



Mayor
Daniel Lurie

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



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

5:00 pm

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 (Excused)
Commissioner	Dr. Anne Moses
Commissioner	Dr. Raveena Rihal (Excused)

Agenda

I. CALL TO ORDER: DISCUSSION

President Jones Lowrey called the meeting or order at 5:05 PM.

Ms. Dominique Blakely performed roll call and confirmed that 4 out of 7 Commissioners 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 June 24, 2026.

No Public Comment.

June 24, 2026, Minutes— (Roll Call Vote) Chung (motioned)/ Andary (seconded) – 4 ayes, 0 nays – Unanimous

President Jones Lowrey welcomed everyone and recognized Pride Month and Juneteenth, reflecting on the importance of celebrating diversity, inclusion, and equality. She shared her appreciation for the City's Pride and Juneteenth events and emphasized the value of representation, allyship, and protecting the rights of all communities. President Jones Lowrey also acknowledged the contributions of Opal Lee in the establishment of Juneteenth as a federal holiday and noted the continued importance of advancing equity and equal rights, particularly for women and LGBTQ+ communities.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. RECOGNITION OF FREEDOM BRAIDERS AND YOUNG WOMEN'S FREEDOM CENTER: DISCUSSION

Sammie Rayner, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Community Forward, presented an overview of the organization's work and recent findings from the Women's Housing Coalition's Women's Needs Assessment survey of women experiencing housing instability and homelessness in San Francisco.

Ms. Rayner shared that Community Forward recently updated its mission to explicitly center women and survivors of violence and highlighted the organization's continuum of care, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and a housing subsidy program that has

helped house 83 women over the past year. She noted that women and gender-expansive people represent a significant portion of San Francisco's unhoused population, while access to shelter and permanent housing remains limited.

Ms. Rayner presented preliminary findings from a citywide survey of 408 women, which found that many respondents had experienced violence, felt unsafe while unhoused or in shelter settings, and had experienced repeated episodes of homelessness. The findings also identified domestic violence as a leading contributor to homelessness among respondents, underscoring the need for survivor-centered housing and services.

Ms. Rayner reported that the Women's Housing Coalition is conducting focus groups to further inform its research and plans to release a comprehensive report in September, followed by a citywide retreat in October to discuss policy recommendations and solutions. She also provided an update on the Coalition's legislative advocacy, including Assembly Bill 1573, which seeks to recognize survivors of violence as a priority population within California's housing planning framework and expand survivor-centered housing opportunities.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Chung asked whether Community Forward and coalition partners receive federal funding and whether recent budget changes have impacted their programs.

Ms. Rayner shared that Community Forward's federal funding for transitional housing services for women living with HIV has remained secure, though the organization continues to monitor potential changes closely. She noted that she could not speak on behalf of the Women's Housing Coalition at large, but that many member organizations receive federal funding. Ms. Rayner added that Community Forward's programs are primarily supported through local funding sources.

Commissioner Andary thanked Ms. Rayner for the presentation and shared that the information provided was eye-opening, highlighting the

importance of increasing awareness about the experiences of women facing housing instability and homelessness. She shared that she recently began serving on Community Forward's Advisory Board and encouraged Commissioners and community members to engage with and support the organization's work, including through site tours of A Woman's Place drop-in center, community outreach, volunteering, and other opportunities to connect with the organization.

Commissioner Moses commented that, based on Community Forward's previous presentation two years ago, the data appears to have worsened. She asked whether there are opportunities for advocacy within the City to support the creation of shelter or single-room occupancy (SRO) housing specifically designed for women.

Ms. Rayner responded that there are a few promising projects currently being developed through Prop A funding sources. She highlighted a recommendation from a previous citywide retreat to implement gender-inclusive and survivor-centered training for staff at co-ed shelters, noting that this type of training could help increase awareness and improve services for women experiencing homelessness. Ms. Rayner also emphasized the importance of continuing to evaluate how housing resources are allocated toward women-centered programs, supporting future projects that prioritize women's needs, and strengthening coordination and collaboration among service providers.

Ms. Rayner shared that Community Forward is advocating for additional women-centered housing opportunities, including a proposed women-only transitional housing project that would increase the organization's capacity from serving 25 women to approximately 42 women. She noted that the project is awaiting final approval and emphasized the need for continued advocacy to expand women-specific permanent supportive housing options.

Commissioner Moses asked whether the benefits of providing gender-specific services for women experiencing homelessness have been communicated to the Mayor's Office, noting that trauma-informed and appropriate services may help improve outcomes and support efforts to

reduce homelessness among women. Ms. Rayner confirmed that they're working on it and can use more voices at the table to advocate.

President Jones Lowrey asked about the collection of qualitative data and emphasized the importance of incorporating personal stories and lived experiences to help illustrate the findings. She encouraged Community Forward to consider capturing these stories in the final report and asked whether survey participants received compensation for their participation.

Ms. Rayner confirmed that compensation was given to participants. She also thanked President Jones Lowrey for the recommendation regarding personal stories and shared a story she had heard that day about a woman being assaulted in a co-ed shelter.

President Jones Lowrey also emphasized the importance of documenting both successful and unsuccessful coordination efforts among City departments and organizations to identify barriers and improve accountability. She noted that while collaboration is important, systems should be in place to ensure coordinated efforts lead to meaningful outcomes. Ms. Rayner agreed and shared that challenges can arise when multiple departments are involved, highlighting the need for stronger coordination structures and accountability measures.

