



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Greg Wagner
Controller
ChiaYu Ma
Deputy Controller

Charter Reform Working Group Meeting – Draft Meeting Summary

March 4, 2026

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 201

3:00pm

1) Opening Remarks and Introduction

Alicia John-Baptiste and Board President Rafael Mandelman opened the meeting by providing updates on proposed legislation based on the Working Group member discussion. Ms. John-Baptiste informed the group that draft legislation would be shared soon and that she anticipates continuing to engage the group over the next few months. President Mandelman shared next steps for the Board of Supervisors process, including an upcoming hearing on the Commission Streamlining recommendations.

Greg Wagner reviewed the agenda and goals of today's meeting. He shared an anticipated timeline for report publication.

- Kim Tavaglione asked for clarification on the report content and process for publication.
- Greg Wagner and Rafael Mandelman provided clarification that the report will summarize the working group discussions to provide feedback to policymakers, but will not provide official recommendations.

2) Values Exercise: Results and Discussion

Natasha Mihal provided an update on the values exercises that members completed in meetings #2 and #3. She shared data on how members ranked different values and stated that the results will be memorialized in the final report.

- Tiffany expressed surprise that fiscal responsibility was ranked as low as it was. She also expressed that some values presented were redundant or were expectations rather than values. She stated that ConnectedSF supports reforms that increase accountability and opposes reforms that harden bureaucracy against corruption or weaken voter power.
- Shakirah Simley noted that the Charter affirms many of the values discussed, such as equity, inclusion, and community support. She stated that we should not deprioritize the values that are already in the Charter.

- John Doherty stated that he was happy to see transparency and integrity rated highly. He was surprised to see affordability was ranked lower on the list.
- Sherilyn Adams cautioned that people may have interpreted values statements differently. She noted that reforms should recognize the values that are already in the Charter and stated that the values presented are not in opposition to each other.
- Katherine August-deWilde stated that everyone believes affordability is important and noted that she completed the exercise through the framework of the four topic areas discussed in the Working Group meetings.
- Zach Goldman expressed that it was interesting to see executive authority ranked last. He noted that his interpretation is that for this group, efficient and effective government does not necessarily mean greater executive authority.

3) Presentation and Discussion by Topic Area

a) Policymaking

Greg Wagner presented additional research and data on ballot measures and a summary of Working Group member feedback on potential reform ideas.

Natasha Mihal facilitated discussion, asking members if summary accurately reflected the discussion in the room and if members had any additional feedback.

- Zach Goldman appreciated the Controller's Office's commitment to neutrality but requested that the framing of the feedback reflect the words used in the discussion, such as stating members opposed a reform option rather than had concerns about a reform option.
- Norma Garcia expressed concern about the potential impact on democracy of some of the proposals presented. She noted that civic participation is core to San Francisco.
- Tiffany Waugh expressed appreciation for Ms. Garcia's comment about democracy and noted that voters are important component of checks and balances in San Francisco's government.
- Steven Bacio expressed support for a strong executive authority and stated that we vote for elected officials and should let them do their jobs. He noted that the voters' check on the balance of power is being able to vote out an elected official.
- Miss Narula stated that the summary of feedback was a fair representation of what was said in the room. She noted that it was important to try to make these types of decisions easier for future generations.

- Kim Tavaglione appreciated the additional data but requested that numbers be presented alongside percentages.
- Fred Blackwell asked about potential changes to the Ethics Commission's ability to place items on the ballot, referencing public comment from Pat Ford, Ethics Director, at a prior meeting.
- Greg Wagner briefly explained the process for the Ethics Commission to place items on the ballot. He noted this was discussed at the Commission Streamlining Task Force and was referred to in a prior Working Group meeting.

b) Operational Efficiency

Greg Wagner presented additional benchmarking research and a summary of feedback on reform options.

Natasha Mihal facilitated discussion, asking members if the summary accurately reflected the discussion in the room and if members had any additional feedback, particularly around options to reform procurement.

- Kim Tavaglione commented that removing procurement rules could lead to corruption. She stated that a lot was missing and encouraged reaching out to workers.
- Katherine August-deWilde discussed the risk of having a non-centralized procurement strategy, particularly around technology. She noted that reviewing procurement could save the City money, and that there are likely some voter-approved policies that are no longer relevant.
- Tiffany Waugh stated that ConnectedSF members supported increasing the Controller's Office's budget for auditing and introducing incentives for cost cutting and problem solving. She expressed support for granting the City Administrator more authority, improving procurement rules, and other reforms that centralize and streamline.
- Shakirah Simley requested that the City better define who is a grantee and who is a vendor, noting the level of oversight the City provides over nonprofit contracts. She also stated that procurement laws often have policy impacts, and asked about ensuring continued checks and balances and community oversight.
- Aimee Alden spoke to the theme of policy ideas that limit procurement, providing an example of requiring contractors to agree to abide by the MacBride principles. She recommended considering adding a mandatory review of these types of regulations after a certain number of years.

c) City Organization

Greg Wagner presented additional benchmarking research and a summary of feedback on reform options.

Natasha Mihal facilitated discussion, asking members if the summary accurately reflected the discussion in the room and if members had any additional feedback, particularly around moving specific departments or functions to code.

