



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

Monday, January 12, 2026 | 5:00 PM
25 Van Ness Ave, Room 610

COMMISSION ROSTER

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

I. CALL TO ORDER: DISCUSSION

President Jones Lowrey called the meeting to order at 11:38 am and reviewed the logistics information for participants. Miss Hannah Cotter conducted roll call and confirmed that 5 of 7 Commissioners were present (quorum.) Please note that two Commissioners, Rihal and Chung, arrived later in the morning. Miss Cotter read the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgment.

President Jones Lowrey welcomed the group and wished everyone a happy new year. She shared that while our current times may be challenging, she is looking forward to the work of the Commission. She noted that 2025 was challenging but she believes the Commission and the Department are stronger than ever.

Executive Director Aroche also welcomed the Commissioners and the community and thanked everyone for their time. She spoke about the core role of the Department and Commission in 2026 and beyond.

II. STAFF PRESENTATIONS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Item 2.a) Board of Supervisors resolution on Roe v. Wade

Director Aroche spoke about the resolution authored by Supervisor Melgar with consultation from the Department to recognize what would have been the 53rd Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision on January 22, 2026. The resolution was introduced on January 13th and will be voted on at the following Board of Supervisors meeting on January 20th. Director Aroche added that the Department is working on a rally on January 22 with Mayor Lurie, Supervisor Melgar, Planned Parenthood Northern California and the Human Rights Commission. She invited all the Commissioners to attend.

Commissioners Miry and Vice President Rivera asked about the Department's role in the drafting of the resolution and the support at the Board.

Director Aroche responded that the Department was involved, consulted with the City Attorney's office, as well as the Mayor. She noted that Supervisor Sauter was the one missing vote as they had not had a chance to review the resolution but is planned to review and is expected to be supportive.

President Lowrey clarified the order of the upcoming presentations and asked for a motion to support the resolution at the BOS.

(Roll call vote) Riveria/Miry – 6 ayes, 1 absent

No public comment.

Item 2.b) Budget presentation from the Human Rights Commission/Agency for Human Rights

Director Tugbenyoh spoke about the creation of the new agency under the direction of the Mayor, and how both Departments are working together to advance the shared goals. He looks forward to supporting the work of the Department and the Commission, noting the threats to women, the LGBTQ+ community, and people of color. He acknowledged the long history of the Commission and one of his priorities is to refocus the work of the Department

on their chartered mission to investigate civil rights investigations, including discrimination against women.

Samuel Thomas, CFO of the Agency for Human Rights, presented the budget process and projections. He noted the Departments and their missions ARE distinct and designated as so in the budget. Mr. Thomas also discussed the pending budget deficits which are projected to grow from \$300 million to \$640 million in year two. He noted Expenditures are outpacing revenue, but the federal healthcare cuts, which are about \$300 million a year, and the federal government canceling other reimbursements, are also a significant factor.

Mr. Thomas discussed the AHR's budget in the context of the Mayor's priorities, including to have a clean safe San Francisco, revitalize downtown, strengthen internal systems and improve service delivery. CFO Thomas noted these goals translate to AHR's goals. He shared the new process set forth by the Mayor's Budget Office for this year.

Mr. Thomas also shared a schedule for AHR, HRC and DOSW's upcoming Commission and budget meetings and the budget process as a whole. He noted the joint public budget meeting will be Monday, January 26th from 3-5:30 pm at the Main Branch of the Public Library,

Commissioner Rihal asked if the new process might mean some Departments could see cuts above 15%, and Mr. Thomas responded that it is possible and the process is new. Director Tugbenyoh added that the new methodology from this administration is more collaborative, and the Mayor's office noted that smaller departments like ours have cut as much as we probably can in the last rounds.

Commissioner Miry asked about the review and vote on the budget from both Commissions, and what happens if the Commissions don't agree on proposed budgets.

