

San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 25, 2025 | 5:00 pm

San Francisco City Hall, Room 408

COMMISSION ROSTER

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

Please note that all meetings are recorded, and recordings will be made available within 72 hours of the meeting date. The Commission encourages everyone to listen to the full recordings to ensure the minutes accurately reflect the discussions.

I. CALL TO ORDER: **DISCUSSION**

President Sophia Andary called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

Ms. Dominique Blakely performed roll call and confirmed 4 of 7 Commissioners were present (quorum). Ms. Blakely read the land acknowledgment.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

President Andary requested context and reminders regarding the minutes from Acting Director Yeung. Acting Director Yeung provided a recap, noting the changes requested by Commissioners, as well as a request from a member of the public to update their public comment to more accurately reflect their statement.

Commissioner Miry asked whether all requested changes had been made. Acting Director Yeung responded that the Department needed guidance and direction on how to handle edits—particularly those requested by members of the public.

A discussion followed, during which the Commission affirmed that changes requested by Commissioners should be reflected. Regarding public requests,

Commissioners suggested referring individuals to the full video recording of the meeting. They also recommended that the Department add a note to the Commission meeting pages to ensure the public is aware of the available videos.

President Andary continued the approval of the April minutes, along with the general discussion of meeting minutes, to the July meeting.

The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the regular Commission meeting on May 28, 2025.

Public Comment.

Dr. Pamela Tate, representing Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWVADV), stated that she was the individual who requested the edit to the April minutes and expressed that she would like the change to reflect her comment regarding the Commission holding a town hall or similar community meeting.

President Andary read a prepared statement reflecting on the history of women's rights and gender equity in San Francisco. She highlighted the creation of the Commission 50 years ago, the establishment of the Department on the Status of Women (DOSW), and the City's adoption of a local CEDAW ordinance. She emphasized the importance of providing services to the most vulnerable communities, including immigrants, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and other marginalized groups. She also addressed the Mayor's proposed merger of DOSW and HRC. She shared that she had met with both Department Directors and acknowledged that the merger is the current reality, affirming that the Commission and Department will continue their important work.

(Roll Call Vote) Jones Lowrey motioned/Miry seconded - 4 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

III. PROP E COMMISSION STREAMLINING TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

DISCUSSION

President Andary shared that she made an executive decision to work on the Prop E survey directly with Secretary Blakely, as the committee was unable to meet within the constraints of the Brown Act. With support from Department staff, they completed the survey, which addressed four key areas: estimated staff time spent supporting the Commission, cost implications of eliminating the Commission, the potential impact of a merger, and non-personnel considerations. The survey was submitted on June 20, and no further action is anticipated at this time. If needed, a new committee can be formed or a Commissioner may work with the Secretary. The responses will be shared with

Commissioners. The Commission clarified that this was the first step—data gathering and analysis—in the Prop E Taskforce's work.

No Public Comment.

IV. DIRECTOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE *DISCUSSION AND ACTION*

Commissioner Jones Lowrey provided an update on the Department Head hiring process and timeline. She shared that she, Acting Director Yeung, and staff from DHR updated the proposed job description based on the previous version, with changes noted in the Commissioners' binders. She requested feedback from the Commission, and after discussion, it was agreed that any feedback would be incorporated during the meeting. The Commission delegated authority to finalize the job description to Commissioner Jones Lowrey, with support from Acting Director Yeung and DHR.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Moses asked for clarification regarding the Director's reporting structure, noting that she hadn't seen personnel files for the previous Director. Mr. Greene from DHR explained that reporting structures vary, but in this case, the Director reports directly to the Commission. He also shared that review processes are typically initiated via email notifications.

Commissioner Miry recalled that in the past, due to confidentiality, the Commission Secretary received the review information and shared it with the Commission.

Commissioners Moses and Jones Lowrey requested that Mr. Greene confirm the current process and report back to help codify their obligations.

Acting Director Yeung asked whether the Commission wanted to use an external recruiter or continue with DHR.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey emphasized the urgency of the process and recommended using DHR, noting that an external recruiter could add up to six weeks and cost \$25,000–\$50,000.

President Andary asked about internal costs, and Acting Director Yeung responded that the Department has an \$80,000 work order with DHR for half-time recruitment support. The goal is to present candidates to the Mayor by mid-September.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey asked Acting Director Yeung to speak to the administrative process in light of the city's hiring freeze. She confirmed that the position was approved by the Mayor's Budget Office. The Commission

then discussed whether the full Commission should serve as the interview panel and what that process would entail. Yeung noted that future meetings would include closed sessions for interviews and that at least three candidates must be forwarded to the Mayor.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey asked whether the Commission wanted to interview more than three candidates or limit it to the top three.

