The Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners convened Tuesday, March 28, 2006 at 9:10 a.m., Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center, 1700 Stadium Way, Los Angeles 90012.

1. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioner Andrew Friedman

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.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. PUBLIC HEARING PERIOD REGARDING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AUDITS

Refer to Meeting Transcript of Proceedings by Melinda Bates, Hearing Reporter, Job No. LFD9682, Court Reporters - Lynden J. and Associates, Inc. - Attachment A.

4. CONTINUED DISCUSSION RELATIVE TO THE RECENT FIRE DEPARTMENT AUDITS INCLUDING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS’ DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Refer to Meeting Transcript of Proceedings by Melinda Bates, Hearing Reporter, Job No. LFD9682, Court Reporters - Lynden J. and Associates, Inc. - Attachment A.
SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA:

1. Reconsideration of the intergovernmental contract to provide EMS/Fire Dispatch Services to the City of Santa Monica.

   Department's Recommendation: The Board: 1) Rescind the action taken at its meeting of November 1, 2005 relative to the Fire Chief’s report dated October 24, 2005 [BFC 05-096]. 2) Approve the revised implementation plan for a regional dispatch component to Department operations. 3) Approve the regional dispatch and interoperability agreement with City of Santa Monica for fire communications. 4) Approve the City Attorney to make any technical adjustments to the contract, if necessary. 5) Forward the agreement to the Mayor’s Office and the City Council for consideration and approval.

DISCUSSION: The matter was opened for discussion and comments from the Board. Refer to Meeting Transcript of Proceedings by Melinda Bates, Hearing Reporter, Job No. LFD9682, Court Reporters - Lynden J. and Associates, Inc. - Attachment A. for details.

MOTION: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes motioned for approval, with the caveat that as soon as the Department initiates the contract, that it keep baseline data to determine what the recoverable costs are, what the gaps are, and to determine the additional pressure that the additional workload puts on the technological ability of the Department.

SECONDED: Commissioner Tolentino

AYES: 4
NAYS: 0

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m. (Hudley-Hayes/Tolentino)

ATTEST BY:

DALILA T. SOTELO, President
BLANCA GOMEZ-REVELLES
Commission Executive Assistant II

Date: June 20, 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.
In the matter of:

Special Meeting

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006

9:00 a.m.

Reported by:

Melinda Bates

Job No.

LFD9682
PRESIDENT SOTELO: Okay. We're going to go ahead and get started. Good morning. Everyone that's in the back, please come forward. There's plenty of seats up here. Again, if you'd would like to speak, there are public speaker cards in the back, and you can fill those out and bring them forward.

We are going to go ahead and get started today. My name is Dalila Sotelo. I'm the President of the Fire Commission, and I would just like to welcome every single one of you. Thank you for coming out in the rain. Thank you for coming out this morning. It really means a lot to us to be able to hear directly from people. And as we go out to the various locations and the various fire houses, we are able to talk with people one on one.

We're hoping this gives you, also, an opportunity to speak with us directly and freely. So, with that, I'm going to go ahead, and Ms. Jackson, if you could please do roll call.

JANET JACKSON: Yes. Roll call for the Tuesday March
28th, 2006, special meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners. We have President Sotelo, Vice President Furillo, President Commissioner Tolentino, President Commissioner Hudley-Hayes. Absent, we have probationary Friedman, who is in court today and wanted it to be known that he very much wanted to be here today, but had an unavoidable court appearance that could not be rescheduled.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you very much, and I'm going to call Chief Emile Mack to lead us in the flag salute.

DEPUTY CHIEF MACK: Please rise. Raise your right hand over your heart. Ready. Begin.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Please remain standing for a moment of silence.

(Moment of silence).

PRESIDENT SOTELO: So again, we wanted to begin today very enthusiastically, encouraging people to come up, and I'm very heartened by the fact that you are all here and will be talking with us directly about your input relative to the Fire Department and the work that this Commission has been undergoing for the last couple of months.

Again, we see this as an opportunity to hear directly from people about the work that we are doing.
relative to the audit. There were many of you that were unable to give input through the audit process, and I wanted to make sure that you hear from us, and we hear from you, that you are encouraged, and that your voice counts.

So, part of what we want to do today is have public speakers come up. We have a three-minute limit. We ask that you, basically, direct all your comments to the Commission, and that you honor the fact that we have three minutes and that there are other people here that need to speak.

So we're very encouraged by the number of you there are. I have about 15 public speaker cards, and again if there are any other public speakers cards. You can do it throughout the meeting. You can give them to Blanca, and she will bring them up here. Okay.

