is and its potential use in shaping the Department and Commission's strategic plans. She asked how often the assessment is conducted, and Dr. Huante informed her that this was the Department's first community needs assessment. President Andary expressed interest in making it a recurring report and recommended that future assessments include a public survey.

Vice President Rivera agreed with using the assessment for strategic planning purposes and asked if it had been shared with the Mayor and his team. Dr. Huante confirmed it was shared with both the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. Vice President Rivera emphasized the importance of uplifting the report and requested it be added to future agendas for continued discussion and exploration of its findings.

Commissioner Miry also praised the report and highlighted that, while challenges were evident, there were also notable successes in the data—such as the number of people able to access counseling when needed. She noted the importance of integrating the report into the strategic plan and acknowledged that, given the current national political climate, the situation for women, trans, and nonbinary individuals may have worsened since the data was collected.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey shared that a "light bulb went off" while reading the report, recognizing its value in empowering the Department as both an advocate and watchdog. She emphasized that the report offers concrete facts

and data the Department can use when engaging with other departments and agencies.

Vice President Rivera inquired about the report's development process, and Dr. Huante shared that it began in 2022. She also asked about incorporating the findings into the strategic plan. Dr. Huante recommended using the report as a catalyst to inform and guide the strategic planning process. He noted interest from members of the Board of Supervisors in district-specific data and suggested encouraging agencies and elected officials to circulate survey questions in their newsletters. He also recommended reviewing Mount St. Mary's annual report on the status of women as a model.

Public Comment:

JM Jaffe stated that their organization works on many community surveys and emphasized the importance of accurately capturing identities. They stressed the need to ensure that trans individuals are reflected in the data and not grouped into nonspecific categories.

Dr. Paméla Tate said the Community Needs Assessment was very well done and acknowledged how difficult it can be to get people to participate in surveys. She added that BWRADV plans to use the report to inform their work.

v. City Attorney Remarks on Closed Session. *DISCUSSION*

The Deputy City Attorney will provide information on the law regarding closed sessions, including those permitted under Government Code Section 54957(b) and San Francisco Code Section 67.10(b), commonly referred to as the "personnel exception."

Deputy City Attorney Clark referenced the Good Government Guide and reviewed the Brown Act rules regarding policy bodies and their authority to hold closed sessions under limited circumstances. She explained that, in specific instances, state and federal laws—such as those protecting the privacy of personnel information and individual rights—may require a body to conduct a closed session.

No Commissioner Comment.

No Public Comment.

vi. Public Comment on all Matters Pertaining to Closed Session. *DISCUSSION*

No Public Comment.

VII. Vote on Whether to Hold Closed Session. (San Francisco Admin. Code Section 67.10(d)). *ACTION*

(Roll Call Vote) Jones Lowrey/ Chung; 7 yeas, 0 nays – Unanimous

1ST Open Session ended: 7:55)

Closed Session: (8:08-10:08)

VIII. (Closed Session). *DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION*

Roll Call:

Public Employee Dismissal

Number of Employees Affected:1

(Present: President Andary, Vice President Rivera, Commissioners Chung, Jones Lowrey, Miry, Moses, Rihal, Acting Director Linda Yeung, Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark, Deputy City Attorney Cecilia Mangoba, Chief of Public Integrity & Investigations, City Attorney's Office, Keslie Stewart, DHR Director Carol Isen, and Assistant Director DHR, Employment Services, Shawn Sherburne)

Closed Session Ended: 10:08 p.m.

IX. (Open Session) Remarks from the City Attorney. *DISCUSSION*

President Andary called the session back open at 10:12 PM.

The Deputy City Attorney provided information on the laws regarding the disclosure of information from closed sessions.

Deputy City Attorney Clark elaborated on the processes and legal requirements for closed sessions held by public bodies.

X. Vote on Whether to Disclose Any or all Discussion on Item 8 in Closed Session. (San Francisco Admin. Code Section 67.10(a)). *DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION*

President Andary called for motion not to disclose the discussion, except for the legally required announcement of the vote.

(Roll Call Vote) Moses/Rihal – 7 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

President Andary announced that, by unanimous vote, the Commission on the Status of Women has voted to remove Director Ellis. For the benefit and future success of the Department on the Status of Women, the Commission has removed Kimberly Ellis as the Director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women effective immediately.

XI. General Public Comment.

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 pm.