Director Aroche thanked Ms. Rayner for the presentation and continued partnership with the DOSW. She highlighted the importance of addressing housing instability as a critical issue affecting women, girls, and gender-expansive communities and noted that the Women's Agenda provides an opportunity to identify pathways forward. Director Aroche shared that conversations are underway regarding how existing resources and voter-approved funding measures can support housing solutions and asked Ms. Rayner for additional context regarding delays and opportunities for further advocacy.

Ms. Rayner shared that budget constraints and the need for a budget request have been significant factors contributing to delays in expanding services. She noted that Community Forward is currently the

only women's shelter funded by HSH and emphasized the need for funding rates to be adjusted to adequately support survivor-centered shelter services. Ms. Rayner highlighted the importance of maintaining sufficient resources for case management, trauma-informed care, and staff training to ensure quality services and noted that addressing these funding challenges is necessary to expand shelter capacity.

Director Aroche asked Ms. Rayner to share Community Forward's vision for the future and how the upcoming retreat and ongoing conversations could help address identified gaps and advance shared goals.

Ms. Rayner shared that the upcoming retreat will be shaped by the Women's Housing Coalition's collective input and informed by findings from the survey. She noted that the coalition is in the process of developing concrete recommendations and solutions, with key focus areas including housing access, coordinated entry, and improving safety in co-ed shelter environments. She expressed interest in partnering with DOSW to help inform the retreat and advance solutions.

Public Comment:

Beverly Upton, representing the Domestic Violence Consortium, highlighted the continued need for expanded domestic violence shelter and transitional housing resources in San Francisco. She noted recent funding reductions affecting gender-based violence services and emphasized the importance of continued support for organizations serving survivors, including Community Forward. Ms. Upton underscored the challenges faced by older women experiencing homelessness and violence and encouraged continued partnership and advocacy.

Dr. Pam Tate, Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence, thanked Community Forward for the presentation and emphasized the complexity of addressing housing needs for women experiencing homelessness and violence. She highlighted the importance of trauma-informed, survivor-centered approaches, noting that solutions cannot simply focus on increasing bed capacity without considering the need for private, safe spaces and specialized support services. She

encouraged continued attention to these issues and noted the significant gap between the need for shelter services and available resources in San Francisco.

Taylor Stommel, Youth Coordinator with Bay Area Women Against Domestic Violence, echoed the importance of ensuring co-ed spaces are designed to support women, gender-nonconforming individuals, and people of all ages accessing services. Taylor emphasized that without appropriate safeguards and trauma-informed practices, these spaces can unintentionally create harm and retraumatization for survivors, including youth. Taylor highlighted the need for protections that ensure all individuals feel safe and respected when accessing supportive services.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: DISCUSSION

Director Aroche provided updates on the Women's Agenda, noting that departments are finalizing action plans and identifying measurable outcomes for implementation. She shared that the Department's budget remains stable moving forward, with no additional anticipated reductions, while acknowledging the continued need to support the full scope of the Department's work. She also provided an update on the Agency for Human Rights transition, noting ongoing collaboration with the Human Rights Commission while maintaining the Department's independence and mission.

Director Aroche highlighted legislative efforts, including collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, Human Rights Commission, and Office of Transgender Initiatives on expanding Fair Chance Ordinance protections, as well as partnership with Supervisor Danny Sauter on proposed paid family leave legislation. She encouraged community participation in upcoming advocacy efforts.

Additional updates included continued work related to women in custody issues, the Strong Starts initiative, guaranteed income pilot programs, and efforts to engage City departments in advancing the goals of the Women's Agenda.

She also shared that the Department is working with President Jones Lowrey to plan a commemoration at the August Commission meeting honoring the late Commissioner Andrea Shorter and her years of service, leadership, and advocacy for women, families, and gender-expansive communities in San Francisco. She noted that the meeting will coincide with Women's Equality Day and encouraged former Commissioners and community members to attend.

Commissioner Comment:

Commissioner Chung asked for additional information regarding the jail in-custody issues, including the current concerns and circumstances that led to the Department's ongoing work in this area.

Director Aroche shared that following community concerns regarding the treatment of women in custody at County Jail #2. She noted that the Department conducted a facility tour with Commissioners and held additional discussions with the Sheriff's Department, Department of Police Accountability, and Human Rights Commission. Director Aroche shared that the agencies identified several recommendations, including a review of policies related to strip searches and other related custody policies currently under review.

Commissioner Chung shared that this issue is particularly important to her given her more than 15 years of work with the transgender community through the Transgender Law Center. She noted that while conversations regarding these issues have been ongoing, some challenges have involved labor-related concerns rather than department leadership. Commissioner Chung emphasized the importance of continuing to address policies related to strip searches and housing practices to ensure safe and appropriate conditions for transgender women in custody.

Public Comment:

Dr. Kathy Johnson, representing the San Francisco Women's Political Committee and San Franciscans for an Independent Women's Commission, shared concerns regarding proposed charter amendments. She noted that while there was relief following the Board

of Supervisors' decision not to adopt the Prop E recommendations, the Mayor's proposed amendments could impact the Commission's role and authority. Dr. Johnson stated that community members are becoming aware of the issue and are exploring ways to support the Commission.

V. COMMISSIONER UPDATE: DISCUSSION

President Jones Lowrey shared that the Commission is exploring potential fundraising opportunities to support Women's Agenda initiatives and will continue discussions regarding potential public-private partnerships. She encouraged Commissioners to consider potential community partners who may support the Commission's work. She also discussed efforts to improve meeting efficiency through more focused agendas and exploring expanded committee work to support discussions and bring recommendations forward.

No Public Comment.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC: DISCUSSION

No Public Comment.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.