- Kim Tavaglione remarked that the public would not support options that impact Mayor's Office staffing given current budget conversations.
- Sherilyn Adams noted that it is difficult to comment on specific recommendations without understanding which Commission Streamlining Task Force recommendations will go forward. President Mandelman asked for any specifics and Ms. Adams provided an example of not wanting to increase Mayoral authority over a department head while also eliminating that department's oversight commission.
- Bob Fisher referenced the earlier values conversation, noting that in order to have efficient and effective government, it is important to have a government that can move quickly and solve problems. He stated that reforms around procurement and city organization would help.
- John Doherty expressed concern about the Commission Streamlining Task Force recommendations to increase the number of commissioners that serve at-will.

d) Resource Management

Greg Wagner presented additional research and a summary of feedback on reform options.

Natasha Mihal facilitated discussion, asking members if the summary accurately reflected the discussion in the room and if members had any additional feedback.

- Katherine August-deWilde agreed that it would be a bad idea to eliminate baselines, but noted that the continued growth of baselines over time makes it important to convene a group to discuss potential reform.
- Tiffany Waugh expressed support for sunset dates, general fund returns, and restricting growth over time. She also remarked that the goal of baseline consolidation should be cost savings. She spoke about the need to support SFUSD and children's services.

- Fred Blackwell urged the group to discuss reform options for existing and future baselines separately, noting that discussing limiting future set-asides would be less fraught than amending voter-approved funding.
- Jose Lopez noted that members of the SF Parent Coalition had anxiety around this topic and encouraged continuing conversation with key stakeholders within policy areas. He also recommended framing flexibility as expanding potential uses for funding, rather than proposing cuts to funding.
- Kim Tavaglione spoke about the history of why voters placed baselines on the ballot, noting that baselines indicate a policy area's importance to voters.
- Norma Garcia advised that the language used to discuss options is important. She also noted the importance of continuing to value civic participation and community involvement.

4) Meeting Closeout and Next Steps

Mayor Daniel Lurie thanked Working Group members for their participation.

Greg Wagner briefly explained next steps and closed out the meeting.

5) Public Comment

- Margaret Brodtkin expressed support for baselines and set-asides, noting that the children's baselines are impactful.
- Jill Wynns spoke in support of school set-asides. She noted that school set-asides fill a gap in local funding for schools, that voters always pass school funding, and that this reflects the values of San Francisco.
- Gina Curtis expressed that the restrictions on funding uses were important and cautioned against giving the school district discretion over funds. She noted that voters supported the school set-aside.
- Sarah Kern discussed that it is important to protect funding for SFUSD.
- Flo Kelly discussed the importance of having representation from unhoused people in rooms such as this one.
- Jenny Friedenbach asked if reforms would increase accountability or centralize power. She discussed commission streamlining recommendations and noted opposition to options raised to change signature thresholds or remove baselines.
- Alyssa Avalos spoke about federal government budget cuts threatening the LGBTQ community and expressed opposition to San Francisco budget cuts that would impact services.
- An unnamed individual stated that she is a current SFUSD teacher and spoke in support of school set-asides that fund school libraries.
- Jessica Agnos expressed that she felt SFUSD was mismanaging funds.

- Michelle Jaques stated the importance of the voices of CBOs and workers in decision-making. She expressed concern about the possibility of removing fund restrictions.
- Brandie Bowen-Bremond spoke in support of baselines, noting that voters approve these funds each time they are on the ballot and that the funds have contributed to positive outcomes in San Francisco.
- Rachel Jones expressed her support for baselines, noting that she would oppose any efforts to eliminate baselines.
- Stella Lochman spoke in support of the Arts Commission, noting her opposition to Commission Streamlining Task Force recommendations and stating her agreement with Working Group members who spoke to the need to discuss Charter reform options alongside the commission streamlining recommendations.
- Teresa Dulalas expressed concern that proposed reforms could weaken community participation in government and opposed reforms that would limit shared governance.
- Zach Frial remarked that the reforms under discussion were misguided and that everyday San Franciscans should have been represented in the Working Group. He opposed reforms.
- Susan Green expressed the importance of the Department of the Environment remaining the Charter in order to meet the City's goals.
- Andrea Mejia spoke about the need to protect children and not have funding for children determined by the regular budget process. She also noted that Working Group composition did not reflect the community impacted most by reforms.
- Rebecca spoke about the difficulty of following Charter reform meetings and expressed the importance of women's rights.
- Jenny Belway noted that the Dignity Fund is an important source of support for her organization. She asked why the Working Group did not include more nonprofit directors.
- Jaqueline Zimmer Jones also spoke about the importance of the Dignity Fund. She supported increasing baselines and gathering more community input.
- Jason Lyman expressed that San Francisco's direct democracy is part of what makes San Francisco beautiful.
- Rachelle Axel noted that voters consistently supported set-asides and spoke to the public support for maintaining baselines. She also did not support the commission streamlining process.
- An unnamed individual spoke in support of baselines, noting that she would oppose any efforts to cut funding.
- Margaret Libby noted that it was important to increase public awareness of Charter reform efforts.

- Ani Rivera noted the potential impact of reforms on the Latine community and stressed the importance of the will of voters. She also noted that many community members exercise power through commissions.
- An unnamed youth asked why the Charter would defund the student success fund.

DRAFT