



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

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 | 5:00 PM  
San Francisco City Hall, Room 408

### COMMISSION ROSTER

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

#### I. CALL TO ORDER: **DISCUSSION**

**President Diane Jones Lowrey called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.**

Ms. Hannah Cotter performed roll call and confirmed that 5 of 7 Commissioners were 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 November 12, 2025.

**(Roll Call Vote) Moses/Rihal – 5 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous**

**No Public Comment.**

### III. **PROP E COMMISSION STREAMLINING TASK FORCE COMMITTEE:**

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

President Jones Lowrey provided a brief overview of potential action items from previous regular meetings.

Commissioner Andary provided a summary of the current climate and shared the draft of a Commission Task Force press release. She invited the Commission to provide feedback, emphasizing the importance of transparency to the community, educating the public, highlighting the vote that took place, identifying who voted and how, and showing the current state versus the recommendations made.

Vice President Rivera requested that the call to action be stronger in the statement. She noted that edits should emphasize that the Commission condemns the Task Force's recommendations. She expressed that the most important element is the call to action, which should be reflected at the beginning and contextualized within the county and local politics, as this is an issue occurring broadly.

The commissioners discussed and revised the draft proposed by Commissioner Andary, ensuring that the edits reflected a clear and strong call to action.

Director Aroche shared for the Commission's consideration that she was informed of a working group scheduled to meet on December 10 at 3:00 PM at City Hall, related to the Charter Reform Working Group. She noted that the meeting would include an overview presented by the Controller's Office and others on the charter reform, its background, and an introduction to the city charter. There will also be a group discussion and an opportunity for the public to provide input.

Commissioner Andary further clarified that the Charter Reform Working Group would not only address the Commission Streamlining Task Force but would also consider overall charter reform.

Although still in the early stages of development, Commissioners agreed that the draft should encourage community members to stay informed and engaged regarding the Charter Reform Working Group, to attend any upcoming meetings, and for Commissioners to remain actively involved.

Commissioners discussed what background information should be included regarding the Commission Streamlining Task Force.

1. Vote to publish draft press release:

**(Roll call vote) Andary (motioned)/Rihal (seconded) – 5 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous**

**Public Comment:**

Dr. Kathryn Johnson of San Franciscans for an Independent Women's Commission and the SFWPC shared how impressed she was by the strength of the comments presented during this process. She noted that many commissions—often those serving communities of color—have been cancelled. She asked the Commission to consider reaching out to other commissions, rather than limiting the call to action solely to other officials.

President Jones Lowrey asked if the Commission could return to this agenda item later, so they could move to agenda item 5A and give community members a chance to discuss that item.

Commissioner Andary requested that the Commission first finish the vote to designate which commissioner would handle the press release. She then suggested that Commissioner Moses be the designee to distribute the press release.

2. Vote to assign a Commissioner Moses to publish the press release on behalf of the Commission.

**(Roll Call Vote) Andary (motioned)/Jones Lowrey (seconded) – 5 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous**

**No public comment.**

**(The Commission moves to item 5A and will return to this item).**

**5A. NEW BUSINESS: CONCERNS REGARDING SF COUNTY JAIL AND WOMEN IN CUSTODY: *DISCUSSION***

President Jones Lowrey provided a brief overview of the concerns raised by members of the public and the Commission following the recent *Mission Local* article regarding the alleged searches of women in SF County Jail 2. She emphasized the seriousness of these reports and the need for focused attention on this matter, requesting that Director Aroche assess what additional steps the Department can take to support the women affected and ensure appropriate oversight.

President Jones Lowrey further recommended that the matter be evaluated through the appropriate channels and that the Commission's concerns be shared with the Human Rights Commission (HRC). She asked that the Mayor's Office be informed, emphasized the Department's and Commission's interest in monitoring the situation, and noted that a summary would be included in the Director's report to ensure transparency and public accountability.

Before beginning her remarks, Director Aroche, first acknowledged and thanked community members for being there and also acknowledged the recent loss of the elder, Ricardo “El Tigre” Peña who was part of the Mission and larger SF community.