Commissioners, do you want to make any comments before I go ahead and open up the public comment period?

(Commissioners shook their heads in the negative.)

PRESIDENT SOTELO: So, if there are any public comments for non-audit related items, which is on the agenda, which is Item Number 3. If you guys can raise your hands, and I'll call you out of order. If you have other comments, other than to talk about the audit, we
will be happy to hear those as well.

Okay. We don't see any. So we are going to go ahead and start with comments on the audit. For those of you in the back, if you can't hear us, can you just raise your hand and let me know. Are we okay? Okay. Great.

So come up. There's plenty of seats. Sit down. It will be about an hour and a half meeting. The first public speaker is Daniel Mattera, and then Jacqueline Zarate.

DANIEL MATTERA: Go morning, Chief. Good morning, Commissioners. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Daniel Mattera. I have 28 years in service with the LAFD, and I'm currently assigned to Fire Station 90 in the San Fernando Valley.

First, I would like to say I am not a racist or a sexist, and I resent being accused of such. I have never seen a member of our department singled out, treated indifferently or otherwise mistreated due to their race or gender, nor have I ever heard of any such actions.

True racism disgusts me, and I would be the first to stop any such behavior if I were to witness it. However, any member of our department may be singled out for such standard performance or character issues, and may be provided expert training or receive discipline as
a result.

Are we no longer supposed to train or discipline a member if they belong to a particular class? To do so, we would be guilty of racism of precarious type, treating someone differently because of their race or their gender. Is it being suggested that minorities are unable to hold the same standard as others? To do that would also be racist and sexist.

The challenges that face the Los Angeles firefighters are too daunting to allow two different standards of behavior, behavior or performance. The reasons that our standards must be maintained is simple, save lives of citizens and of fire fighters.

It would be unfortunate that after testing and trying to become a firefighter a young person is hired but subsequently terminated. It would be far worse if that firefighter died as a result of a deficiency that was recognized previously but no action was taken. That person deserves better, and his fellow firefighters deserve better.

Another issue that I take exception to is so called "hazing". Firefighters spend 24, 48, 72 hours at a time with each other, with all of the same internal pressures and issues that everybody has. Where we differ is we respond to emergencies that the average person
cannot tolerate. To help cope, we joke, we tease, we play pranks on each other.

The Fire Department psychologist even recognized that our joking and humor, is an invaluable part of our coping mechanism. If our pranks cross a line into an area called unwise, call it that, unwise, not racism. To confuse the two is a disservice to those who experience a real racism on a bus or in a concentration camp.

Talking heads in the media, like to use juicy sound bites, like "institutional racism" or "rampant sexism." This tabloid style of rumor laundering is insulting to the men and women who make the the Los Angeles Fire Department, and it's not even close to being true. Remember, in all walks of life, there are those who blame their employer or their co-workers for their own unwillingness or inability to do their job.

A handful of disgruntled employees out of a 4,000 member organization. Commissioners, please do the math. There is nothing institutionalized. There is nothing rampant. The Los Angeles Fire Department has important work to do. Please support those of us who do the work. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

Jacqueline Zarate.

JACQUELINE ZARATE: I'm here today -- I'm Jacky
Zarate. I'm here as President of the Los Angeles City Chicano Employee's Association. I am the former sexual harassment counselor for the Fire Department. I recently changed jobs. I'm now working in the Personnel Department, in the Public Safety Background Investigation Unit.

In September, I changed jobs, right during the time when this audit was undergoing the investigation part, and I can tell you -- today, I didn't really prepare any kind of written speech or anything. I came here to speak to you, both as a representative of the Chicano Employees for the City of Los Angeles and from my heart, from the work that I did here in this department.

For people to say that there was not discrimination going on in this department is -- is maybe their truth, but I can tell you in the eight years that I served here in this department, it broke my heart, many times, to have people come and report the things that were done to them, often after they quit, after they walked away from the career that they were anticipating, walked away from the way that they were treated, inhumanly as a person by members of this department.

It was very disappointing. And to think that it wasn't racist, or to thing it wasn't sexist is wrong, because it happened here over and over again. And the
thing that's, I think, is uncomfortable for me is --
serving as a sexual harassment counselor, we were not
given the authority to do investigation. We were
advisory to the Department. And on those occasions,
where people came to us soon enough, early enough, that's
handed off to the Department to investigate.

I think that the department -- the audit,
particularly the Personnel Department's audit, about the
disciplinary process was quite accurate. I think that
this department falls short of having a very fair or
consistent way of investigating complaints of
discrimination and harassment.

