



London N. Breed
Mayor

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



San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 | 5:00 PM
San Francisco City Hall, Room 408

COMMISSION ROSTER

Commission President	Sophia Andary
Commission Vice President	Ani Rivera
Commissioner	Cecelia Chung
Commissioner	Diane Jones Lowrey
Commissioner	Dr. Shokooh Miry (Excused)
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 6 of 7 Commissioners present (quorum). Ms. Blakely read the land acknowledgement.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *DISCUSSION and ACTION*

The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the regular Commission meeting on February 10, 2025

No Public Comment.

(Roll Call Vote) Andary/Rihal – 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: *DISCUSSION*

President Andary welcomed Linda Yeung as Acting Director for the Department. President Andary addressed the leave of Director Ellis and confirmed the Commission and Department are still committed to their goal of advancing gender equity and supporting staff in their good work.

Acting Director had the same sentiments as President Andary.

Acting Director Yeung provided a briefing of the Director's Report, sharing updates from the Safety Opportunities and Lifelong Relationships Collaborative (SF SOL) and other programs. The Department is coordinating with Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) on the transition of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) portfolio to that agency and is also processing an internal billing agreement with the Human Rights Commission for Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence. Acting Director Yeung mentioned that the Department will no longer be participating in meetings with the Controller's Office Contract Monitoring Committee because of the transfer of the GBV portfolio to MOHCD.

Commissioner Comment.

Vice President Rivera raised a question regarding the Controller's Office and Contract Monitoring, expressing concern that this may negatively affect women-owned small businesses.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey raised a question regarding the Department's budget. She noted that the budget represents both power and voice. She expressed concern that the voices of women may be diminished under this new structure. She is also worried about the Department not participating in meetings and is unclear about the process.

Commissioner Moses asked about the SF SOL Collaborative report, and Acting Director Yeung will ensure they see receive the report.

President Andary asked about consultation on the budget. Acting Director Yeung noted that she has not yet been briefed on the development of the department's budget. President Andary also highlighted the freeze of the Department's CFO role during budget season and requested an update on this matter.

Public Comment.

Caryl Ito referenced the new guidelines for grant processes asked a question about the passage of Proposition E, which has every Commission under review. She emphasized the importance of these meeting being known not only to Commissioners but also to the broader community of women, and she requested that the Commission explore this further.

Dr. Pamela Tate, Director of Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV), spoke about the need for transparency, and noted that they are waiting for funding. She

expressed gratitude that the transfer is being processed but requested more transparent and open communication.

Mary Martinez, Co-Director at WOMAN Inc., urged the Commission and anyone in a position of power to use their platform to make funding available to organizations and to advocate for making services for survivors whole and accessible.

Ashley Crystal Rojas, the Policy Director for Indigenous Justice (IJ), advocated for the release of funding for the IJ Sole Source Grant to continue the pilot program for guaranteed income. She expressed that this grant was a critical investment in the safety, healing, and empowerment of Indigenous women, families, and communities.

Unknown name - A 37-year-old Indigenous San Franciscan and participant in the Indigenous Justice grant expressed that she is a survivor of multiple forms of violence, including police violence. She asked the Commission for their continued support of the funding for women facing similar issues.

Beverly Upton, of the SF DV Consortium, expressed support for BWRADV and appreciated that the funding is moving forward and support for Indigenous Justice. She also highlighted legislation that will teach law enforcement how to identify a crime scene where a murder has occurred but has been made to look like a suicide. She expressed concern for the GBV portfolio being moved to MOHCD. She urged the Commission to be good stewards and shepherd these contracts with care.

Michelle Anton, of the Native American Health Center, expressed that she encounters community members daily who have been affected by trauma and domestic violence. She expressed support for Indigenous Justice and advocated for the release of funds to assist the community in their daily lives and help Indigenous women continue their healing path.

Melanie Anton Gordon shared that her family came to San Francisco in the 1950s through the relocation program. She expressed that she is a recipient of the Indigenous Justice grant and shared how impactful it has been in her life, particularly in supporting her healing journey after the loss of her son.

Arvata Grant, a California native member of the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians a participant in the IJ Microgrant Program and staff member at Larkin Street Youth Project, expressed that after experiencing domestic violence and increasing debt, she found support through the microgrant. She asked for continued funding for these programs.

Emberly Cross, of the Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic (CROC), of the Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic (CROC), expressed that she has provided regular updates on those served by GBV organizations and voiced concern and confusion over the breakdown in partnership.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution Honoring Women's History Month: *DISCUSSION*

Acting Director Yeung read the resolution honoring Women's History Month, addressing attempts to diminish or erase the contributions of women, including the removal of Women's

History Month from calendar, bulletin boards, websites and other visible places and spaces.

Commissioner Comment:

President Andary, speaking on behalf of Commissioner Miry, raised the question of why two Bay Area city employers removed Women's History Month from their calendars. She stated, at a time when our time and energy could and should be spent addressing the very real needs of girls and women in this city, we are instead, by circumstance, forced to answer a fundamental question of why it is so hard for women to be seen. She expressed the hurt and harm caused by this and emphasized that being seen is vital for our well-being, mental health, advancement, and safety in this city and community.

No Public Comment.

(Roll Call Vote) Rihal/Moses – 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

B. 2024 Representation of Women in City Property Report: *DISCUSSION*

Dr. Alfredo Huante gave a presentation on the Department's 2024 Representation of Women in City Property Report. He provided details of the report's findings and noted that street names are the area where the City and County have the most work to do in advancing gender representation.