Director Aroche shared that the Department was contacted by community members and organizations, including the Young Women's Freedom Center, who work closely with individuals in custody in San Francisco's jail system. In response to concerns about the allegations, the Department was invited to attend a community rally to represent its stance, where both she and Vice President Rivera were asked to comment. Director Aroche emphasized the Department's charter and administrative code mandates to review and support recommendations related to the treatment of women and girls in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Director Aroche also shared that DOSW was reminded of its role under Administrative Code Section 33.4 to advise the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, and City agencies on improvements to procedures concerning discrimination and sexual harassment.

Lastly, she shared that DOSW is working with the Department of Police Accountability encouraging them to continue moving forward with their own comprehensive independent review. The Department is also in communication with the Human Rights Commission to provide additional oversight on civil rights and discrimination concerns. Working closely with Director Tugbenyoh, the City Attorney, and community members, DOSW is maintaining ongoing dialogue with law enforcement agencies and oversight bodies to ensure accountability and to address community concerns.

President Jones Lowrey thanked Director Aroche, agreeing that she is absolutely right about the role of this Commission and its ability to raise these issues.

Vice President Rivera echoed that and also thanked Director Aroche for the way she has led on this issue and followed President Jones Lowrey's directive, noting that she has helped the Commission understand the complexity of the matter and how to navigate it.

**Public Comment:**

Ruth Barajas, Executive Director of the Latino Task Force, whose organization works directly with justice-impacted individuals, expressed that immediate attention needs to be given to what is happening to women inside SF County Jail. She shared that the patterns of abuse that have been reported are alarming, traumatic, and unacceptable, noting that this reflects systemic harm that requires systemic accountability. She expressed that they stand in full

support of the call to suspend and remove all deputies and supervisors involved while a full investigation takes place, citing the importance of a full, independent, community-informed investigation that centers on the women. She emphasized that this is about safety and ensuring that women in jail are treated with humanity. She noted that the community stands united and is asking the Commission to take a formal position to both acknowledge the harm and ensure proper oversight so that it does not happen again.

Valerie Tulier-Laiwa, a former Commissioner on the Commission on the Status of Women, questioned why we are allowing the position of women in society to be diminished and disregarded. She expressed that there should be mandatory training for all sheriffs, that the women should receive a formal apology from each individual involved, and that the Sheriff should commit to ensuring this never happens again. Lastly, she asked the Commission to take a leadership role on this issue.

Bianca Sanchez, representing the Latino Task Force Re-Entry Committee, shared that she has walked alongside justice-impacted families for nearly a decade. She called for immediate accountability and protection for the women harmed, starting with the suspension and removal of all deputies and supervisors involved. She emphasized the need for a fully independent, community-informed investigation that centers the voices of the women inside, rather than the institutions that have failed them. She highlighted the importance of trauma-informed counseling, support, and pre-trial release. She also stated that the strip searches in question were a reflection of power and humiliation, adding that this call for accountability is about the dignity and humanity of the women involved.

Joanna Hernandez shared that she was speaking as a community leader, a mother of someone currently incarcerated in SF County Jail, and as someone who has spent nearly 20 years standing with system-impacted families. She expressed deep concern over the treatment of women in San Francisco County Jail, framing it as a human crisis, not just a policy failure. She called for immediate accountability and protection for the women harmed, starting with the removal of all deputies and supervisors involved. She emphasized the need for a fully independent, community-informed investigation that centers the voices of incarcerated women. She highlighted the importance of prioritizing safety and healing through trauma-informed counseling, meaningful support, and access to programs, and called for an immediate end to blanket strip searches without reasonable suspicion. Lastly, she emphasized the need to end generational incarceration.

JuJu Li, the Statewide organizer at Young Women's Freedom Center, expressed solidarity with women currently incarcerated at San Francisco County Jail, condemning mass strip searches without individualized suspicion

as unlawful, traumatic, and harmful to their safety and well-being. She called for the immediate suspension and removal of deputies involved, independent investigations into the strip searches, support from the District Attorney for pre-trial releases of impacted women, and full funding for oversight while withholding new funding until accountability is achieved. She emphasized that the women deserve safety, healing, and justice.

Trancita Ponce, Ambassador with the Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition and a formerly incarcerated woman with 25 years of experience in the system, shared her personal experience with illegal strip searches, describing them as humiliating and traumatic. She expressed solidarity with women currently inside San Francisco County Jail and highlighted the ongoing mistreatment and retaliation against those who speak up. She called for the immediate suspension and removal of all deputies and supervisors involved, a fully independent, community-informed investigation, prioritization of safety and healing through community-based counseling and support services, pre-trial release for impacted women, ending blanket strip searches without individualized suspicion, proper handling and storage of body camera footage, and full funding for the Sheriff's oversight and accountability measures.