What people call "hazing" and just pranks and
practical jokes often went too far. I was able, in the
eight years that I was here, to see a lot of changes made
to the drill tower. Part of that happened as a result of
some of the collection of data that was done with exit
interviews of people leaving this department, and that
advice was passed onto management in this department, and
they did take a look at what was happening in the drill
tower, and I think it kind of backfired in some ways,
because that whole action of trying to clear up and clean
up some of the things that happened in the drill tower,
then spilled out into the field.

I realize I'm running out of time, but I just want to
say that I believe that a lot of the stuff that was in
the audit was accurate, and I think this Department needs
to take a stronger look and readdress the issue of
discipline and how sexual harassment and discrimination
is handled in this department.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Ms. Zarate. We have
James Smith and Raymond Hime. Mr. Smith.

JAMES SMITH: I have some documents here, if I may.
PRESIDENT SOTELO: Sure. After you speak, you can
hand them over.

JAMES SMITH: Good morning, Chief, Fire
Commissioners. I would like to thank you for this
opportunity. In this wonderful country we live in, we
have the opportunity to be able to speak and be heard.
My name is James Smith. I'm 25 years old. I grew up in
a fire department family. My dad was a 23-year veteran
of this fire department. He's retired now with a
disability pension. My step-mother was the first female
firefighter to be hired in the nation and was hired with
the Los Angeles Fire Department, and spent 10 years as a
paramedic.

I spent six years in the United States Marine
Corps, where I served honorably. I served in Iraq and
was a decorated Marine in combat. Upon returning home
from Iraq, I pursued my dream in becoming a Los Angeles
fireman. 14th months I spent on this fire department, and in this package you will see I have evaluations from my task force commanders and show nothing but standard performance and excellent people skills and ability to operate as a fireman for the City of Los Angeles.

I was involved in an off-duty incident when I was on a four-day, and someone happened to threaten the safety of my family. I addressed that incident with no malicious intent. I had a discussion with the person and understood that everything was understood, and it was all water under the bridge, so to speak.

A few months later I was investigated for making threatening statements to somebody. I was investigated, and I was found guilty of I don't know what, because to this date I have no documentation from the Los Angeles Fire Department of what it was that I was told to either resign or be terminated for.

I was called down and spoke with the Operations Commander with the union representation. During that discussion my experience in Iraq was brought up. I became emotionally distressed during that time, thinking about my friends and what I had done for my country. It was a suggestion that I go and see the department psychologist, and upon going and seeing the department psychologist, and if I was cleared, I would be allowed to
come back to the Los Angeles Fire Department. I did
that. And in this package here, you will see the
evaluation from the department psychologist releasing me
to come back to work.

Approximately a week later, as Fire Chief was
out of town doing business, the acting fire chief, the
Operations Commander, called me down and told me I had 10
minutes to make a decision on whether I wanted to be
terminated, or whether I wanted to resign for personal
reasons.

Union representation was there, Steve Norris,
was with me at the time, and I was given a tablet of
paper and after serving for my country and having
performed outstanding in the Fire Department for 14
months, I was given a pen and piece of paper, and I was
told to write my resignation on a life-long dream that I
had to become a Los Angeles fireman.

I wrote down, and it's in here, on a piece of
paper, that was transferred over to the secretary's
office, and she filled it out and handed it to the
Operations Commander, and that was the end of my career,
on August 10th, of this last year.

And in closing, I know my time's up, I'd just
like to say that since that time, I've been urged to come
back on the job. Seven days after, the 10th of August,
on the 17th, I took my C-pat. I currently re-enrolled myself back in the process, took a written examination again. I scored a hundred percent on my oral interview. I was given five veteran's points, 105 total, and I'm now in the background process.

I just want all of this to go away. I'd just like an opportunity to serve the citizens of Los Angeles and serve my country as a proud member of Los Angeles Fire Department, and what I believe that I was. I'm looking forward to that opportunity one way or the other, and I'd like to thank you for your time.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

JAMES SMITH: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Raymond Hime.

RAYMOND HIME: Good morning, my name is Raymond L. Hime, and I'm a Captain II, a Task Force Commander, at Fire Station 75. I've been a member of the department for 29 years. I've been a captain for 18, and I've been a Captain II for almost 11 years. It's interesting seeing that young man speak. It doesn't really prove that we have sexism and racism. I think what it proves is that they just pretty much treat everybody badly, but I'm trying to stay away from criticism. I can stand up here all day and do that.

