

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners convened Tuesday, February 7, 2006 at 3:10 p.m. in the Fire Commission Meeting Room, City Hall East, 200 N. Main Street, Los Angeles.

Present: President Dalila Sotelo, Vice President Jill Furillo, Commissioners Andrew Friedman, Genethia Hudley-Hayes and Casimiro U. Tolentino. Fire Chief William Bamattre and Deputy City Attorney Janet Jackson.

The flag salute was followed by a moment of silence in honor of past and present members of the Los Angeles City Fire Department who devote their lives to the protection of our community.

**PRESENTATION** - Ms. Maria Escobedo was acknowledged for her City service career and presented a 30-year service pin.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

**COMMISSION BUSINESS**

1. Activities/Events/Meetings

Commissioner Hudley-Hayes reported having attended the recruitment expo at the Rancho La Cienega Park. She indicated that the Department is very community-oriented and thanked them for their efforts in coordinating the expo. She reported that the Department's booth was very well represented, however, she would like to see more women firefighters participating at the expos and interacting with the community. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that she attended the FS 43 groundbreaking ceremony in the Palms District and provided an overview of the proposed project. President Sotelo indicated that her Fire House Friday visits are underway and noted that Commissioner Hudley-Hayes is also conducting firehouse visits. She extended an invitation to the Commissioners to join her on any Friday for a station visit.

2. Request for future Agenda items

None.

3. Status report from the Board of Fire Commissioners Technology Committee.  
[Commissioners Hudley-Hayes/Tolentino]

- [BFC 06-012] Public Safety Voice and Data Radio Communications Interoperability Project.

Tabled.

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- [BFC 06-013] Information Technology 5-year Budget Analysis FY 2001-2006.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Dennis Bloemhof provided an overview of the budget analysis, including funding shortage impacts on staffing and projects. Commissioners Hudley-Hayes and Tolentino addressed the need to put policies in place to begin lobbying successfully for incremental technology budget increases. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that the Technology Committee is in the process of reviewing the Department's budget and have requested an overview of the tech budget from Ms. Mattera. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes addressed the need to have the \$500,000 funding controls of the conversion IT lines in-house rather than under the ITA general fund. She clarified for the record, that this was her own thought and they did not reflect the staff's opinion. President Sotelo directed for the matter to be placed on the February 21<sup>st</sup> agenda for further discussion. Ms. Mattera explained that the CAO has determined that the matter it is a policy issue and that the funding should remain with ITA. Commissioner Tolentino indicated that the Technology Committee has reviewed documents very carefully to determine what the Department's needs are and would like the Board to support their request through a motion. The matter was deferred to the end of the meeting for further discussion.

ACTION: The matter was continued to the next meeting without further discussion.

4. Consideration and action related to the following Fire Department audits:

- [BFC 06-006] Correspondence dated January 26, 2006 from Laura Chick, City Controller, transmitting the Los Angeles City Controller's review of the Los Angeles Fire Department Management Practices by Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting, Inc.
- [BFC 06-014] Correspondence dated January 31, 2006 from Margaret Whelan, General Manager, Personnel Department transmitting the Executive Summary of Fire Department Audit.

DISCUSSION: President Sotelo indicated that both audits had been disseminated to encourage input. She said that the Board wants to hear from as many people as possible and opened the meeting for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Richard Markota, President, Chiefs Officer Association (COA), commented that after reviewing both audits, the COA concurs with the Fire Chief that the recommendations are something that needs to be addressed. The COA looks forward to working collaborative with the Fire Commission and Fire Chief to bring the recommendations forward and effect a positive change in the Department. He said, that he sees no purpose in destroying the system and the inter-workings, which they've had for so many years that have worked so well for so many people and have served the citizens of this community. He said, "We should be very proud of what we do have. Can we get better? Absolutely. Do we need input from the key stakeholders, employee organizations and from management? Absolutely. Do we need direction and insight and thought from the Mayor's Office, the community, the council members, yes we do. We all have a stake

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in what's before us; we have a lot of hard work; the COA looks forward to working with everybody to bring effect--positive change to make the Department better."

