



Mayor
Daniel Lurie

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



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 22, 2026

San Francisco City Hall, Room 408

COMMISSION ROSTER

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

Agenda

I. CALL TO ORDER: DISCUSSION

President Diane Jones Lowrey called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Ms. Dominique Blakely performed roll call and confirmed that 6 of 7 Commissioners were present (quorum). Ms. Blakely read the Ramaytush Ohlone Land acknowledgement.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: DISCUSSION and ACTION

The Commission reviewed and approved the minutes from the regular Commission meeting on March 25, 2026.

No Public Comment.

March 25, 2026, Minutes— (Roll Call Vote) Andary (motioned)/Miry (seconded) – 6 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. RECOGNITION OF BLACK WOMEN REVOLT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND LA CASA DE LAS MADRES: DISCUSSION

President Jones Lowrey started the meeting by sharing a quote that she felt was reflective of the current moment and relevant to COSW. The quote read: “Peace, in all its aspects, is now clearly a woman’s issue. Perhaps if there were less patriarchy, there’d be less violence.” – Mary Frances Farenthold.

She then expressed the importance of creating positive change and shared her appreciation for the Commission having the opportunity to recognize two very important organizations: Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) and La Casa de las Madres.

On behalf of the COSW, Commissioner Miry expressed the Commission’s honor in formally recognizing BWRADV and La Casa de las Madres for their outstanding contributions to supporting survivors of domestic violence and for advancing safety, healing, and justice for women and their families.

The Commission began by recognizing BWRADV, and Commissioner Miry welcomed Dr. Tate and the team to come to the podium. She also highlighted and congratulated Dr. Tate once again for being named Woman of the Year for California’s 19th Assembly District.

The commission began by recognizing BWRADV and Commissioner Miry welcomed Dr. Tate and staff to come up to the podium. She also highlighted and congratulated Dr. Tate was again for being awarded the Women of the Year for California's 19th Assembly District. Remarks highlighted the organization's efforts to create safe and affirming spaces that promote healing, dignity, self-determination, and support for survivors within the community.

The Commission then continued by recognizing La Casa de las Madres, with Commissioner Andary providing remarks and welcoming La Casa de las Madres team to come to the podium. Remarks highlighted the organization's role as a cornerstone of safety and healing in San Francisco, providing hope, stability, and resources to individuals experiencing violence and crisis.

The Commission also acknowledged both organizations for their compassionate, survivor-centered approach and their continued commitment to advancing safety, healing, empowerment, and support for survivors of domestic violence and gender-based harm in the community.

Commissioner Andary then turned it over to Dr. Aroche to share a few words.

Director Aroche shared remarks recognizing Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence (BWRADV) and reflected on the organization's support and partnership with the Department on the Status of Women. She acknowledged Dr. Tate as one of the first individuals to warmly welcome her upon her appointment as Executive Director and expressed appreciation for the organization's advocacy, leadership, and commitment to supporting survivors despite limited resources.

Director Aroche also highlighted the organization's crisis response work, court advocacy, and dedication to uplifting vulnerable communities, and reaffirmed the Department's commitment to continuing to support BWRADV and its mission.

Director Aroche expressed appreciation on behalf of the Department for La Casa de las Madres, highlighting its role as a vital “home” and safe refuge for women and families seeking to leave abusive relationships. She acknowledged the organization’s decades of service in San Francisco, spanning multiple mayoral administrations and generations of survivors, and emphasized its enduring impact in providing safety, stability, and support to those in need. Director Aroche also recognized La Casa’s critical services for Spanish-speaking women, undocumented communities, and other vulnerable populations, and thanked the organization for its continued dedication to providing refuge, advocacy, and care.

Dr. Aroche then welcomed Executive Director Dr. Tate of BWRADV and Executive Director Lusero Arias to share remarks.

Dr. Tate expressed gratitude for the collective efforts of staff, partners, and supporters, noting that the work is challenging but made possible through collaboration. She recognized key staff members, including Taylor, Rachel, Monica, and Wanita, highlighting their individual contributions and impact on the organization’s work.

Dr. Tate also emphasized the importance of the Department on the Status of Women’s foundational support, noting that the organization’s first grant came from DOSW and acknowledging its continued role in sustaining their work. She concluded by thanking the Commission for its ongoing support, contributions, and partnership in advancing services for survivors of domestic violence.

Lusero Arias, Executive Director of La Casa de las Madres emphasized that a city cannot claim equity while people are living in fear in their own homes. She expressed gratitude for the recognition and highlighted the longstanding partnership between La Casa de las Madres, the Commission, and the Department on

the Status of Women, which dates back to early city investments in domestic violence services.

She noted that since its founding in 1976, La Casa has focused on providing both immediate safety and long-term stability for survivors. She underscored the continued urgency of this work, citing the impacts of domestic violence and housing insecurity in San Francisco.