Commissioner Miry explained that in the past, DHR screened candidates and the Commission interviewed the top three in a closed session. President Andary confirmed that DHR managed the screening process, and Commissioner Miry added that all candidates were asked the same set of questions.

President Andary noted that the Commission could interview more than three candidates if needed. Deputy City Attorney Clark confirmed that DHR would handle the screening, and the Commission would interview top candidates in a closed session.

Acting Director Yeung asked the Commission to help spread the word once the job posting goes live. The Commission agreed to keep the posting open for four weeks and review applications on a rolling basis.

Public Comment:

Dorka Keehn, SPUR Advisory Board Member, Former COSW, 99-2010), shared her concern about the Commission's ability fulfill this responsibility. She shared that during her tenure, she helped hire two directors and that the Commission was very aware of their responsibilities. She voiced frustration that the Commission supported the work of the prior Director for five years, and she felt as if they let the women of San Francisco down. She added that this is not the first time the City has tried to eliminate the Department and the Commission, and noted that only the Commission President has spoken out. She added that the Department's budget has been zeroed out and that it is being merged with another department that is facing a 30% budget cut. She concluded by calling the situation truly shameful for the Commission and for the women of San Francisco.

(Roll Call Vote) Miry motioned/Moses seconded – 4 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: *DISCUSSION*

Acting Director Yeung shared that the supplemental RFP for the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) portfolio was released by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) on May 14 and closed in early June. She noted that intent-to-award letters are expected to be issued later in June

and that a representative from MOHCD has been invited to present at the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in July. She also reported that invoices from January to April 2025 for Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence have been paid.

Lastly, she noted that a memo outlining the requirements for Commission subcommittees was included, along with explanations for why certain subcommittees became committees of one.

Commissioner Comment:

President Andary thanked Acting Director Yeung and echoed the challenges related to the subcommittees.

No Public Comment.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. MAYOR'S FISCAL YEAR 2025-27 BUDGET PROPOSAL OF THE MERGER OF DOSW WITH THE HRC *DISCUSSION*

Acting Director Yeung began the presentation by discussing the proposed merger, noting that it presents an opportunity to create a more efficient and unified structure while enhancing impact. She reviewed slides from prior presentations outlining the Department's mission and priorities.

Acting Director Mawuli Tugbenyoh shared that the Human Rights Commission was the first of its kind in the country. Upon joining the agency eight months ago, he developed a plan centered on four key goals: stabilizing the organization and its programs, regaining public trust, improving the organizational structure, and addressing staffing and resource needs. He explained that the Mayor's proposal would merge the Department on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Commission into the Agency of Human Rights. While acknowledging that significant work lies ahead, he emphasized the opportunity this merger provides to serve communities more deeply.

Acting Director Yeung thanked the Commissioners for their support, as well as the staff of DOSW, HRC, and Acting Director Tugbenyoh. She also extended gratitude to the community.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Moses asked why DOSW's budget showed a much larger reduction than expected—greater than what would result from losing two positions.

Acting Director Yeung clarified that three positions were cut—two filled and

one vacant—and noted that over \$8 million was transferred to MOHCD. Commissioner Moses acknowledged that but recalled \$3 million remaining in the budget. Yeung added that \$600,000 was cut because the Department will no longer host the summit. When Moses asked whether any cuts to external funding might explain the difference, Yeung said she would follow up with additional information.

Commissioner Moses also asked whether the Department would still be eligible for external grant funding. Acting Director Tugbenyoh confirmed that it can, under certain circumstances and guidelines.

Commissioner Miry thanked the Directors for providing detailed organizational charts and asked how the departments might further align around intersectional goals. Acting Director Tugbenyoh responded that one of HRC's core functions is investigating discrimination and civil rights complaints. He noted the departments share aligned missions and could amplify impact—for example, by having HRC proactively examine gender-based discrimination and ensure alignment in policy priorities.

Commissioner Miry followed up by asking whether response times to gender discrimination complaints could be improved, noting it's a community concern.

Acting Director Tugbenyoh acknowledged that delays are tied to staffing limitations, but they are actively hiring in the Civil Rights Division and reviewing the structure to allocate resources more effectively due to rising complaint volume.

Commissioner Miry also expressed concern about HRC's budget being cut from \$44 million to \$28 million—still significantly more than DOSW's. She asked whether the merger might offer greater political leverage for shared priorities.

Acting Director Tugbenyoh said he believes the merger will strengthen the overall ability to address human rights issues. Uniting HRC and DOSW under the Agency of Human Rights (AHR) offers a stronger platform to advance shared missions.

Commissioner Miry then asked for a breakdown of the budget—operations, community initiatives, and policy/anti-discrimination work.