Mr. Thomas said under administrative code, all Departments with an oversight Commission must have the approval of their Commission. If not, the Departments cannot submit their budget. If the budget isn't approved, there would need to be a special meeting called to meet the statutory deadline, 15 days before the submission. And Director Tugbenyoh noted that special meetings require 15 days' notice.

Commissioner Miry clarified that she doesn't worry about the COSW approving, but more what happens if they approve but HRC does not. Mr.

Thomas noted that it would not be able to advance, but the Directors are going to do everything in their power to support it passing.

Executive Director Aroche said that because this is a new legal process we would consult the City Attorney for specific guidelines. In the past, when budgets were not approved by Commissions, the budgets were moved forward in accordance with statutory guidelines.

President Jones Lowrey and Vice President Rivera suggested mapping priorities to the Mayor. Vice President Rivera expressed concerns about trying to develop a strategic plan without a known budget.

Public Comment:

Kathy Johnson asked for clarification on the budget process change and what projected budgets are.

Item 2.c) Presentation on the Department's Community Listening Sessions and updated FY25-28 Strategic Plan

Executive Director Aroche thanked everyone for their work on the community sessions and that the feedback was important for the strategic planning process.

Commissioner Miry asked for clarification on the supporting documents and which documents they should be referencing right now. Director Aroche directed them to the presentation and added the pink chart is part of this section.

She added that the Mayor's office affirmed their support of the directive of the Commission and to incorporate the Mayor's vision. The strategic plan looks to fulfill the charter mandate, provide accountability and be responsive to community needs.

Director Aroche presented on the department's framework that included data, the aforementioned resources, the charter and the 2024 Community Needs Assessment. She shared details about the meetings, including an online meeting. Director Aroche shared the updated proposed purpose and vision statement and how community input shaped the updates and key takeaways from the meetings. She noted broad support from the community on the Department's plan and discussed the feedback on the Department's core policy areas. She also reviewed the timeline and next steps in the strategic planning process.

Commissioner Miry thanked the team for their work and added her concerns about the impacts of ICE activities on the community and the proposed work, asking the Commission and Department to keep those concerns in mind. She followed up asking if the shift from a "mission statement" to a "purpose statement" was universal, to which Director Aroche responded she believed we were the first Department to make that specific change. Many Commissioners commented that they hope we can set a trend and advocate for that change across Departments.

VP Rivera asked about the process and rolls of the Commission and Mayor's office, and if the plans have considered budget allocations. Director Aroche replied in the affirmative. Vice President Rivera asked questions about how the work will be divided up and the next steps. Director Aroche replied that this is a framework that will be developed and evolve through the budget process and beyond. She noted the current assumption is that the Department will maintain its current level of funding.

Commission Miry asked for clarification on what has been shared with the Mayor, and Executive Director Aroche responded that we will be sharing all the resources, including the full report, addendums, and revisions from today's conversation.

No public comment.

President Jones Lowrey gave the group a 15-minute break and called the groups back into session at 1:36 pm.

III. Strategic Plan Presentation: Discussion and possible action

President Jones Lowrey reminded the Commission that this is a 3-year plan, and the presentations is the staff's recommendations on the plan.

Director Aroche began reviewing the process of the strategic plan and the details of the agenda item that are for the Commission's approval.

Commissioner Miry asked if they could provide feedback on any of the slides and Director Aroche replied that the Department would consider all feedback.

Director Aroche reviewed the purpose statement and asked for feedback. Commissioner Miry suggested we use the word Mandate given our role outlined in the charter. President Jones Lowrey agreed with the inclusion of mandate and liked the update to a "purpose statement." noted that not all

departments have a mandate, but having a mission would allow for consistency across agencies, but agrees we move from Mission to Purpose.

Commissioner Andary also affirmed the move to a "purpose statement" but expressed concern about the proposal to strip the Commission of its governance powers and make it an advisory only committee and how that may impact the use of the word mandate. Commissioner Miry suggested that since this is not a legal document, we use a powerful word. Commission Andary and Miry and President all concurred.