Foreign Tonga, a youth organizer and leader at the Young Women's Freedom Center, emphasized that abuse in the system is being normalized and hidden, calling for accountability for those responsible. She stressed that individuals involved should be suspended and that support for impacted women must address both mental and financial harm. She highlighted the importance of integrity in leadership and ensuring that women's voices are heard, underscoring the seriousness of the issue.

Karina Rodriguez and Karina Duarte from Nuestra Causa, and members of the Our Families for Justice Program, expressed deep concern regarding the events discussed, acknowledged the bravery of the women who shared their experiences despite hesitation, and affirmed strong solidarity with community partners and Commissioners in the ongoing effort to seek justice and protect women.

A representative from the Mass Liberation network called for the immediate suspension and removal of all involved deputies and supervisors, a fully independent, community-informed investigation, and an end to blanket strip searches without individualized reasonable suspicion. She urged prioritizing the safety and healing of incarcerated women through community-based counseling and support services, advocated for pre-trial release of impacted women, and called for safeguards to prevent tampering with body-worn camera footage. The speaker also urged the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to fully fund oversight, hire an independent inspector general, hold a special

Board hearing, and withhold new funding to the Sheriff's Office until accountability measures are implemented.

Estela Nataly Ortiz spoke as a community member, community organizer, and member of the Sheriff's Oversight Board, sharing her personal experience of sexual harassment by a police officer while fleeing domestic violence as a teenager and single mother. She emphasized that such abuse is longstanding and systemic, underscoring the need for policy, process, and systemic change. She expressed her commitment to working collaboratively with the Commission and the Sheriff's Oversight Board to address these issues.

Julie Soo spoke as an individual community member and as a member of the Sheriff's Oversight Board, noting her past 12 years of service on the Commission on the Status of Women. She commended Director Aroche for convening departments and community members and emphasized the importance of hearing directly from the community. She highlighted the Board's opportunity to hire a new Inspector General, expressed confidence in Sheriff Miyamoto and the Sheriff's command staff, and supported a thorough investigation conducted outside of Internal Affairs. She stressed the importance of continued cross-agency collaboration, drawing parallels to coordinated efforts that addressed domestic violence in the past, and encouraged public engagement with the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board.

Beverly Epton of the San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium emphasized that the vast majority of justice-involved women—approximately 90–95 percent—have experienced prior trauma, including child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence. She highlighted how such trauma increases vulnerability and enables abuses of power, underscoring the need for systemic accountability. She affirmed that improving and holding systems accountable is a core responsibility of DOSW and the Commission on the Status of Women, framed leadership as service, and urged the Commission to seek justice for impacted and all incarcerated women.

Calling in remotely, Nancy Breneau, a commissioner with the Santa Clara County Commission on the Status of Women and a board member of the National Association of Commissions for Women, spoke as an individual. She expressed shock at the events described and noted that such abuses occur nationwide. Drawing on Santa Clara County's experience with jail monitoring, public hearings, and jail reform efforts, she urged the Commission to take the issue seriously by convening a special public hearing, inviting organizations and women with lived experience to testify, and carefully reviewing and acting on the recommendations shared. She emphasized the critical role commissions play in addressing the needs of incarcerated women, offered to

share Santa Clara County's report and 18 policy recommendations, and encouraged the Commission to advance strong policy action.

### **3. (Return to) Prop E Commission Streamlining Task Force Committee**

President Jones Lowrey announced the return to item 3 on the agenda to discuss any further actions the Commission would like to take.

3. Vote to assign President Diane Jones Lowrey to draft the letter to the Board of Supervisors and develop a recommendation for the distribution plan.

Commissioner Moses noted that multiple commissions, including the Sheriff's Oversight Commission, face challenges such as insufficient funding. She recommended organizing a public-facing effort that brings together community members and representatives from the Women's Commission and other impacted commissions prior to the Board of Supervisors' vote. While acknowledging limitations due to the Sunshine Ordinance, she suggested that individuals could still participate and support the effort, even if formal group organizing is restricted.