Mr. Armando Hogan, President, Stentorians, commented that he supports the findings of the recent audits and the Stentorians look forward to assisting and taking a leadership role in addressing the critical areas. He said, the Stentorians have a demonstrated a history of leadership within the Los Angeles Fire Department and that he wanted to share a few brief dates: in 1954, the integration struggle; 1974, the consent decree were the Stentorians were one of the original signators of the document; 1992, the civil disturbance, the Stentorians assisted the Department in community outreach; and of course the creation and implementation of HRDC. Mr. Hogan said that he looks forward to working with the Mayor, City Council, Fire Commission, and the LAFD to address the many areas that need improvement; that the Board's leadership will be needed to make sure that we bring about the implementation changes. He said, "I have been asked, why is there a need for the Stentorians? Well, for some reason we got off that beaten path, that road map that would have led us with the HRDC to here we are today, still having to address issues that should have been addressed long ago and we understand that. But until we can get rid of the racism, the nepotism, the favoritism and the unfair and unequal treatment, I see no other reason but to maintain the tradition of the Stentorians as well."

Mr. Pat McOsker, President, United Firefighters Los Angeles City (UFLAC) commented on how regrettable it is to have to be dealing with the same issues ten years after the problems were originally exposed. He said that UFLAC appreciates the work that the Controller did and the fact that it was conducted as an outside independent audit. Mr. McOsker provided historical summary on UFLAC's request to the prior Fire Commission for an outside independent audit to addressed problems in the Fire Prevention Bureau. He said that UFLAC recently hired a diversity and harassment expert, Abby Liebman, who is available to assist the Board. Mr. McOsker's said that UFLAC is committed to getting the problems fixed and this is the essence of what a union is about—the individual rights and respect for people.

Ben Flores, President, Los Bomberos, stated that when the Commission restarted the HRDC and demonstrated its willingness and leadership to look into the culture of the Fire Department, the Commission received the support and participation of Los Bomberos and they will continue to have that support as long as it actively tries to effect that change in the Department. He said that there is a long and difficult road to affect the audit recommends; that there has to be an investment of time and commitment from the Fire Commission, Fire Chief, command staff, and also the employee organizations. Mr. Flores indicated that if the Fire Chief, command staff, Fire Commission, and even the employee organizations are not willing or not dedicated enough to insure the completion of the audit, they should step aside and allow others to do it. He remarked on the need for everybody to work collectively. Mr. Flores said, "I'll end on this, on February 16, 1995 the Human Relations Development Committee summarized its major findings in three words, equity, inclusion, and accountability--I think that really summarizes what we need to do."

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Ms. Maryln Bohanik indicated that she has lived and worked in Los Angeles for over 20-years. She commented that taxpayers make the assumption that their tax dollars are being used efficiently and effectively, safety above the public and LAFD personnel. Ms Bohanik commented on the Controller's audit and said that she is appalled at the pattern of wasteful use of taxpayer's dollars by the Fire Chief and his administration. Ms. Bohanik's commented on the amount of money spent on Department investigations, which she thinks, should be resolved by supervisors. She said that incidents are allowed to escalate out of proportion, requiring the City to defend the accused officers; that it appears that the LAFD has a problem in managing its affairs without the excessive and wasteful help of the City Attorneys. It is her opinion that money would be better spent going to the safety of taxpayers than LAFD personnel.

Mrs. Chris Mattson commented on her youngest son's lawsuit against the City. She said that on January 18th she spoke before the City's Personnel Committee and relayed her concerns about the LAFD. Mrs. Mattson commented that both audits have confirmed that Fire Chief Bamattre has consistently demonstrated poor administrative leadership and that under the command of Chief Fox the entire disciplinary process has continued to be seriously defective. Ms. Mattson's submitted her comments in writing to the Board.