Sitting here earlier, I was looking at that
banner right there, and I was looking at the that sign.

It's really great because it shows firefighters actively involved in what we do, which is fight fires.

I have two daughters, one is 20, and one is 22. They will never be doing that. But they will never be doing that because it's the Fire Department's fault, it's because they are little, and they can't do the job. But I understand that it is a political motivation of the Fire Department and the citizens of the city to have females on the Fire Department, that's great.

But what the Fire Department needs to do, in my opinion, is to look at who we really are, and what do we want to be, and we need start at the top, and we need to go all the way down through the chain of command of the firefighters and say, "We don't care if you like it or not, guys. This is who we want you to be." Because it's up to the top to tell us who they want us to be.

Do they want us to blow through red lights, or do they really want us to stop? Do they want us to wear our uniforms that we're supposed to, or do they really not care? And if you, as the honorable Fire Commissioners, and the citizens of the city want female firefighters, hire single-function paramedics and single-function AMT's who can't do that, but they can do what's down in the little corner down there, which is
ride the ambulance.

Maybe they'll need a little more help, maybe we in the field won't like that, but it's up to the leadership of the department to tell us what they want us to do and actually enforce it, which leads me to my -- the one I'll pick, I'll say, of my other comments, which is, I would like you to stop blaming the captains and particularly the gray-haired old white guys for all the problems in the department, because I just have my little fire station out there in the Valley.

I don't run the Fire Department. I don't even run a battalion. I do have a boss though, and he tells me what to do, and if we have institutionalized racism, and if we have institutionalized patterns that are occurring in the fire station, it's up to me to stop it at my fire station, but if I'm unable to do that, or if I don't see it, I got a boss who is supposed to see it, and he's supposed to correct me and tell me, "Ray, you are doing this the wrong way."

Where have they been? Okay. See, I disagree with the concepts that we have, this institutionalize racism, but if that's the premise that we are going to accept, okay. We have it. Where have these chiefs been? Are they floating in some Catharial mass up here and the only time they appear is when there is a problem? I
don't know how you can see it.

Although, now I have to defend the battalion chiefs, because I don't think it's their fault. The battalion chiefs, in my opinion, have become the administrative tools. They're on projects; they're on committees; they're raising funds for this, they're doing that; they're doing this. They're constantly in some meeting someplace. Where they should be is in my fire station once in a while, making sure that I'm doing my job.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Mr. Hime, I'm sorry, your time is up.


PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

RAYMOND HIME: Thank you for your time too by the way.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: We have Bruce Galien and Abby Liebman, followed by Vicky Barker.

BRUCE GALIEN: Chief, Commission, thank you very much for allowing us to be here today. My name is Bruce Galien. I'm a Captain II at Fire Station 90. I have 31 years of seniority on the job. I've seen a lot of changes in 31 years. I've gotten to know a lot of people. I'm speaking today for myself and a lot of those other people. It's not just Bruce up here speaking. It
We were talking earlier on about sexual harassment, that perceptions -- your perceptions are your reality. In fact, the perceptions that we have, in our level at least, is that communication has dropped down to nothing. We don't understand what it is our bosses want or need. We get conflicting orders. We get conflicting messages.

The trust, I really don't feel like our officers, our chief officers, trust us what we do. We seem to be micromanaged quite often. We're not allowed to take the initiative to do our job. Sometimes when we do take initiative, things go good, and something things can go wrong. But we are not allowed to even do that while we are told what to do and how to act. When things go wrong at the fire station, it's usually, what did the firemen do wrong? It wasn't the fault of the equipment. It goes on and on and on.

If it continues on this way, I think we are going to end up not being able to fight fires, not be able to go to EMS incidents, because they are all dangerous, and they are all going to cause some sort of injury or problem.

Input from the field. We're looking for input. We should be looking for input from the field, when there
is a problem or there is an issue, we don't get the
opportunity to address those issues. Hey, there's a
problem in the field here. How would you guys fix it?
What would be your best operation? How could we best
serve you guys? What do you guys need out there in the
field to make your job better? And we would like to have
the opportunity to have that input.

The audit itself, I feel, was formed from a
minority opinion. I think you will find that there was
more opinion out there, that this is still the greatest
job in the world, and I want to keep it that way. One of
the things I came here to do is to let you know that when
I came on, it was a great job, and I want to leave it as
a great job.

I can't go into all the details. It would take
too long. I've got hundreds of examples. I did write a
letter. It was a little controversial a few years ago, a
year and a half ago, regarding probationary firefighters
and the problems we've had. I'm not going to go into
that today. I did make a few copies, and I'm going to
leave that with you today. So you can take a look at
that.