Director Aroche suggested "The purpose and mandate" as the opening statement. The Commissioners affirmed that change.

Director Aroche asked the Commission for feedback on the vision, and Commissioner Miry asked to amend the statement from women, girls and non-binary people to say "where we are all safe" to include children and families to connect us with community, affirm the roles of mothers.

Commissioner Rihal felt keeping women and mothers was important and asked about "women, as integral members of households" to be more encompassing?

Director Aroche suggested "women, girls, non-binary people and their families." The Commissioners affirmed that language.

Commissioner Cecilia Chung arrived at 1:50. She asked for clarification on family, if our definition would include chosen family.

Commissioner Moses disagreed with family as they are the Commission on the Status of Women.

President Jones Lowrey referenced the role of women as leaders in their families.

Director Aroche suggested "their families" which would be more expansive, and we will create a glossary that could explain our definitions and positions.

The Commission affirmed the inclusion of "their families" and the usefulness of a glossary of terms. Director Aroche quickly reviewed the details Commissioner Chung had missed.

Director Aroche moved on to discuss the Department's three roles. The Department defined the role, scope and authority and some initiatives in the chart provided and asked the Commissioners for feedback.

Commissioner Miry initiated a discussion about the grammar of advocate and convener as roles, but the terms accountability is not. After discussion of numerous terms, including owners, steward, enforcer, and others, the group decided to tentatively go with "accountability enforcer" but revisit when Vice President Rivera was back.

Director Aroche reviewed the core policy areas and asked for feedback. Commissioner Moses approved of the areas but noted that the term "advancement" felt vague. The Commissioners discussed a few potential changes, but as Commissioner Rivera stepped out, they tabled making a final decision until she could weigh in.

Director Aroche moved on to review the core initiatives and proposals. She reminded the Commissioners that this is the proposal from the Department. The Department discussed the foundational pieces that need to be set, like the vision, purpose and policy areas and added that the Department is also looking into a behested payments ordinance and women's agenda executive directive to uplift all of the policy areas and work.

President Jones Lowrey asked how the women's agenda executive directive fits into the strategic plan and work. Director Aroche replied that it would connect to our citywide objectives and would be a tool for our work. She also noted the behested payments would be from the private sector to provide additional support.

Commissioner Rihal asked for clarification on the documents in their binders and she and President Jones Lowrey suggested some clarification of documentation before sharing with the Mayor and other offices. Director Aroche noted their requests and offered examples of how the Department would engage with partners like the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD). President Jones Lowrey asked how an executive director would impact the Department's work and enforcement of gender-equity, and Director Aroche replied that it would complement and reinforce our mandate.

Commissioner Moses asked about operationalizing the plan and accountability. Director Aroche noted that an executive directive would add to accountability measures.

Commissioner Chung asked about the language around "equity centered" and "gender equity initiatives." Director Aroche replied that DOSW wants to make a distinction between other equity measures in the city, like the Office of Racial

Equity, but can revise to clarify same. She wants the focus to be women, girls and non-binary people.

Commissioner Miry asked about historic work around public art and public spaces and which pillar that fell under and noted the power of those data driven reports. Director Aroche agreed about the importance of data and added the reports are part of the civic and community pillar.

Vice President Rivera returned and Director Aroche provided and update and revisited the conversation around Civic Advancement and Community Engagement. Commissioner Rihal recapped the suggested change to "Civic Leadership and Community Engagement." Rivera said she likes it and supports the change. Leadership was something she was thinking about the need for investment to get more women in leadership. The Commission affirmed the update.

Commissioner Rihal initiated a discussion of the change to "accountability enforcer," and Vice President Rivera shared she did not like the term. The Commissioners discussed a variety of other terms, revisiting the term watchdog, as well as authority, auditor. The Commissioners could not come to a consensus and agreed to come back to the discussion later.

Director Aroche suggested we take a few minutes to visit other parts of the conversation and come back. She then reviewed the policy, goals and initiatives and other details in the charts.

