

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

**MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2006**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners convened Tuesday, February 21, 2006 at 3:12 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 and Genethia Hudley-Hayes. Fire Chief William Bamattre and Deputy City Attorney Janet Jackson. Commissioner Casimiro Tolentino arrived at 3:25 p.m.

Vice President Jill Furillo was excused at 3:55 p.m.

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.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Cori Tipton, President, Sirens, commented that in 1995 a group of female firefighters and paramedics began meeting to discuss information regarding LAFD; today the Sirens, work as an association to better the commitment for women and men of the Department. She said that the Sirens recently received their non-profit status; have established a scholarship program to assist women entering firefighting; and have an ongoing mentoring program that assists women and men with promotions. Ms. Tipton said, that the Sirens are not disappointed with the audits but are disappointed at the reaction. She explained that over ten years ago, they went through the same process and that sadly the Department has not moved forward. Ms. Tipton said that the Department has a checklist mentality of trying to fix problems and that it is indicative of the way it works—it is a reactionary Fire Department and would like to see it move toward being a progressive Fire Department. The Sirens would like to take a leadership role and work in unison with other employee groups, the Fire Chief, Mayor, and the Commission to move the Department forward. Ms. Tipton said that recruitment should consist of systemic efforts to make the Fire Department a place where people want to work and that until the culture and environment of the Fire Department changes, it would continue to lose qualified candidates. She said that recruitment is always made into a female issue; that it is true that the Department is losing qualified candidates but the point that is not being made is that it is also losing qualified male candidates in all classifications—but because the number of males that are interested in working at LAFD are so high, no one talks about it. Ms. Tipton said, that only when it becomes difficult to hire women does recruitment become an issue. She indicated that the Department is allowing talented and experienced candidates to go to surrounding fire department; this is happening because those women do not want to be part of the current culture and

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environment that the LAFD is continually perpetuating. In her closing remarks, Ms Tipton, commented on moving forward and implementing the much needed reforms.

**2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Activities/Events/Meetings

President Sotelo announced the Department's upcoming events, including her Firehouse Friday visits and the Firefighter of the Year luncheon that will honor Captain Steve Ruda. She extended an invitation to the Taking the Heat premier, scheduled March 9th at 7 p.m. at Pacific Design Center.

Commissioner Friedman reported having attended the AED news conference on February 16<sup>th</sup> and provided an overview on the importance of the program.

B. Request for future Agenda items

None.

C. Reports from Board of Fire Commissioners' Committees

Taken jointly with item 2.D.

D. 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.

(Continued from February 7, 2006 meeting)

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mrs. Chris Mattson remarked on having commented before the City Council Personnel Committee on February 15<sup>th</sup> regarding the Personnel Department LAFD Audit. She proceeded to quote an excerpt from the audit, "LAFD system of administering employee discipline fails to meet the City's policy standard of fair, equitable, progressive discipline..." Mrs. Mattson commented on her son's pending case and the LAFD substance abuse policy that she thinks is outdated. Mrs. Mattson submitted her written comments to the Board.

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Mrs. Marcy Carle, said that she is the wife of retirement LAFD Captain and commented on the LAFD disciplinary process. She commented that under the current administration, the employee discipline process fails to meet the City's policy standards of fair, equitable, and progressive discipline. Ms. Carle commented on her disappointment with the issues outlined in the anonymous letter, costly lawsuits, and employee rights.

DISCUSSION: President Sotelo provided an overview of the process that the Board developed to help address the audits. She recapped on the Fire Commission Committee assignments and indicated that the Board would continue to work with all the stakeholders to develop a plan within the 90-day timeframe that was given by the Mayor's office.

Vice President Furillo indicated that there had been two audit recommendations referred to the EMS Committee and provided an overview of the Committee's ongoing work. She reported that the EMS Committee had begun addressing the comprehensive recruitment and retention issues to help increase the number of women in the fire services; the Committee had undertaken the issues before the Personnel Department Audit was released. She said that other issues the Committee had already begun to look at were the recruitment and retention efforts that LAFD had undertaken relative to the medical component. Vice President Furillo indicated that the Committee has also appointed a task force to look at what recruitment areas can be improved on. She reported that the Committee has instructed the Department to highlight the role of women within the Department and the medical component in their recruiting efforts. She noted that the Committee has determined that the issues are not only with recruitment they are also with retention and will be addressing those issues also. The EMS Committee has also initiated the gathering of data on the disciplinary procedures from other Departments.