I just want to say that this is a great job.
The department as a whole is a great department, and we
want to keep it that way. Thank you.
PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Galien.

ABBY LIEBMAN: Good morning, Members of the Commission, Chief Bamattre, and Members of the Department. My name is Abby Liebman. As you know, I'm an independent consultant. I was hired by Local 112 and the other employee organizations to make an assessment about the challenges that currently face the Los Angeles Fire Department with regard to their recruitment hiring, and retention of women, and the hiring and retention of men and women of color within the department.

My work coincided somewhat with the audits, the investigation. Although, my time line is a little longer than theirs. I anticipate that when my colleague, Jennifer McKenna, and I complete this work sometime in the next couple of months, that we too will have some findings and some recommendations for you.

I wanted to touch a little bit on the audits this morning. Something that I think you are all aware that I have been very careful not to do too much of when I've been to the meetings that we've had. One of things that I think is clear is that the findings of the audit are fairly consistent of what most observers have articulated about this particular department. That is that those findings resinate pretty strongly from people who had some experience with this Department.
Having said that, it's also clear to me that the manifestations of discrimination in the Los Angeles Fire Department are breeding in a culture that has been homogeneous for generations. It's resistant to change, and it's been subject to very little public scrutiny, and while there are elements of both firefighting and the Los Angeles Fire Department that are unique in the United States, there is also a consistency of cross fire departments around the United States, and there is much to be learned from other fire departments, which I think is a real positive aspect to all of this.

One of the things that I cautioned, in one of previous meetings, which we discussed some of these issues, was that we feel that this audit actually doesn't cover a comprehensive look at the department. We thought that it was somewhat narrow in its look, and it was a little shallow, somewhat. In fact, I think some of the previous speakers have eluded to the fact that there was a shallowness with regard to how these issues were explored.

Having said that, I also feel that some of the work I've done will compliment what they've found. So I'm hoping to shore up some of that information.

The timing of what you've been asked to do is a concern to me. I'm concerned because these issues and
the culture that created them, it didn't arise overnight. That rushing to make some kind of change may, in fact, sacrifice not just quality, but a long-term real change, which would be unfortunate, and we will be back here again in a few years.

So then, if we look at this as the preliminary step in trying to make an assessment as to -- well, I don't talk very fast. I'll close. I'll just close by saying that if this is the preliminary step in making the assessment, I think that's crucial. I think these recommendations are flawed. Many people have rushed to embrace them. I think that's a mistake. I will leave my written comments. I think that you will have the greater depth of what I had to say this morning.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

Vicky Barker followed by Eric Mattson.

VICKY BARKER: Good morning, Commissioners. Again, My name is Vicky Barker, and I'm the legal director of the California Women's Law Center. Since its founding in 1989, the Law Center has worked to ensure the legal rights of women and girls, and eliminating sexual harassment. And sex discrimination in the employment has been an issue prior to this, since the beginning.

And along with that, we have worked very hard to increase opportunities in the numbers of women in jobs
such as the Fire Department.

You know, and so here we are in 2006, and you know, I read the audits, and it's stunning to me that while most of corporate America has moved beyond antiquated notions of how women should be treated in the workplace, we have these findings that demonstrate here a culture, an institutionalized culture of sexism and racism in this department.

And it wouldn't be so disheartening if, in fact, the department never looked at this before, but it has and has attempted to change things in the past, and it was not successfully done so. So I have a few general points, because this is, you know, obviously it's an important issue that requires serious consideration.

My first point is that the audit findings must be taken seriously and to heart by the department. As ugly as these findings are, this is the reality for a significant number of your employees. It may not be the reality that some of your other employees experience, and I believe that's true, but for the ones who responded to this audit, that is their experience; that is their reality, and it's got to change.

My second point is that, it kind of echoes what Miss Liebman said, is that a Band-Aid approach is not going to solve this problem. You know, when you got a
cultural problem like this, you have to address it
systemically, and you have to look at the department as a
whole, and it's very difficult to achieve a cultural
change like this.

      Usually you need three key, and there's more
than three, but I got three things to talk about. First
you need clear and consistent leadership. It has to come
from the top. It has to be consistent. It has to
permeate all the way down through the department. If
it's not coming from the top, it will never get all the
way down. That's just the bottom line.

      Second you do need, and this was talked about in
the audits, you definitely need a transparent, a fair,
and consistent disciplinary process, otherwise you will
have a situation where people don't come to complain or
bring instances to light until after they've left the
department.

      Or you know, if you know, if employees see one
person get away with behavior and somebody else lose
their career, you know, it is impossible to eradicate
this kind of behavior if you're not consistent, and it is
not perceived as being fair.

      And finally, you need a critical mass of
employees of who either are being discriminated against
by either people of color or women, to institute this
change. And frankly, the critical mass is not here in this department.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Miss Barker, if you could submit the rest of your comments in writing.

VICKY BARKER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.


ERIC MATTSON: Good morning. My name is Eric Mattson. I put in over 30 years on this fire department. The two audits have confirmed what the rank and file have known for years, that Chief Bamattre does not have the necessary leadership skills to command the LAFD.

The audits reveal what was already well known within the department, that Bamattre and some chief officers do what they please when it comes to meting out arbitrary and unjust discipline. And then when employees object, they make them fight them through administrative means. Then if the administrative means don't work, they next step is for the employee to take us -- take us to file a costly lawsuit. But even then, the City of L.A. usually takes ownership of the lawsuit filed against the chief officers, sparing the chief officers from liability.

If Chief Bamattre and chief officers were affected
directly and held accountable, they might make entirely
different decisions. The taxpayers are not aware they
are paying for all of this, and there are enormous sums
of their hard-earned money that is being squandered by
the LAFD and the City of L.A. on these issues.

And what about the taxpayer's money and City
resources that were budgeted for human relations issues
in the LAFD over the passed 10 years? How much money did
that amount to? And when will the Fire Commission reveal
how Chief Bamattre spent that money -- how Chief Bamattre
spent that money and used those resources?

One of my sons, with other recruits, is now involved
with a lawsuit against Bamattre and other chief officers.
I am continuing to get numerous phone calls at home from
LAFD personnel, including captains, who I have never met
before, who are looking for a good attorney to defend
them against the consequences of this chief and his
defective disciplinary system. They and others who have
witnessed the intimidation tactics have told me they
cannot speak out because they fear being retaliated
against and maligned by management.

I have talked with many other firemen and chiefs from
other departments who have read the audits and the
newspaper articles, and one question always gets raised.
What happened do the LAFD? It used to be the department
that everybody looked up to. Years ago, I encouraged young men who wanted to be firemen, including my two sons, to test with L.A. because they were considered number one, but no more.

I read in the Daily News, recently, that Bamattre said, "I won't leave until our effectiveness in dealing with human relation issues dramatically improved." That decision is made up to the Fire Commission, the Mayor and the City Council.

Will you hold this chief accountable for this now documented neglect of duty and abuse of personnel, or will you reward him and give him more money and more power, which will further demoralize the troops?

Two audits, many personal testimonies, and numerous lawsuits have now exposed Bamattre's follies. It is long past time to restore this fire department's good name. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

Mr. Scott Gould, followed by Jerry Thomas.

SCOTT GOULD: Good morning. Thanks for being here. I've been with the LAFD for 24 years. I worked for three public service agencies, Department of Defense and two other fire departments. Before I came to the LAFD, I had never seen this kind of treatment by an administration before. This is not how other fire departments operate.
This is contributed to the low morale. The reasons, for example, there is double standards between Chief officers and subordinates. Whenever a subordinate challenges a chief officer's accusations, the subordinate is rarely given any credence whatsoever. This has caused firefighters to become ambivalent, unhappy, and unmotivated.

Disciplines and reprimands are passed out like candy on Halloween with impunity. Blind discipline is implemented before facts are obtained or investigated. The retaliation is rampant. This causes a tremendous amount of resentment. Recently, I was denied a transfer because a battalion chief requested another captain who was his buddy, in instead of me. I abide your seniority over this guy. I went through the process. I was ultimately given the transfer, but it was only after I filed a grievance.

Another reason, I had called the battalion chief for help was when I was confronted with a potentially volatile situation with a citizen, who was at the fire station. The battalion chief refused to come and help. The situation deteriorated. The same battalion chief issues me a reprimand, and the chief refused to hear my version of the facts. This citizen happened to be a personal friend of the battalion chief.
Firefighters have a deep-seeded animosity toward certain chiefs because of these inequities. The mismanagement, hostility, chronyism, a favoritism reigns. The 1996, HRBC recommendations were implemented and then ultimately ignored. The Human Resources Bureau was implemented, and this has become nothing more than a facade.