Commissioner Comment:

Vice President Rivera asked about DOSW connecting with relevant departments to ensure women are represented in new and upcoming projects. Alfredo noted that we do connect with each department and share the report with them. The Arts Commission is excited to collaborate. Vice President Rivera urged the Commission to determine how they can advocate for better representation.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey emphasized that these should be considered goals, not quotas. She also expressed a desire to better understand the challenges involved in moving forward with these goals and requested more context on how to implement change.

Commissioner Chung noted that the Commission can call for hearings.

Commissioner Rihal expressed her support for and emphasized the need to take action based on this information.

Public Comment:

Karen Fleshman, from the Interracial Sisterhood Coalition highlighted and noticed that the most work that needs to be done is in street names. She suggested prioritizing the renaming 20% of streets for women and believes that supervisors would likely support that.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO ITEM 7 BELOW, CLOSED, INCLUDING PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6, VOTE WHETHER TO HOLD ITEM 7 IN CLOSED SESSION. *DISCUSSION*

Public Comment:

Karen Fleshman expressed support for Black women in leadership and called for transparency regarding the Director's leave status. She noted a Commissioner was cleared of wrongdoing and that the Director reported misconduct in the foster care pilot in November 2024. She requested clarity on the Deputy Director's employment status and the actions taken by the Mayor, DHR, and the City Attorney's Office.

Rebecca Jackson, Vice President of Re-Entry and Public Affairs for Community Forward SF, urged the Commission to help ensure transparency and truth. She shared that her organization's experience with the Director and department has been positive and questioned the timing of the current concerns. She also expressed that it does not feel safe to be a woman in the city.

Caryl Ito shared that she helped reinstate the Commission 35 years ago and questioned the decision to transfer GBV funds out of the Commission's jurisdiction. She also sought clarification on the Acting Director's interim appointment. Additionally, she questioned the status of a prior add-back of over \$1 million to the department, stating that none of the DV agencies ever received those funds.

Dr. Ren, speaking on behalf of her own organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of African Americans, and as a member of Black Women Organized for Political Action, emphasized the importance of transparency and stated that integrity in reporting is essential and must be demanded.

Kevin E. emphasized the importance of truth and transparency, noting that the community is aware the Director reported misconduct in the foster care pilot in November 2024. He questioned the Deputy Director's current status and how long key city offices have known about the issue.

Dr. Pamela Tate emphasized the importance of uplifting women during Women's History Month and echoed concerns about safety and transparency for Black women in San Francisco. She called for openness and accountability, particularly regarding accusations in the foster care system.

Brittney Doyle shared that she is a community stakeholder in San Francisco and expressed her support for the Director. She reiterated that truth matters, especially when it comes to the protections in place to ensure the safety of youth, particularly those in foster care.

Ashley Crystal Rojas expressed her support for the Director, stating that she always stood in solidarity with Indigenous women when it mattered most, especially in the wake of the devastating loss of Jessica Alva. Furthermore, she urged the Commission to honor truth and transparency, to stand for justice, to stand for safety, and to stand for change.

Mary Martinez expressed the need for transparency, not just behind closed doors. She also shared that she felt there has been a takedown of Black women over the past few years.

A woman, who declined to share her name but there representing herself as a Black woman, expressed her support for the Director and emphasized that Black women need to be protected as human beings. She stated that the process should be open and dignified, and that the right thing should be done.

Piercey Bastiany of the SF NAACP questioned the transparency surrounding the Director's leave status. He noted a Commissioner was cleared of wrongdoing and that the Director

reported misconduct in the foster care pilot in November 2024. He also inquired about the Deputy Director's employment status and the actions taken by city leadership.

Anastasia Freeman expressed her support for the Director and questioned the transparency surrounding the Director's leave status. She noted a Commissioner was cleared of wrongdoing and that the Director reported misconduct in the foster care pilot in November 2024. He also inquired about the Deputy Director's employment status and the actions taken by city leadership.

Hilary Crosby (remote comment) shared that she attended the SHIFT Happens Summit and was impressed. She then expressed her support for the Director and questioned the transparency surrounding the Director's leave status. She also questioned whether the Deputy Director was being held accountable as well.

President Andary requested a 5 minute break at 6:37PM

President Andary called the meeting back into order at 6:43PM

Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark provided more information and context regarding the closed session, informing the room that any personnel matter must be discussed in a closed session. Clark noted that this was the first opportunity the Commission had to hear about the investigation.

Vice President Rivera confirmed that this was the first time they would hear details from the investigation.

VI. VOTE ON WHETHER TO HOLD CLOSED SESSION. (San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.10(d)). *ACTION*

(Roll Call Vote) Rivera/Jones Lowrey 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

1st Open Session ended: 6:55 pm
Closed Session: (6:55 pm – 8:44 pm)

VII. (Closed Session)

Roll Call;

Public Employee Performance Evaluation—Director, Department on the Status of Women

(Present: President Andary, Vice President Rivera, Commissioners Chung, Jones Lowrey, Moses, Rihal, Acting Director Linda Yeung, Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark, Deputy City Attorney Peter Cownan, Deputy City Attorney Keslie Stewart, Mayor's Chief of Staff Staci Slaughter, and Assistant Director DHR, Employment Services, Shawn Sherburne)

Closed Session Ended: 8:44 p.m.

VIII. VOTE ON WHETHER TO DISCLOSE ANY OR ALL DISCUSSION ON ITEM 7 IN CLOSED SESSION. (San Francisco Administrative Code Section 67.10(a))

President Andary brought the Commission back into open session at 8:44 PM.

Jana Clark reviewed the regulations and requirements, noting that the subject of the session is a personnel matter.

Vice President Rivera motioned to not disclose any or all discussion from the Closed Session. Commissioner Chung seconded.

Roll Call Vote) Rivera/Chung – 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

No public comment.

IX. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM.