

## San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women

### MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 28, 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 5:07 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: *DISCUSSION AND ACTION*

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the regular Commission meeting on April 23, 2025.

Commissioner Miry noted that while the meeting minutes capture the spirit of commission proceedings and discussions, she did not feel the April meeting minutes captured public comments accurately. Commissioner Miry asked Deputy City Attorney Jana whether there are mechanisms or processes in place to ensure the public can correct or comment on their own statements made during previous meetings.

Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark responds.

Commissioner Miry followed up, noting her exploration of previous meeting minutes, identifying the absence of any public comments within this Agenda

item. Miry emphasized that she would like to institute a period at each commission meeting moving forward for the public to comment on their statements recorded in the minutes. This public comment period would occur before the commission takes a vote to approve the previous month's commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey shared concerns about public comments describing commission minutes as "sanitized," particularly given the lack of similar sentiment expressed in prior meetings. She agreed with Miry to allow the public to provide feedback on their own comments in future meetings.

Commissioner Miry asked Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark whether minutes are available to the public before commission meetings.

Commission Secretary Dominique Blakely confirmed that the minutes and recording of the previous commission meetings are available 72 hours before the next commission meeting each month.

Since the Commission is chartered, Deputy City Attorney Jana Clark elaborated on the requirements surrounding the minutes. She explained that the minutes must include a list of members of the public who spoke on each matter and identified themselves, indicate whether the speaker supported or opposed the matter, and provide a summary of each speaker's public comment in accordance with the Sunshine Ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Miry asked that a specific quote from the April meeting be reflected in the April meeting minutes. Commission Secretary Dominique Blakely confirmed that she would update the April minutes.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey asked whether Miry was requesting a verbatim record of public comments within the minutes, as that would require a transcription rather than an interpretation, which is the current practice.

Commissioner Miry affirmed that she preferred any approach that would render public comments as accurately as possible, without the risk of them being edited or reframed in a way that might subdue their criticality or concern.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey then asked whether Miry believed the comments had, in fact, been sanitized.

Miry affirmed that she felt the April Commission minutes read as sanitized. President Andary asked whether this was something the Commission could do and whether they could vote on it at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Chung noted that the discussion was not part of the agenda and suggested it be agendaized for the June meeting.

Vice President Rivera expressed support for continuing the discussion on meeting minutes in June.

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

**No Public Comment.**

**No Roll Call.**

### **III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: *DISCUSSION***

Acting Director Linda Yeung provided an overview of the material shared with the Commissioners, noting that much of the information addressed prior requests and questions from the Commissioners. She also shared that conversations with the Controller's Office are ongoing and noted that the BVRADV grant will remain with DOSW, with performance measurements for the contract set to begin on July 1. DOSW has created an operational policy for contract oversight, which will be circulated for feedback.

She shared that, regarding budget add-backs and in response to the Commissioners' request during the April meeting—"What was the impact of previous year add-backs on the Department's budget?"—the Department is conducting a historical analysis to understand the add-backs received by DOSW from the Board of Supervisors in previous years. This includes examining timelines, implementation strategies, and any reconciliation items. A summary and timeline will be provided once the analysis is completed.

Senior Program Analyst Hannah Cotter provided an overview of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Memorandum related to its transfer to MOHCD. She shared that funding had been eliminated for two legal programs previously funded by DOSW. However, as of May 9, both program fundings had been restored.

She also noted that seven contracts existed for organizations receiving funding from DOSW that were not technically part of the GBV portfolio (including BWRADV and Freedom Forward) but were included on the list.

She explained that four DOSW grantees had missed the MOHCD grants application deadline, two of which are shelter programs. MOHCD acknowledged a lack of housing-related applications received under their initial RFP and subsequently created a new RFP focused on GBV emergency

and transitional shelters. Ms. Cotter shared that if all emergency and transitional housing funds were awarded through this second RFP, the total GBV portfolio would exceed the one currently funded by DOSW.

Commissioners requested that the table shared by Ms. Cotter be made publicly available. Acting Director Yeung stated it would be uploaded to the website.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey noted that MOHCD's overall budget for the GBV portfolio was higher than DOSW's current funding level and suggested that transferring the portfolio to MOHCD may have been a net positive.