It is my hope that the current audit will be implemented. Firefighters are passionate about their job, but resent the treatment of the LAFD administration. None of us deserve this kind of treatment. Scores of firefighters have left the LAFD to go to the L.A. County, Orange County, and Ventura County Fire Departments. Nobody has ever left those Departments to come here. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

Again, I encourage everyone who is in the back. There are still a few seats up here in the left. If there are public speakers, go ahead and fill out the cards and hand them over to us over here on the left-hand side. Thank you. Mr. Thomas.

JERRY THOMAS: I am retired Jerry Thomas, Captain II, with 31 years with the Fire Department. You know, I am not disgruntled, and I experienced some indignation and discrimination and racism in the 31 years on the Fire
Department, but I've been a captain for eighteen years, and I have never, never taken that out on white firefighters or non-black firefighters.

I think it starts with leadership, and I'm somewhat dismayed and a little disheartened too when I hear "White firefighters." You know, I've never experienced racism -- well that may be the case, but you can't disallow what people of color and females are telling you about what is pretty consistent on this fire department. And I want to encourage that the Board to stay focused, because you know I spoke at the '94 and '95 hearings, and you know what, this is reflective of what we went through 10 or 12 years ago, and I did it when most firefighters and most captains and chiefs wouldn't speak up.

In fact, it was only two captains that spoke up, no chief officers. So you can see some of the black and white chiefs are complicit in this disgrace that we're talking about today.

The displayed treatment is real. The gentleman just spoke just before me, it's real. We know it's real. Perception is reality, but you know what, I lived in reality. So I want the Board to stay focused. Don't be discouraged. It's real. Leadership starts from the top, and your organizations is only as strong as your
leadership. Value is definitive, and it reflects what it said 10 years ago.

Here we are in 2006, and you know we got to make some structural and intricate changes in this fire department, and I want to say one thing, because the Board has the responsibility. Your choice is a responsibility. I don't think the chief's job, when Bamattre eventually leaves, should be rewarded to any chief on his job, black or white, because they were complicit with these people being discriminated against.

Gender discrimination, racial discrimination, hazing -- hazing is not -- does not have a place in the Fire Department. Hazing, they do it in college. You don't haze a professional entity like the Fire Department.

So in closing, what I want to say is don't reward an inside member with the fire chief job. It has to come from the outside, because then I got to stand up in human rights and civil rights, because they don't need to be sitting in that position. Thank you for your time.


WILLIAM ZARING: Thank you, Fire Commission and Chief Bamattre. I didn't come prepared, but I had the opportunity to be here. I'm William Zaring, another
speaker didn't show up. I have 32 years on the job, and
the first thing I would like to address is this audit,
and I would like to give you an example.

When the Mayor comes in new to office, I believe
he asks all the Fire Commissioners to tender the
resignation. He may keep some. He may replace the
entire Board, if I'm correct. So let's say there are 10
commissioners, and I'm going do an audit of you 10
commissioners.

So I'm going to take all 10, but I'm only going
to speak to two of you, okay. And I'm going to pick the
ones I speak to, and I'm going to speak to one of the
commissioners who had to leave who didn't want to leave,
and that's the only one I'm going to speak to.

Now, I'm going to take you, the sitting board of
the Fire Commission and challenge you and say, here is
what our commission has said about all of you, but I
didn't talk to you. I didn't talk to you. I didn't talk
to you. I didn't even let you see the questionnaire.
I've never seen it.

We have a member in this audience, a Captain,
Bill Finn, over 40 years on this job. Did anybody speak
to him? No. That's the first problem we have here.
That's huge.

Secondly, okay. Discrimination, sexism, it
could be in any workplace. It shouldn't be tolerated here. We have members of every race, of every sex, and every position on this job. We have a chain of command. Just make it work. And to these other people, I say have every charge fully investigated, because things I've seen in the newspaper, recently, you're only getting a 10th of the story. You're not getting the entire story. Challenge yourselves to go after the whole story. It's out there. Thank you.


JOHN HAGERMAN: Commission, Chief. I apologize. I'm unprepared. I didn't plan on speaking. I decided to when I saw most of the firemen sitting in the back. You're only going to hear from -- you can't fault the membership. Courage is the interstrength to do what's right, and it's really hard to come up here and talk about an organization that we all love, but I'm here to tell you today that I've walked out of your engine houses for 26 years, and I have gone to construction sites, where I'm an architect and a builder. This house needs rebuilding.

I would go to those construction sites and get all those men to work for a common goal. The majority of those men spent time in prison, because construction work
is a tough job. The men on my construction jobs respected each other more than the men in your engine houses do. The necessary component that's missing here is respect for each other.