Arias shared that La Casa operates a 35-bed emergency shelter that is consistently over capacity and served 231 women and children last year. She also noted that the organization operates 24-hour crisis hotlines and text lines, responding to nearly 7,000 calls annually, and provided support to more than 600 survivors through drop-in and community-based services, with advocates working across systems to ensure survivors can access support wherever they are.

Dr. Aroche formally recognized both organizations and presented them with certificates of recognition on behalf of the Department and the Commission.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Chung expressed appreciation for the recognition of two important city organizations led by women of color. She emphasized the importance of supporting and resourcing this work, noting that while current conditions do not always reflect that priority, she hopes the City will be able to do more in the future to strengthen and sustain these efforts.

Public Comment:

Beverly Upton of the San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium noted that in her 25th year in the role, she was struck by the Commission honoring both one of the City's oldest and newest domestic violence organizations. She reflected that this represents the continuity of work across generations and expressed confidence that the field is in good hands moving forward.

Sammy Rayner of Community Forward San Francisco, speaking on behalf of the Women’s Housing Coalition, echoed previous comments and emphasized the importance of recognizing and honoring organizations serving women in the community. She noted that acknowledgements such as these play a meaningful role in elevating women’s contributions, highlighting inequities, and guiding how resources are directed within the City.

Taylor Stommel, Youth Coordinator of Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence, acknowledged the importance of legal service partners that support survivors, including the Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic (CROC) and Bay Area Legal Aid. She emphasized the critical role these organizations play in addressing inequities by assisting survivors with temporary restraining orders, restraining orders related to custody and safety concerns, and gun violence restraining orders.

Dr. Tate expressed appreciation for La Casa de las Madres. She commended La Casa for its longstanding, exemplary work over 50 years, describing the organization as a model that has informed and supported the development of programming at BWRADV. She further thanked La Casa for its consistent partnership and responsiveness, emphasizing that the organization “shows up” when called upon and expressing gratitude for its continued service.

B. RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE DETENTION OF ANGELINA LOPEZ-JIMENEZ AND HER DAUGHTER AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION

President Jones Lowrey thanked Commissioner Miry for bring this situation to the commissioner and turned to her to speak to the drafted resolution.

Commissioner Miry shared her intention for calling for the resolution, expressing deep concern after viewing social media footage of an incident at San Francisco International Airport, which

she described as an act of state violence involving the assault of a woman and abuse of a child.

Commissioner Miry noted distress that bystanders appeared unable to successfully intervene and emphasized that such an incident occurring in San Francisco conflicted with the city's stated values of protecting and standing up for vulnerable communities. She urged the Commission to adopt the proposed resolution as a public statement condemning these forms of traumatic immigration practices and affirming the city's values, citing her professional experience in supporting women through trauma and emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and validating survivors' experiences.

Commissioner Miry also suggested circulating the resolution to nonprofit partner organizations for possible support before forwarding it to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Miry then read the resolution.

Commissioner Comment:

President Jones Lowrey thanked Commissioner Miry and expressed that reading and hearing the resolution aloud helps reinforce awareness of the incident and its impact. She emphasized the importance of using the Commission's platform and visibility to elevate what occurred and help prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

Commissioner Chung expressed support for the resolution, sharing that she was at the airport the day after the incident and experienced heightened anxiety as a result of what had occurred. She noted that the emotional impact continues to linger for many individuals, particularly women of color and immigrant communities.

Commissioner Andary expressed support for the resolution.

No Public Comment.

To approve the resolution condemning the detention of Angelina Lopez Hemenez and her daughter at San Francisco International Airport and to direct its submission to the Board of supervisors -

(Roll Call Vote) Miry (motioned)/Jones Lowrey (seconded) – 6 ayes, 0 nays - Unanimous

C. PRESENTATION ON STATE LEGISLATION: DISCUSSION

Denise Heitzenroder provided an overview of the City’s process for supporting state legislation, explaining that proposals must be reviewed through the State Legislative Committee in coordination with impacted departments before advancing for approval. Ms. Hetzenroder reported that the Committee unanimously supported two bills presented by the Department: AB 1973, which expands abortion care access by allowing qualified nurse practitioners and physician assistants to provide medication and aspiration abortion care in the first trimester, and AB 1876, the Fair Care for All Act, which would codify Affordable Care Act anti-discrimination protections into California law. She emphasized the importance of both measures in advancing equitable healthcare access and protecting vulnerable communities.

Ms. Hetzenroder also highlighted support for additional legislation advanced by the Department of Public Health, including AB 2302, requiring toxic metal labeling for infant formula, and AB 2160, expanding lactation support for Medi-Cal recipients after hospital discharge. She noted that these measures help advance health equity for women and birthing people, particularly communities of color. Additional legislation is currently being tracked for possible future recommendation, and community members were invited to share legislative proposals for consideration.

Commissioner Comment:

President Jones Lowrey asks whether such State Legislative Committee update can become a regular occurrence.

Director Aroche shared that policy advocacy is now an intentional focus of the Department under the Women's Agenda, including proactively reviewing and supporting state legislation through the City's legislative process. She noted that the previously discussed bills were brought forward by Planned Parenthood and encouraged community members to continue submitting legislation for the Department's consideration.

Commissioner Miry asked for clarification on the process for supporting legislation, specifically whether support is being provided by the Department, the Commission, or the City through the Mayor's Office.

Ms. Heitzenroder explained that once legislation is approved by the State Legislative Committee, it becomes an official position of the City and County, and City lobbyists may then advocate for it at the state level. She described the process for submitting letters of support. She also noted that due to scheduling constraints, timing does not always allow for commission co-sponsorship in advance, but that efforts can be made to align future opportunities for formal Commission support when feasible.

Commissioner Miry asked whether DPH has to take a separate stance on the bills discussed regarding abortion access and services, or how the process works.

Denise explained that the Department does consult with DPH in advance and is currently working with them on certain bills, including efforts to expand abortion care coverage in California for veterans following federal-level changes.

Commissioner Miry emphasized that DPH is a large agency with a significant budget and noted the importance of its involvement in flagging relevant legislation.

Director Aroche explained that the Director of DPH has encouraged ongoing collaboration between departments and that DPH has historically taken positions on state legislation quite actively, often being one of the most engaged departments in the State Legislative Committee. She noted that, in terms of organization, the lead agency that submits legislation then works with other City agencies.

Commissioner Miry asked for further clarification on whether DPH is independently advocating for public health-related issues, such as abortion access.

Commissioner Chung noted that the Department has equity officers who focus on equity and inclusion, but acknowledged that due to the size of the Department it is difficult to address every issue simultaneously. She explained that the Department prioritizes key public health concerns, including environmental health issues and long-standing community concerns, and works to elevate those issues when they are identified.

Commissioner Chung added that leadership includes clinical expertise, which helps inform attention to women's health issues such as abortion care, and suggested that these topics are likely to continue receiving focus. She also raised the importance of considering how to support individuals coming from out-of-state seeking care that may be restricted elsewhere, and noted that while policies currently exist, further consideration from legislators may be needed.

Director Aroche shared that, under Dr. Tsai's leadership, when reviewing legislation the Department actively sought DPH's engagement as a co-supporting partner. She noted that DPH immediately assigned staff to work closely with Denise to coordinate review and ensure alignment on the bills moving forward.

Commissioner Chung explained that the Department of Public Health is composed of two main branches: a clinical branch that

oversees city health programs, and a population health branch that focuses more on education and research.

Public comment:

Sammy Rayner from Community Forward and the Women’s Housing Coalition, spoke in support of AB 1573, a non-fiscal bill co-authored by the coalition. She explained that the bill would include survivors of sexual assault, human trafficking, and domestic violence in housing element planning language and is advancing with strong support. She noted it aims to address housing equity gaps for survivors and may serve as a precedent alongside other priority populations, and that the coalition will seek letters of support as the bill moves forward.

D. DOSW WOMEN’S AGENDA UPDATE: DISCUSSION

Dr. Aroche provided an update on the implementation phase of the Women’s Agenda, focusing on securing department buy-in, defining agency ownership, and meeting with departmental heads. She noted ongoing discussions with departments to assess funding, implementation plans, and long-term outcomes for the agenda’s priorities.

She reported strong engagement across multiple departments, with additional meetings planned through May, and upcoming updates to the Mayor’s Office regarding commitments and resource needs amid budget constraints. Dr. Aroche emphasized the coordination effort required across agencies to align on expectations for implementing the Women’s Agenda, and noted continued integration of the agenda into legislative review and engagement with elected officials to clarify commitments.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Rival asked whether, during these meetings, the Department is presenting suggested areas of focus or if

departments are instead reviewing the Women’s Agenda and identifying their own priorities and commitments.

Dr. Aroche explained that prior to meetings, the Department sends a standardized questionnaire based on prior discussions to confirm existing commitments and next steps under the Women’s Agenda. She noted that meetings with departments and their “champions” are used to validate or update commitments, though most have remained consistent or strengthened.

President Jones Lowrey asks which departments DOSW has met with as of today, noting that the fiscal climate is such that DOSW will need support, especially from larger, well-funded departments such as DPH. She asked about meetings with MOHCD, particularly in regards to our safety pillar.

Dr. Aroche shared that DOSW has met with several departments, including the DPH, multiple times, particularly given current funding conditions. She noted that some departments require additional meetings to better understand status and needs, and that DPH is among those being engaged more frequently.