Acting Director Tugbenyoh said he didn't have the breakdown on hand but would provide it at a future meeting.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey noted that the previous Director and Commission intentionally shifted from grant administration toward advocacy

and accountability. She expressed hope that DOSW's expertise and issue areas would be respected and integrated into the merged structure.

Acting Director Tugbenyoh responded, "Absolutely," and said he looks forward to collaboration. He noted that HRC already houses OTI and the Office of Racial Equity, and has experience addressing complex equity issues, providing oversight and guidance.

Public Comment:

Dr. Paméla Tate thanked DOSW for finalizing the work order transfer of funds, which has helped BWRADV stay open. However, she expressed frustration that she learned about the proposed merger through the news and noted that someone should have communicated this with the grantees. She expressed hope that with this merger, communication will become better. She concluded by stating that BWRADV is still waiting to hear about additional funds from HRC. Despite focusing solely on gender-based violence work, the organization has not been considered for GBV funding, and she urged that this be addressed.

**B. PRESENTATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANS WOMEN 2024 DATA
REPORT *DISCUSSION***

This presentation was postponed to the July meeting. Guest speaker Dr. Erin Wilson from the Department of Public Health (DPH) will present at that time.

**C. THE GENDER EQUITY POLICY INSTITUTE (GEPI) CONTRACT EXTENSION
*DISCUSSION AND ACTION***

Acting Director Yeung read the proposed resolution to carry over unspent funds from the existing grant to the Gender Equity Policy Institute and to extend the contract deadline to June 30, 2026.

Commissioner Comment:

President Andary asked for confirmation that no additional funds were being allocated, and Acting Director Yeung confirmed this.

President Andary then requested a motion to approve the resolution to extend the grant agreement with the Gender Equity Policy Institute from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

No Public Comment.

(Roll Call Vote) Miry moved/Jones Lowrey seconded – 4 ayes – 0 nays – Unanimous

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Miry reflected on prior comments—echoed again during the meeting—calling for a hearing or meeting to foster open communication with the community.

The Commission and Acting Director Yeung discussed aspects of the request, as well as the requirements for public meetings. Commissioner Miry suggested holding a hearing to address community concerns.

President Andary asked for clarification about the ability to discuss issues and respond to public comment. Deputy City Attorney Clark clarified that Commissioners cannot discuss items not on the agenda and cannot respond to public comments on non-agenda items. She strongly recommended identifying a specific topic for the hearing in order to comply with Brown Act regulations.

The Commissioners and Deputy City Attorney Clark then discussed how best to determine and agendize a hearing topic. President Andary said she would work with Secretary Blakely to reach out to those expressing interest in a hearing.

Deputy City Attorney Clark clarified that, under the Commission's charter, the appropriate action would be to hold a regular meeting rather than a formal hearing.

The Commissioners discussed potential topics, including concerns around communication. Commissioner Jones Lowrey emphasized the need for a specific focus, especially if the Commission intends to take action.

Acting Director Yeung offered to consult with partner agencies to gather more specific input on potential communication-related topics. Deputy City Attorney Clark agreed with this approach.

Public Comment:

Dr. Tate suggested holding a town hall to discuss the transfer of the GBV grant portfolio to MOHCD. She highlighted the challenge grantees face in being unable to communicate directly with the Commission—only with staff—and the resulting gap in the Commission's awareness of community concerns.

Commissioners Moses and Miry expressed support for the idea, and President Andary asked whether a town hall could be held in collaboration with MOHCD. Acting Director Yeung said she would inquire and report back.

VIII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT *DISCUSSION*

Public Comment:

Emberly Cross noted that this was CROC's final meeting as a Department grantee. She thanked the staff, numerous former Commissioners, and former staff for their support. She shared that over the years as a Department grantee, CROC has served 30,672 individual survivors and their children.

Bev Upton thanked past Commissioners, former Directors, Department staff, and the community of service providers. She noted that the Department has been their home for 35 years and that their shared work has transformed the landscape in San Francisco. While she expressed regret over a lack of impact in recent years, she looks forward to their next chapter with MOHCD. She added her hope that MOHCD's funding will include BWRADV.

Mary Martinez, WOMAN INC, echoed prior comments and thanked the staff over the years. She shared that the Department funded WOMAN INC's 24-hour support line, which has served hundreds of thousands of survivors. She also encouraged the Commission to get to know the community and attend their events.

Andrea Jackson, BWRADV, acknowledged the critical work that WOMAN INC does every day, including covering crisis line duties for other providers. She noted that while the community is saddened to see the GBV portfolio leave the Department, keeping communication open will help everyone navigate the transition together.

Commissioner Miry offered a closing remark, suggesting that the Commission and Department reflect on the input and outcomes of the 2019 Strategic Planning sessions before embarking on the next round of planning.

IX. ADJOURNMENT :

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.