Vice President Rivera asked to include "gender-affirming care" in the healthcare objectives, and Director Aroche and the team incorporated the suggestion.

President Jones Lowrey and Commissioner Andary asked about the partners listed under Civic Leadership and Community Engagement, and all agreed to add the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Rihal asked about the Department's prior work on gender-based violence and Director Aroche replied that she would continue to monitor and be an accountability partner with agencies like MOHCD. Staff member Denise Heitzenroder added that the implementation of measures like Proposition D also dictates very specific roles for certain agencies, and those roles are reflected in the documents.

Commissioner Miry noted that in many areas, including the statewide commission's work that roles and goals are changing across time, including

many women's groups no longer specifically mentioning gender-based violence as a focus. Commissioner Miry added that the Department has grown considerably beyond just that role and that growth is reflective of a larger trend. Director Aroche asked offered to include gender-based violence as but the Commissioner declined and said to keep the language as is.

Director Aroche brought the conversation back to the language around accountability. The Commissioners discussed and clarified what CEDAW is, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, what language it uses, and the importance of continuing to include it in the planning and the proposed glossary. They discussed a variety of terms and settled on "accountability steward."

Director Aroche reviewed the next steps before asking for confirmation of the changes discussed today.

Commissioner Miry discussed some grammatical changes to slides 5,6 and 9 and Vice President Rivera asked for clarification on the slide order.

Commissioner Moses asked about the history and potential future plans for the Community Needs Assessment. She noted that she would hope if we conducted another community survey that we use a more rigorous and representative process. Director Aroche replied that we currently do not plan to do a full survey but will be leveraging information from other regular surveys as well as feedback from community. President Jones Lowrey asked to include success metrics based on the Mayor's objectives. Director Aroche said those will be incorporated and will be finalized after the initiatives are finalized.

President Jones Lowrey thanked the staff and Director Aroche for all the work, asked for last comments from the Commission, and as there were none, called for a motion and public comment.

Motion for a vote to approve the draft of the current plan as updated.

No public comment.

Roll call vote: Miry/Rihal – 7 ayes

President Jones Lowrey gave the Commission a ten-minute break and called the meeting back to order at 3:24 pm.

IV. Commission Governance Overview: Discussion and potential action item

Note: Commissioner Miry had to leave at 3:10 pm.

Item 4a) Director Evaluations and Review: Discussion and potential action item

President Jones Lowrey opened the discussion with an overview of Commission priorities, process and goals, and the reminder they will be finalizing the calendar for the rest of the year. She noted the Commission co-owns management of the Director and suggested the Commission evaluate them on progress towards goals and objectives. To ensure there is transparency and accountability, she suggests they align their goals and the review of the Director to the strategic plan and the initiatives that will be finalized. She then asked for a volunteer to lead the development of the performance plan. She confirmed that the development of the plan and goals are in an open session, the review is done in a closed session.

Commission Andary asked if the Department of Human Resources would still be supporting the Commission through the process, and President Jones Lowrey confirmed they will. Commissioner Andary asked about the new process, and President Jones Lowrey consulted with the Deputy City Attorney to tie the evaluation rubric to the public goals but reminded everyone that the actual review would be in a closed session.

President Jones Lowrey again asked for a volunteer to create the template based on the materials provided by Human Resources, use the agreed upon goals, and create the review template. The end of the year would be June-July.

Vice President Rivera and Commissioner Moses and Rihal asked more about the process, the role of DHR and the Mayor.

President Jones Lowrey reiterated that she consulted with DHR who provided the template and added that the Commission is responsible for reviewing the Director. That review would be shared with the Mayor and they will conduct their own review. She reiterated that CHR and CAT approved of this process.

Commissioner Andary added that the committee or person must work with DHR, and Commissioner Rivera asked about the timeline.