Mr. Brian Brooks commented that he was in support of Laura Chick's audit and findings. He said that he wanted to provide the Fire Commission with two more specific instances of discrimination both racially and gender. Mr. Brooks proceeded to read page 5, paragraph 1 of an investigative report dated 9/10/94, regarding alleged racial statements made at a fire station. He said that the incident her referenced happened ten years ago and that he is under the impression that discrimination has become worse over last ten years. Mr. Brook commented on an August 28<sup>th</sup> incident involving his wife, Ta'Nita Brooks. He submitted a copy of his wife's letter dated 11/3/05 relative to the incident and the F-225 report dated 9/10/94.

Mr. Jerry Thomas said that he is a retired captain and that it is unfortunate to have to revisit the situation. He said, that he had participated in the discrimination hearings ten years ago and was dismayed and outraged with the recent audit. Mr. Thomas provided his opinion relative to Mr. Brooks' comments and spoke on the primary responsibilities of officers. Mr. Thomas commented that when he read in the audit that some of chief officers are afraid of retaliation if they report discrimination or harassment, he though it outrages because those are the individuals charged with protecting the employees in terms of human resource responsibilities. He remarked on civil rights violations and the need to protect Department employees.

DISCUSSION CONT'D: President Sotelo indicated that approximately ten-days ago, the Board was charged by the Mayor to take a look at the audit in a very serious and direct manner. She said that the Board is a very experienced Commission with years of both civil rights and community activism. She said that one of the main charges from the Mayor's office that is being carried forward is to be objective, create a process that

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is transparent, and includes as many organizations and individuals as possible. President Sotelo said that the City Council would also be looking at the practices of the Department. She indicated that the Commission is accountable for the process that they will undergo together and wants everyone to have the utmost confidence that they will get there. President Sotelo indicated that the Board would work through its committees; that they would hold public meetings to deal with and resolve the business of the audit. She expects the matter to be a standing item on the Board's agenda so they can develop an implementation plan based on the audit recommendations, within the 90-day deadline.

Fire Chief Bamattre provided a draft handout titled "Combined Audit Recommendations" and went over each audit recommendation grouping. He explained his proposed plan to work with the various committees and organizations in order to develop and implement an effective action plan. The matter was opened for discussion and questions from the Board.

President Sotelo indicated that all human relation items (Recommendation O, P, Q, R and 5, 3, 9) would be referred to that HRDC Committee; the Drill Tower, Recommendation No. 1, recruitment of women was referred to the EMS Committee; the overlaps would be referred to Labor Management then to HRDC for further review and forwarding back to the Commission. Commissioner Tolentino suggested that the recruitment issues be forwarded to the Personnel Committee first. Vice President Furillo explained that the EMS Committee had already begun to look into the recruitment/retention of women and that was why they had asked the matter be forwarded to them. President Sotelo indicated that the reason she wanted the matter forwarded to the Joint Labor Committee first, was that there might be meet and confer implications that need to be addressed prior to the Personnel Committee's review. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes suggested that a matrix be created to track the Committee assignments to assure cross-pollination of the work; and for the Committee work to be reported and coordinated at Board meetings. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that technology is an important function of communication and she discussed the enrichment of communication through technology. The Board concurred with Commissioner Hudley-Hayes. They referred Items f, g, h and 8, to the Labor Management Committee and instructed upon completion, they be forwarded to the Technology Committee. Commissioner Friedman indicated that another area of consideration would be staff positions that may be necessary to facilitate implementation of the audit recommendation plan. He indicated that a supplemental budget to address the issue might have to be considered by the Mayor and City Council. Commissioner Tolentino recommended that items that deal with guidelines and employee groups be initially considered by HRDC. Items e, 7, and 6 were referred to the HRDC Committee; Items i, 11, j, k, 13 were referred to the HRDC then to Personnel Committee; items l, m, n, and 12 were referred to Personnel Committee. On the request of Commissioner Friedman item 10 was referred to the EMS Committee with cross over of the Joint Labor Management Committee.

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The meeting was opened for summation by each Commissioner, followed by discussion on developing a plan to begin addressing and resolving the audit issues. The Board concluded discussion by encouraging all individuals and associations to come forth and participate in the audit process.