Commissioner Tolentino, Personnel Committee Chairperson indicated that the Personnel Committee has scheduled their first meeting this Friday and subsequent Fridays to begin addressing the issues referred to that committee.

President Sotelo reported that the HRDC committee has agreed to meet weekly for the next 60 days to look at the seven recommendations of both audits. She said that the work had been distributed among the committee members and she provided an overview of those functions. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes who Co-Chairs the HRDC added that there had been healthy discussion with the advisors regarding the audit survey; some members think the survey may be perceived imbalanced because it was distributed to a narrow group of the Department employees. She said that there was discussion as to whether or not the Board should go back and devise a survey model to obtain more inclusive information on how everybody in the Department feels about the audit. She assured that this option, if considered, would not take away from the Fire Commission's position because they are firmly behind the recommendations of the audits and they do believe that there is reality in what is discussed in the audit. She indicated that the advisors want to assure that the audit survey does not become a point

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of contention for people who were or weren't surveyed---people being able to say a thing like, that was not my perspective and no one asked me. She said that Ms. Emily Williams would be looking at various options available for the Committee to review, including the survey conducted by UFLAC.

Commissioner Hudley-Hayes, Technology Committee Chairperson indicated that the Committee had begun addressing some of the issues even before the audits' release. She explained that the Technology Committee is on target with their assignment since they had already begun to look at enhancing communication through the use of technology. She provided an overview of the work that the Committee has completed and the expected progress in the audit related areas. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes also requested that the technology Motion being considered by the Board today be carried over to the next meeting without discussion.

Fire Chief Bamattre provided an overview on the audit recommendations assigned to the Joint Labor Management Committee. He indicated that they had have begun to discuss the issues and are developing a process to solicit input from the membership.

President Sotelo encouraged the audience's participation in the process and said that opinion or input relative to how the Commission should address the recommendations of the audit should be submitted to her. She said that appointments with the Commissioners could be requested through the Board Office.

**3. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**A. Significant Incidents/Activities**

Fire Chief Bamattre provided Department activity information that occurred since the last Board meeting. He gave a brief report on a drilling incident that was in progress at 12th & Olive Streets; it involved various agencies and departments assisting to mitigate the emergency and street closures.

**B. Budget status report**

Ms. Georgia Mattera, Fire Administrator, provided a status report on the proposed budget. She indicated that there were concerns with decreased funding in the MICLA account and a deficit in the salary account. She indicated that the matter is pending further decisions from the Mayor and the CAO; a tentative meeting with the Mayor is scheduled for Saturday. As soon as the meeting is confirmed the information will be provided to the Board.

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**COMMISSION BUSINESS – CONT'D - (Taken out of order)**

2.D. Consideration and action related to the following Fire Department audits.

President Sotelo indicated that she was reopening the matter under 2.D., the Audit. She indicated that she had discussed with Chief Bamattre, sending a joint letter acknowledging the receipt of the audit recommendations; spelling out exactly what the Commission will be doing during the course of the next 90 days to address and develop an audit implementation plan as requested by the Mayor. She said that a copy of the draft letter had been given to the Board for their review and she asked them to provide input directly to her by the end of business day tomorrow. President Sotelo noted that the joint letter between the Commission and Fire Department must be sent out by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**4. CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. [BFC 06-016] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 24, 2006, requesting approval of the proposed revisions to the Fire Department's Honorary Awards Process.

Recommendation: The Board approves the revisions to Section 16 of Department Rules and Regulations as recommended by the Fire Chief and the Labor-Management Executive Committee.

- B. [BFC 06-017] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated February 3, 2006, requesting authorization to accept a donation from Mrs. Ho Yeh Mei Chiu in the amount of \$500.00.

Recommendation: The Board accepts Mrs. Chiu's donation of \$500.00 and directs the Department to deposit said donation in Fund 848, Account 000B, Miscellaneous Contributions Account, in accordance with the Los Angeles Administrative Code, Division 5, Chapter 5, Article 12, Section 5.111.3

- C. [BFC 06-018] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated February 2, 2006, submitting the Fire Department Variable Staffing Accounts (V-Accounts) activity report for the Fiscal Year 2005-06. [Sotelo].

Recommendation: Receive and File

- D. [BFC 06-020] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated February 10, 2006, submitting the status report on the reimbursement claims for the Topanga Brush Fire, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Rita.