Ms. Cotter clarified that the GBV portfolio under MOHCD would only be larger if all emergency and transitional housing RFP funds were awarded.

There was a discussion about revising the details outlined in the initial and subsequent RFPs issued by MOHCD.

Commissioner Rihal asked whether there was any clarifying information about why grantees had missed the initial RFP deadline. Ms. Cotter responded that at least one grantee had experienced major staff turnover at the time.

Commissioner Miry asked whether the change in the total portfolio amounted to approximately \$1.1 million more. Ms. Cotter confirmed, noting that this would only be the case if all RFP funds were awarded.

Acting Director Yeung reminded Commissioners that MOHCD had offered to speak with COSW if there were any questions that DOSW staff could not answer.

President Andary stated that the second RFP would close on June 4 and would appreciate an update from DOSW/MOHCD.

Acting Director Yeung provided an update on BWRADV, sharing that all parties had signed the contract and were awaiting the San Francisco Study Center (the fiscal sponsor) to finalize its budget and submit an invoice.

Commissioner Moses stated that the update regarding delays with BWRADV's fiscal sponsor helped clarify the frustrations expressed during the previous Commission meeting. Vice President Rivera added that Acting Director Yeung's update was in response to the Commission's request for a follow-up on BWRADV concerns, emphasizing that the Commission had done its due diligence and was now awaiting an update from the fiscal sponsor.

Acting Finance and Administration Supervisor Febbie Valderrama clarified that the delays from the fiscal sponsor were due to delays in finalizing the budget. Until then, DOSW would await the invoice from the San Francisco Study Center.

Acting Director Yeung continued with the Director's Report updates. In response to concerns raised at previous Commission meetings, she stated that the Department was working to strengthen the invoice reimbursement process. With the end of the fiscal year approaching, the next couple of months would involve a high volume of invoice processing, and staff were working to maintain regular communication with partners to ensure timely submissions.

Vice President Rivera asked which organizations had outstanding reports. Febbie noted that the Jewish Family Center, BWRADV, and Asian and Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (APILO) had outstanding reports.

Acting Director Yeung reminded the Commissioners that Commission meetings were an ideal forum for grantees to voice issues they were facing. Commissioner Chung agreed and said that such processes would hold everyone accountable and help identify solutions. Commissioner Miry added that this was precisely why she looked forward to a future discussion on minutes—to ensure nothing was inadvertently omitted and that time remained allocated to addressing concerns.

Acting Director Yeung noted that, although there had been extensive discussion about the GBV portfolio at the last Commission meeting, three grants would remain with DOSW: BWRADV, the SOL Collaborative, and Indigenous Justice. These were non-GBV grants.

She also notified the Commission of a forthcoming amendment and resolution for a no-cost modification related to BAARC and the Gender Equity Policy Institute (GEPI), expected to be presented the following month.

Vice President Rivera asked whether BAARC's work was supported by the DOSW budget or an outside grant. Department Project Manager Denise Heitzenroder responded that the work was funded by the City and that a request for additional funds had been submitted to continue consultation with GEPI. She elaborated that initial funds had come from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, but in FY 2022–2023, in anticipation of the Dobbs decision, COSW and the Mayor had approved emergency funding for the work.

Acting Director Yeung noted that Staff Performance Plans and Appraisals were being completed in alignment with city guidelines, particularly given the prior lack of formal appraisals.

She then moved on to the DOSW budget, emphasizing that no Budget Forms 1A or 3A were submitted this year to the Mayor's Budget Office. She informed the Commission about the MBO directive and budget timeline, much of which had been presented in January and February 2025. She highlighted \$760,000 in unspent funds in FY 2024–2025. Some of those funds would be used to translate the Community Needs Assessment and to continue work with the Gender Equity Policy Institute (GEPI). Additional information would be available once the Mayor presented the City's budget to the Board of Supervisors.

Vice President Rivera suggested that DOSW consider translating the Community Needs Assessment Report into the City's five official languages to reach the largest number of women.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey agreed and suggested that such translation efforts might be low-cost, given the availability of artificial intelligence tools.

#### **Public Comment:**

Rebecca Jackson from Community Forward expressed that SF Housing Coalition seeks to support Riely Center and Mary Elizabeth Inn, having identified them as two programs that did not get to submit to the initial MOHCD RFP on time. Notes that the community at large knows which programs missed the deadline and are trying to offer support to submit a competitive and timely application, given the nature of the RFP opens the opportunity to other candidates as well.