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

A. Significant Incidents/Activities

Fire Chief Bamattre provided a summary report on the Sierra fire and discussed the on-going mutual aid deployment resources. Relative to the significant incident report, he explained that a new format had been developed. President Sotelo requested that the report be forwarded via e-mail on Fridays to the Board.

B. Budget status report

Ms. Georgia Mattera, Fire Administrator, provided a status report on the proposed budget process. She anticipates the Mayoral hearings to be scheduled next week. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that she would like to see the Board President attend the Mayor's budget meetings. President Sotelo indicated that she would contact the Mayor's office to follow up on the budget meeting process.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

• CONSENT ITEMS:

1. [BFC 06-005] Monthly Financial Summary Report dated January 11, 2006.

Recommendation: Receive and File

2. [BFC 06-007] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 18, 2006, submitting the Labor-Management Executive Committee, Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee's recommendation for issuance of the Medal of Valor Award to Firefighter III Brian E. Stiers in connection with the dwelling structure fire on October 25, 2004.

Recommendation: The Board approves the issuance of the Medal of Valor to Firefighter III Brian E. Stiers.

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3. [BFC 06-008] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 18, 2006, submitting the Labor-Management Executive Committee, Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee's recommendation for issuance of the Medal of Valor Award to Apparatus Operator Jody G. Garfield in connection with the Vallarta Market fire on September 19, 2003.

Recommendation: The Board approves the issuance of the Medal of Valor to Apparatus Operator Jody G. Garfield.

4. [BFC 06-009] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 26, 2006, submitting the list of fire stations enrolled in the Adopt-a-Fire Station Program [Sotelo].

Recommendation: Receive and File

5. [BFC 06-011] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 30, 2006, submitting the 2005 LAFD Toy Program totals.

Recommendation: Receive and File

MOVED: Commissioner Tolentino motioned for approval of Items 1, 4, and 5 and called Items 2 and 3 for special consideration.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Furillo

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

• **REGULAR ITEMS:**

5. [BFC 06-010] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 13, 2006, submitting the Topanga Brush Fire Incident Overview Report. [Sotelo/Hudley-Hayes]

DISCUSSION: Chief Rueda provided a incident summary that included the Department's deployment resources, objectives, and the mutual aide process. He also provided brief information on the firefighter feeding policy and meal tracking resources. Chief Rueda spoke on safety ratio of staff relief and the evacuation process.

ACTION: President Sotelo indicated that the report would be carried over to the next meeting for further discussion and questions from the Board. The Board requested that the Department provide further information on what changes will be taken as a result of the internal incident review process.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Pat McOskey, President, United Firefighters Los Angeles City (UFLAC) commented that he would agree that it was a tough fire and made relief difficult. However, the question that needs consideration is, why is LAFD doing relief different from everybody else; other agencies follow the State guidelines. He would like the Department's rest period and feeding issues reviewed and addressed.

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- **ITEMS CALLED SPECIAL**

(Considered out of order)

[BFC 06-007] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 18, 2006, submitting the Labor-Management Executive Committee, Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee's recommendation for issuance of the Medal of Valor Award to Firefighter III Brian E. Stiers in connection with the dwelling structure fire on October 25, 2004.

[BFC 06-008] Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 18, 2006, submitting the Labor-Management Executive Committee, Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee's recommendation for issuance of the Medal of Valor Award to Apparatus Operator Jody G. Garfield in connection with the Vallarta Market fire on September 19, 2003.

DISCUSSION: Fire Chief Bamattre said that the revised award process guidelines would be submitted for the Board's information at the next meeting. He provided an overview of the medal of valor recipient's heroic actions.

MOVED: Commissioner Friedman motioned for approval.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

- **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. (Furillo/Hudley-Hayes)

ATTEST BY:

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DALILA T. SOTELO, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
BLANCA GOMEZ-REVELLES  
Commission Executive Assistant II

Date: June 6, 2006

Note: Actions of the Board shall become final at the expiration of the next five meeting days of the City Council during which the Council has convened in regular session, unless the Council acts within that time by two-thirds vote to bring the action before it or to waive review of the action.