Vice President Rivera emphasized the importance of the Commission having its own space to make a statement and suggested drafting a letter to the Board of Supervisors. She noted that if the Commission is mobilizing community members to contact the Board, it should also formally present a letter as an official Commission action and confirmed that the City Attorney has approved this approach. She suggested developing a toolkit or media strategy beyond just issuing a press release and emphasized the importance of understanding public meeting requirements. She also noted the value of collaborating with others while ensuring that women's issues have a dedicated space and audience for discussion.

Director Aroche discussed important meeting dates with the Commission regarding timely topics, including Prop E Commission Streamlining next steps, finalizing the strategic plan, the budget, and an overview of the Agency for Human Rights.

Vice President Rivera recommended that the Commission reconvene in January with the proposed plan and timeline to discuss plans for February and March.

Commissioner Andary clarified that March 1 is when the City Attorney will draft the charter amendment language. She added that, to her understanding, the Board of Supervisors will not receive anything until that point.



Commissioner Andary recommended that the Commission take the following steps: first, to send a letter directly from the Commission to the Board of Supervisors in February, which would allow more detailed communication without the typical two-minute speaking limit. She suggested following this with a public statement in March, noting that oral comments at that time would be limited to two minutes—or possibly one minute if there are many speakers.

City Attorney Brianna Voss cautioned that the task force timeline lists dates as “by February 1” or “by March 1,” meaning the actions could occur earlier. She suggested that the Commission keep this in mind when planning next steps.

President Jones Lowrey volunteered to take responsibility for creating the letter, which could be sent out in advance, with the opportunity to make edits at the January 28, 2026, meeting. She noted that this would allow the Commission to be prepared for the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission agreed with President Jones Lowrey's suggestion with the step next being for them to take a vote on assigning her with the task.

Commissioner Andary motioned to assign President Jones Lowrey to draft the letter to be sent to the Board of Supervisors. The President and Vice President suggested amending the motion to include drafting a letter along with a plan for its dissemination. Commissioner Rihal seconded the motion.

**(Roll Call Vote) Andary (motioned)/Rihal (seconded) – 5 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous**

**Public Comment:**

Julie Soo Julie explained that to comply with the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance, one designated person—here, the President—can draft the letter, while other commissioners provide input only through the commission secretary. The drafter incorporates comments and returns a final product for approval at a meeting, avoiding in-meeting edits. She also suggested involving the Executive Director and board secretary to outline the timeline and plan of action, which can similarly be circulated for input. Pre-planning these steps allows the Commission to focus on substantive discussion during the retreat.

Commissioner Moses suggested adding extra time to the upcoming Commission retreat for organizing.

The Commission agreed to add extra time to the retreat to thoroughly discuss the overall layout and next steps, review the draft letter, and propose actionable items for dissemination.

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

Director Aroche provided updates on internal planning and community engagement efforts. Over the past month, the strategic planning process has advanced, refining the department's mission, core values, and priorities. Three major listening sessions were completed—two with community-based organizations and one with the public—with another community conversation scheduled. These sessions, along with the 2024 community needs assessment, inform the department's strategy for the next three fiscal years.

She acknowledged commissioners' participation and thanked community hosts, including the Central Filipino community and staff members for their support.

Director Aroche also highlighted policy engagement with the Board of Supervisors, including collaboration with Supervisor Melgar on a resolution assessing city investments in women's services and an upcoming hearing by Supervisor Chen on county jail conditions. The department continues to work closely with the Department of Police Accountability, Human Rights Commission, and Sheriff's Oversight Committee to develop recommendations safeguarding women.

Lastly, she noted progress with the Agency on Human Rights, including a recent all-staff meeting with Director Mawuli Tugbenyoh and the Human Rights Commission to update staff and engage them in the strategic planning process. She then presented the presentation to the Commission, providing an overview and background on both departments and their forward-looking planning under the new agency.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Andary asked for clarification on who approves the budget for the Agency on Human Rights. She inquired whether COSW approves the line items specific to DOSW or if that responsibility lies with the Human Rights Commission.

Director Aroche confirmed that DOSW would have to submit the budget related to the department to be approved by COSW.

Vice President Rivera and Commissioner Andary expressed concerns around the budget under the new umbrella of AHR.

Vice President Rivera expressed concern about the AHR org chart. She emphasized the need for the Commission to understand the chart, ensure investments align with departmental priorities, and support advocacy efforts, while questioning how much input the department has received from the Mayor regarding the budget and next steps.