Dr. Pamela Tate from BWRADV reported that the contract was signed on May 12 but had been held up by the City Attorney. She clarified that the frustration was not directed at DOSW, but at the overall process. SFSC is currently working on invoicing, and Dr. Tate remains in regular contact with Ms. Valderrama. BWRADV now has access to the \$265,000 approved by COSW in February.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS :**

##### **A. PRESENTATION FROM THE OFFICE OF TRANSGENDER INITIATIVES (OTI).**

##### **DISCUSSION**

Director Mahogany presented the budget recommendations from the LGBTQI+ Advisory Subcommittee. She provided an overview of the 2022–2023 Survey of Trans-Serving Organizations conducted by OTI. She noted the current anti-trans climate and the rise in individuals seeking trans-related services. The Director shared anecdotal evidence that many of

those seeking services were new to the City and no longer felt safe in their state or city of origin.

She emphasized that organizations serving this population were stretched beyond capacity. In 2023, about 60% of these organizations had to turn away individuals seeking care; however, she suggested that the actual number may have been higher given the present political context.

Director Mahogany recommended no budget cuts, noting that the trans services budget represented less than 0.002% of the City's overall budget and could be protected with the support of COSW, the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor. She also emphasized the centrality of housing—particularly permanent housing—as a critical need. She cited that EL/La Para Latina experienced a 46% increase in services over the past year, primarily from individuals arriving from other states rather than recent migrants.

Director Mahogany also underscored the importance of public health in the trans community, citing research indicating that 46% of transgender and nonbinary youth had seriously considered suicide.

She closed her presentation by highlighting San Francisco's rich legacy of trans activism and emphasized that the trans community was relying on the City to honor its history and uphold its commitments.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENT:**

Commissioner Miry agreed with Director Mahogany's comparison of OTI's budget request to the City's overall budget to emphasize how small the request was. She argued that it was incumbent on the City—especially in the context of discussions about "structural change" to the deficit—to recognize that services such as OTI are not the problem. Indeed, she noted, the structural changes needed will not be addressed by cutting 0.002% of the budget.

Commissioner Miry emphasized that, as a clinician, the mental health component is crucial. She stated that with each suicide attempt, the probability of suicide within the individual's peer group and family increases by over 30%. Therefore, without supporting the most vulnerable, a 30%+ risk remains. She extended the Commission's support for Director Mahogany's efforts.

Commissioner Chung also expressed support, noting that often it is not just trans people being attacked, but the entire ecosystem around them—including care providers and their families. She added that learning about cuts to hotlines and other targeted services was deeply concerning.

President Andary expressed her solidarity with Director Mahogany and stated her hope that OTI would not face budget cuts.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey acknowledged Director Mahogany's point about the community coming together to support the trans community and asked what the Commission could do to support OTI.

Director Mahogany responded that working more closely with DOSW and COSW moving forward would be valuable, noting that women and the trans community are interdependent and face similar struggles.

Vice President Rivera noted that funding for Arts and Culture could—and should—be significantly larger.

### **No Public Comment.**

## **B. DIRECTOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD RECRUITMENT. *DISCUSSION AND ACTION***

Paul Greene from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) provided an overview of the executive recruitment process and how it is typically carried out by departments. He described the Commission's role in identifying candidates, interviewing them, and submitting at least three names of qualified candidates to the Mayor.

He explained that most commissions use a recruitment firm and also provided a general overview of the executive recruitment process. Alternatively, he stated, DHR could conduct the recruitment; however, he noted that DHR's resources were currently at capacity, and they would need to determine a timeline for when that could occur.

Commissioner Moses asked for a rough timeline if the Commission were to engage a recruitment firm. Mr. Greene responded that the recruitment process could take approximately four months from start to finish and suggested that the timeline could be extended, given that the Commission meets only once a month.

President Andary suggested that the Commission could potentially create a subcommittee as a way to expedite the recruitment timeline. Commissioner Jones Lowrey asked where the funding to hire a recruitment firm would come from. Mr. Greene responded that the funds would be drawn from the Department's budget and added that if the Commission opted to engage DHR for the recruitment, there would still be associated costs, in addition to existing contracted work with DOSW.