President Jones Lowrey outlined the following: the template needs to be revised by the end of January, starting immediately. From there, the Committee will work with DHR to build the review, and Director Aroche will have the opportunity to provide feedback. The revised template should be shared in February, and if Director Aroche approves, the template will be finalized by mid-February. The Department's HR representative, Tina Lim, is supportive of this timeline. President Jones Lowrey again asked for a volunteer, but no one volunteered.

President Jones Lowrey will lead, and Vice President Rivera noted that all the Commissioners should know what is happening and step up.

V. COSW Procedures and by-laws review: Discussion and potential action item

President Jones Lowrey lead a group discussion about how they would like to operate and work together. Commissioners offered terms like audacious, transparent, respectful, organized, accountable and representative. They then discussed how they would apply those terms internally and externally.

President Jones Lowrey added that the Commission sets the tone for those that come to hear us, as representatives of the community we serve and reflect the culture of this Commission and the culture we are trying to recapture.

She asked the Commission to enact and embody these words and practices.

She added that they have expressed concerns about the by-laws, and they should discuss what works and what does not for this body, taking into account the terms they shared.

Vice President Rivera asked about the provisions of the bylaws that discuss the frequency of meetings, committee meetings, special meetings and commented that sometimes these meetings don't feel efficient. She also noted the terms for officers are for 12 consecutive months. As VP, she found that the first year involved a lot of learning, and last year was chaotic, and a real vision takes time.

Commissioner Andary requested this be a full agenda at a later meeting with the CAT so we can ensure everything is done right.

President Jones Lowrey agreed and confirmed there are specific requirements for a meeting where the bylaws are reviewed. In the interim, she asked the Commissioners to brainstorm what they may want to change or propose, so the content can be shared with the Deputy City Attorney before they sit in on a meeting in order to provide timely counsel.

Vice President Rivera expressed some confusion about the process, and what is required to amend the by-laws. Commission Chung replied that they can be updated at any time with proper consultation and notice to the public.

Commissioner Moses asked for clarification around how Commissioners are permitted to work together, and flagged there are staff support constraints to consider if the time of meetings is changed.

President Jones Lowrey asked the Commissioners to highlight potential changes, reiterating that she heard terms for officers and timing.

Given the timing, President Jones Lowrey suggested agendizing by-laws at the next meeting, but also asked for Commissioners to submit their thoughts to Commission Secretary Blakely to compile and work with the Deputy City Attorney. Commissioner Andary raised questions about Proposition E's impacts on bylaws, and she and Commissioner Miry said they would be interested in a subcommittee working on by-law changes. President Jones Lowrey noted time was running out for the day, and asked for the item of Commission Priorities to be agendized at a future meeting for discussion. Vice President Rivera asked to apply the same process to that discussion as the bylaws, i.e.: everyone send feedback and thoughts to the Commission Secretary to compile and work with Commissioners individually. President Jones Lowrey called for last comments from the Commission and public comment. No public comment.

VI. Prop E Commission Streamlining Task Force: [Discussion and potential action item](#)

Commissioner Andary provided an update on the Proposition E Task Force hearing, noting that only one meeting is left but they can always schedule more. The City Attorney is drafting what the recommendations are and will send the draft to the Board of Supervisors in February.

President Jones Lowrey stated that the Commission can send feedback to Dominique for the January 27th meeting and we can vote on it then.

Commissioner Moses had to leave at 4:31.

Commissioner Andary invited the Commissions to an event on March 11th with the League of Women Voters, San Francisco Women's Political Committee, The Women's Building and other community groups about the proposals from the Prop E Task Force.

President Jones Lowrey confirmed the Prop E Task Force Statement will be agendized for the January 27th meeting.

She asked if there was any further comment, or public comment.

No public comment.

Commission Andary requested the staff and Director work on a resolution regarding ICE, given the shooting and deaths of over 70 people. She added the city needs to be more active regarding immigration enforcement.

President Jones Lowrey asked for any further comment and the next agenda item.

VII. Adjournment

President Jones Lowrey adjourned the meeting at 4:37 pm.