Director Aroche shared that the department is included as a separate entity in budget discussions. She noted that, to her understanding, a report will be provided this Friday, with CFO Samuel Thomas attending to represent the Agency on Human Rights. The report will outline next steps, though there are considerations about a potential reduction in funding given the current budget forecast.

President Jones Lowrey questioned whether the Agency on Human Rights has its own budget or if funding is allocated only to the two departments under it. She asked what the agency is funded for, noting that the work is carried out within the departments.

Director Aroche explained that the agency budget is structured with a separation between the Department on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Commission. While both fall under the same umbrella, the budget is itemized and tracked separately, allowing staff to engage with and monitor each department's funding within the city and county's budget system.

President Jones Lowrey questioned whether there are ways to advocate for programs if the budget is cut. She expressed curiosity on how to elevate the importance of programs and the people to support them so that they are maintained.

Director Aroche explained that she continues to engage directly with the budget office and CFO to identify funding gaps and support program needs. She highlighted efforts to secure an extension for the guaranteed income pilot project, including finding budget resources, navigating contracts with the City Attorney, and advocating to the Mayor's Office by providing impact data and evaluation results.

**Public Comment:**

Dr. Tate thanked the department for the town halls/community meetings, noting that both she and a staff member were able to participate. She also expressed concern regarding the charter workgroup, emphasizing the importance of careful consideration when making changes to charters—particularly in the context of condensing commissions—and stressed the need for attendance in these working group conversations.

## V. NEW BUSINESS:

### A. COMMISSIONER UPDATE: *DISCUSSION*

President Jones Lowrey discussed opportunities to think innovatively about supporting the Commission, particularly through public-private funding for programs. She noted that such funding has been used in the past and suggested agendaizing this topic for the strategic planning session to explore ways to leverage private institutions in support of programs important to the Commission.

Vice President Rivera suggested reviewing the Commission's bylaws, discussing the process for placing items on the agenda and calendar, considering the use of ad hoc committees to improve time efficiency

Commissioner Andary suggested the Commission gather more data on women and housing, particularly the challenges women—especially women of color—face in accessing housing and programs. She recommended that the department collaborate with relevant organizations to present findings and insights, potentially in Q2 of next year, to help to better understand the impact of zoning and housing policies, including effects on rent-controlled homes.

#### **Public Comment.**

Julie Soo suggested that each commissioner submit their top five priority items, ranked in order, to the Commission's secretary. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a gender lens, noting that dividing the Department of the Status of Women's responsibilities under a larger umbrella risks diluting its work, and expressed support for a separate department and commission under the charter.

### B. DOSW PRIORITIES/STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE: *DISCUSSION*

Director Aroche provided an update on the final in person community listening session scheduled for December 10 at the Southeast Community Center and encouraged Commissioners to help maximize attendance, including sharing via social media. She noted a virtual session will follow for accessibility. After the sessions, staff will compile feedback into a matrix, review it with the City Attorney, and use it to inform goals, objectives, and planning for the upcoming retreat. Commissioners will review materials in advance to facilitate efficient discussion, and she shared that she also plans to coordinate with the Mayor's Office to align strategic planning before returning to the Commission for a final vote on the draft.

#### **Commissioner Comment:**

Vice President Rivera requested clarification on the process for approving the strategic plan through the Mayor's Office.

Director Aroche clarified that typically the Commission votes to approve recommendations they want sent to the Mayor's Office, and the Mayor then makes the final decision on those recommendations, similar to any major decision-making process.

President Jones Lowrey asked whether the department had solicited input from the Human Rights Commission regarding the strategic planning. Director Aroche confirmed that they have been.

**No Public Comment.**

**VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: *DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE ACTION***

President Jones Lowrey reviewed the items captured for discussion, including reviewing the bylaws, exploring public-private partnerships, addressing housing for women, and girls in sports. She noted that not all topics could be addressed immediately and recommended keeping unresolved items on each agenda to maintain a running log and ensure they are eventually addressed.

**No Public Comment.**

**VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: *DISCUSSION***

Julie Soo shared that the Sheriff's Oversight Board is seeking a new Inspector General and is collaborating with Human Resources and a recruiting firm. She welcomed input from the Commission and department on desired qualities, emphasizing the importance of applying a gender lens.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.