Vice President Rivera asked Mr. Greene to explain the process if the Commission were to work with DHR. Mr. Greene explained that the scope of



work through DHR would be more limited. Any outreach efforts would need to be carried out by the Commission itself. DHR would post the job announcement, close it, review applications, and forward candidates to the Commission. The Commission would then conduct interviews and submit candidate names to the Mayor.

Acting Director Yeung noted that existing funds could be directed to either DHR or an external recruitment firm.

Commissioner Jones Lowrey asked whether the Mayor could submit candidate recommendations to the Commission. Deputy City Attorney Clark clarified that, based on previous guidance, the Commission is not required to submit three qualified applicants if it understands that the Mayor is willing to appoint an individual the Commission wishes to nominate, or if it believes there are fewer than three candidates who are ideally suited for the position.

Acting Director Yeung reminded the Commission that if the Mayor has a candidate in mind, he can inform the Commission, even while the recruitment process is underway.

President Andary presented the Commission with a set of options for how to proceed with the recruitment process.

Deputy City Attorney Clark clarified that the Commission could vote to create a subcommittee and appoint a chair but could not vote at that time on whether to use DHR or an external recruiter.

Commissioner Miry made a motion to form a special committee. Commissioner Chung seconded the motion.

#### **No Public Comment.**

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

**Vice President Rivera left the meeting at 6:50 pm.**

President Andary thanked Vice President Rivera for chairing the special committee and Commissioner Jones Lowrey for volunteering.

Vice President Rivera asked whether meeting with Commissioner Jones Lowrey would be considered a meeting under the Brown Act. Deputy City Attorney Clark clarified that it would not be, as long as the interaction is solely for scheduling purposes and does not include discussion of the subject matter.

## **C. PRESENTATION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN- POWERS AND DUTIES**

### ***DISCUSSION***

Acting Director Yeung reviewed the standing and special committees and directed the Commissioners to the related bylaws.

President Andary asked the Commissioners to review the information and raise any questions related to the presentation at the next Commission meeting.

#### **Public Comment:**

Dr. Pamela Tate expressed her gratitude for the discussion about special committees and requested that a previous comment from Deputy City Attorney Clark — affirming that special committees could be created—be added to the April minutes.

## **D. COMMISSION STREAMLINING TASK FORCE AND PROPE**

### ***DISCUSSION AND ACTION***

Commission Secretary Dominique Blakely provided background and an overview of the five-member task force established by voters in the November 2024 election. She also covered the task force's timeline, responsibilities, and benchmarks. Most immediately, under Proposition E, the Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office (BLA) will evaluate the yearly financial cost of the City's Boards and Commissions. At this stage, the purpose of the survey is to collect information, with an extended deadline of June 20 for submissions.

The Department recommends forming a special committee that would work collaboratively with the Commission Secretary to gather the necessary information.

#### **Commission Comment:**

President Andary clarified that she would chair the potential special committee. She described the format and content of the survey, referring to it as a questionnaire. She underscored the collaborative nature of working with the Department and staff to adequately complete the survey. She suggested that if the committee were formed, it would disband once the survey was complete.

Acting Director Yeung recommended that if a special committee were formed, it remain active throughout the duration of the task force.

President Andary noted her desire to have an additional Commissioner serve on this special committee. Commissioner Chung said she would be available to serve after June.

President Andary then asked for a motion to form a Proposition E Streamlining Task Force special committee, chaired by herself, which would present information and recommendations to the full Commission.

**Public Comment:**

Dr. Kathryn Kenley Johnson strongly urged the Commissioners to read the publicly available background information on the Commission Streamlining Task Force/Proposition E.

Commissioner Miry made a general statement encouraging public comment during meetings of the Prop E special committee.

**(Roll Call Vote) Miry moved/Rihal seconded – 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous**

**E. INTRODUCTION OF “FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS”**

Acting Director Yeung noted that this agenda item allows Commissioners to publicly discuss future agenda items.

**Commissioner Comment:**

Commissioner Chung affirmed this item and noted its helpfulness in collaboratively developing the Commission's calendar. Doing so would help fellow Commissioners prepare presentations and schedule appropriate and timely speakers.

**No Public Comment.**

**V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT :**

None.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT :**

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.