Recommendation: Receive and File

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DISCUSSION: President Sotelo called item number 4.A. for special consideration.

MOVED: Commissioner Tolentino motioned for approval of Items B. C. D and called Item A for special consideration.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

Note: Vice President Furillo requested to be excused from the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

**5. REGULAR ITEMS**

- A. [BFC 06-010] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 13, 2006, submitting the Topanga Brush Fire Incident Overview Report. [Sotelo/Hudley-Hayes]  
(Continued - February 7, 2006 Meeting)

DISCUSSION: Deputy Chief Rueda, Bureau of Emergency Services, provided and overview of the incident evaluation process. He indicated that lessons learned, came from five primary areas. Two areas were communication related issues, one was the radio system and the other, command issues due to multiple agencies in a hectic situation. He said that those issues will be dealt with by improving training and standing plans. The other areas identified were relief, logistical support, and dispatch center/command center communication infrastructure. Chief Rueda reported that the matter is being address in joint meetings with all agencies; the goal is to formalize an operational and communication plan to fit that corridor of the city. The matter was opened for question and discussion from the Board.

Commissioner Hudley-Hayes wants the communication aspect of the process forwarded to the Fire Commission Technology Committee for review because she would like the technology and communication issues considered in the five-year technology plan. The Board requested a progress status report back in May and July. President Sotelo instructed for UFLAC and the various organizations to be included in the process; she thinks this would facilitate obtaining new ideas from the stakeholders. She thanked and acknowledged staff for their work on this project, and provided special acknowledgement to the Budget staff that prepared and processed the reimbursement claims.

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

MOTION (Hudley-Hayes/Tolentino) relative to the development of a plan to address the Fire Department's technology priorities, funding needs, and the designation of ITA/LAFD funding appropriations.

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Recommendation: The Board 1) Direct and authorize the Fire Commission Technology Committee to work with the Fire Chief to develop a plan that will address the technology and funding priorities. 2) Authorize the Fire Commission Technology Committee to assist with the ITA/LAFD funding account appropriation process.

(Continued - February 7, 2006 Meeting)

Item Postponed.

- C. Brush Clearance Program overview and consideration of the informational brochure.

Recommendation: The Board approves the 2006 Brush Clearance Program Information Brochure.

DISCUSSION: Deputy Chief Hill, Fire Marshal, Bureau of Fire Prevention & Public Safety provided an overview of the brush clearance program. Captain Knight provided a power point presentation on the program. President Sotelo requested that a written copy of the presentation be provided to the Board for review and that the matter be brought back in March for questions from the Board.

MOVED: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes motioned for approval of the informational brochure.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Tolentino

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

**6. ITEMS CALLED SPECIAL (FROM THE CONSENT ITEMS)**

(Taken out of order)

- 4.A. [BFC 06-016] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated January 24, 2006, requesting approval of the proposed revisions to the Fire Department's Honorary Awards Process.

Recommendation: The Board approves the revisions to Section 16 of Department Rules and Regulations as recommended by the Fire Chief and the Labor-Management Executive Committee.

DISCUSSION: President Sotelo indicated that she had requested for this item to be called special because she wanted to commend staff and the Joint Labor Management Committee for their work. She thinks this is an excellent example of where labor and management collaboration as worked well and recommends approval of the item. Fire Chief Bamattre agreed with President Sotelo and indicated that the process took a while to develop but is confident that the Department will have a good process in place. Mr.

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Pat McOsker, President, UFLAC concurred with President Sotelo and Chief Bamattre and commented on how this process is a model for labor and management to work collaboratively. It was noted that the new honorary awards process need to be incorporation into the Fire Commission Standing Rules.

MOVED: Commissioner Tolentino Motioned for approval.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

**7. ITEMS FOR WHICH PUBLIC HEARINGS HAVE NOT BEEN HELD**

- A. [BFC 06-019] - Fire Chief's transmittal dated February 10, 2006, submitting the Fiscal Year 2006-07 Annual Cost of Special Services.

Recommendation: The Board directs the Commission Executive Assistant II to schedule a Board of Fire Commissioners public hearing and publish the required notices relative to the proposed fee enactment.

MOVED: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes Motioned for approval.

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Tolentino

AYES: 4

NAYS: 0

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m. (Hudley-Hayes/Tolentino)

ATTEST BY:

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DALILA T. SOTELO, President

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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.