Public Comment:

Sammy Rayner thanked the Commission for its leadership on the Women’s Agenda and noted growing community momentum behind the effort. She shared that the Women’s Housing Coalition has completed a Women’s Needs Assessment, surveying 408 women across six San Francisco neighborhoods.

E. CONSIDERATION OF BYLAWS REVISIONS: DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE ACTION

President Jones Lowrey provided a brief recap of prior discussion on the Commission’s bylaws, noting that VP Rivera and Commissioner Rihal, in partnership with the City Attorney and the Commission Secretary, will be reviewing proposed updates. She summarized key areas of potential update, including officer terms, meeting cadence, subcommittee structure, attendance policies,

and role definitions. She noted that no vote was taken and that outstanding questions will be revisited at the next meeting with additional clarity from the City Attorney.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Moses asked for clarification on whether the Commission would be voting on the proposed changes. President Jones Lowrey confirmed that a vote may be taken at the next meeting, depending on how the discussion proceeds.

Commissioner Miry noted that if scheduling conflicts prevent some members from attending the discussion, she would like to hear their perspectives in advance on items of concern.

Commissioners confirmed their attendance for the next meeting.

No Public Comment.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: DISCUSSION

Dr. Aroche provided an update highlighting key departmental priorities and engagements. She began by recognizing April observances, including Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Black Maternal Health Week, Child Abuse Prevention Month, Trans Visibility Week, and Lesbian Visibility Week, emphasizing their importance in elevating survivor voices, addressing disparities, and advancing equity and safety. She noted the Department's participation in related events and reaffirmed that these observances reflect actionable commitments rather than symbolic recognition.

She also reported on community engagements, including participation in the 50th anniversary of the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women and collaborations with other agencies on gender equity initiatives. She highlighted ongoing coordination with the Human Rights Commission and preparation for budget-related discussions under a shared agency framework.

Dr. Aroche provided updates on jail and custody policy work in partnership with oversight bodies, noting continued progress on recommendations and policy reviews related to custody practices. She also outlined ongoing programmatic work, including SF Strong Starts, guaranteed income initiatives, and the development of a gender analysis report of City commissions and boards.

Finally, she noted ongoing legislative and Board of Supervisors engagement, upcoming hearings and policy collaborations, and key upcoming dates, including memorial and awareness events. She closed by emphasizing the importance of moving beyond awareness toward accountability and action for survivors.

Commissioner Comment:

President Jones Lowrey thanked Director Aroche for the update, noting the breadth of ongoing work. She stated that the information helps clarify how the Strategic Plan and Women’s Agenda are being implemented in practice, and expressed appreciation for seeing the work take shape.

No Public Comment.

V. COMMISSIONER UPDATE: DISCUSSION

Commissioner Andary announced a Women’s Budget Town Hall scheduled for April 28 at the Women’s Building from 6–7 PM, co-hosted by multiple community organizations. She noted the event will focus on preventing budget cuts that impact marginalized communities and encourage community participation and feedback. She added that this may be the first in a series of budget-focused town halls for different communities, with additional sessions planned.

Commissioner Miry shared that she would hold off on providing her update until the next meeting.

President Jones Lowrey reflected on a recent personal experience while visiting family in Maryland, referencing news about the death of the Virginia lieutenant governor and his wife and expressing the emotional impact of the incident. She spoke about the difficulty of processing such events, particularly in the broader context of violence affecting women, and noted feeling overwhelmed by similar cases that continue to emerge.

She shared that being in a supportive community setting, including a women's college board meeting, was helpful in processing those emotions, and emphasized the importance of community, connection, and shared understanding when confronting violence against women.

Public Comment:

Dr. Tate expressed appreciation for the Women's Agenda and commended the Commission's work in advancing it, noting the importance of making women's experiences visible to the City. She also acknowledged President Jones Lowrey's earlier comments and shared empathy for the emotional weight of recent events.

Dr. Tate requested a moment of reflection to honor the lives of women who have lost their lives in recent weeks, noting multiple recent deaths. She named several individuals in recognition of their lives and called attention to the ongoing impact of violence against women.

VI. PROSPECTIVE CLOSED SESSION CONCERNING PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF DOSW'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: DISCUSSION AND ACTION

- (a) No public comment on matters pertaining to closed session.
- (b) President Jones Lowrey called for a vote to go into closed session. Commissioner Rihal moved to go into closed session. Commissioner Moses seconded the motion.

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

6:40 pm- Commissioners move into closed session.

(c) [PROSPECTIVE CLOSED SESSION]

Public Employee Performance Evaluation of Executive Director,
Department on the Status of Women (Cal. Govt. Code §
54954.5(e); Admin. Code § 67.8(a)(4)).

(Present: President Jones Lowrey, Commissioners Andary, Chung,
Miry, Moses, Rihal, and Commission Secretary Blakely.)

(d) [RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION]

VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT : DISCUSSION

No Public Comment.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.