I feel for the marine that sits behind me. The day before I graduated from the drill tower, the marine that was in my drill tower class flew Navy jets off of an aircraft carrier. He was a 31-year-old man, and the drill tower captain came up and disrespected him as a marine, enough for that marine to punch that captain out. They made it so hard on that 31-year-old officer. He went on this job a year and one day and handed in his badge.

Your people that are in command of this outfit don't know the necessary components to earning somebody's respect. My wife taught me -- she's a school teacher. School teachers, in order to teach, have to earn their students' respect. The people, the officers of this fire department do not know the true meaning of courage, which is the interstrength to do what is right. You just heard a man tell you that not too many chief officers will speak out.

The design of your home that we are trying to rebuild, the design of it promotes two things. If I speak out, quite possibly what you hear you may not like.
Therefor the boss never receives the true message.

I came off the construction site today, on my own time, to give you the true message, that when you rebuild your house, do not pick the architects who are part of the culture that allowed it to fall apart. Pick an architect who understands leadership, who understands that just treatment is one of your most important things, who understands that when you investigate something you cannot lie by omission. You have people who are empowered, that are completely irresponsible for their actions.

If I go onto a job site, and I built something that is not right, and it falls over, I'm in court a day later. Your City is paying a lot of money to shield these people. They lie by omission, and there is no consequence for their actions.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

JOHN HAGERMAN: Pick an architect, but don't pick it within these walls.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you Mr. Hagerman. Randy Souza, followed by Paul Waters.

RANDY SOUZA: Good morning, Chief Bamattre, the Board, and UFLAC. I would like to thank you for holding this session, because it's critical seeing that these issues are being addressed and not swept under the rug,
which is typically being done.

I was not prepared to speak here today. I came down from my captain's class and was allowed to participate here, and my topic is about the promotional exam, particularly the three-hole score.

I have a grievance against the three-hole score, and it is not about sour grapes. It's about trying to change a process that, I think, is broken, and also the Union says, basically they have signed off, although their name is put on at the end of the list that this is what they agreed upon.

So it's not about Randy Souza not passing the three-hole score, but it's about every member who is going to be in the process or to sometime in their career have to go through this, that they don't have to go through what I did.

I spent over two years studying for captain. I went through a separation and some hard times, but at the end, I was at the top of the list, and then it seemed like it was all worth while.

Then, I go through the three-hole score process, that says was not fit to be a captain. Well, I wasn't given the chance for probation to play its role, and to let me perform and see if I am fit to be a captain or not.
I may not have been able to go before a Board and give a nice interview, or whatever, but at least I should have been placed somewhere in the hiring process. I went through a whole testing process that involved experts from outside the department that was supposed to be able to evaluate people to see if they were fit or not, and that's where we ended up on the list in the process.

So, I would like to see that the testing process is looked at very hardly. I know that in the Union's audit, that they have also addressed this issues. But again, this is something I think that needs to be addressed. I know that I worked with two candidates from the AO's process, and they failed the three-hole score. These gentlemen were with me time in, and they worked very hard for what they went through. They went through the testing process. They performed. They answered questions, and they were put high on the lift, and within an hour, there was three personnel on the Board that told them they were not fit to be AO's.

Now, what is that message sending to those chiefs that were out there, grading them, and watching them perform, and also answering their questions. So I would like to take a good, hard look at the whole testing process. I heard about these complaints, and here I am,
I'm going through it again. I don't know if I'm going to get through the 20 month. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Souza.

Mr. Paul Waters followed by Cori Tipton.

PAUL WATERS: My name is Paul Waters. I'm the founder of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, Gay and Lesbian Caucus Reformed members who -- of Neighborhood Caucuses throughout the city. One or two of us and all of them, this is our organization to be able to get to know each other.

I would like to speak to this issue, but more I would like to focus my comments on the future of how to solve it, for the basis of not only the department, but also for the City of Los Angeles. And I'll start with my conclusions first.

While discrimination against women and minorities does exist, there is also discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And wow, if it is a good working environment for women and minorities, it could be still be hostile for gays and lesbians.

However, if it is a good working environment for gays and lesbians, it is absolutely a good working environment for the other two. Therefore, an opportunity to solve this problem would be to, perhaps, put a little extra emphasis on solving that final problem as a way to
also address the other two, and as a way to do that is to consider partnering with community organizations in a public/private partnership as a way to do that.

The report -- the reports that have been issued, discuss the issue of discrimination on the basis for women and minorities, and does not discuss sexual orientation at all. One could say this means it isn't there. Rather, it does mean that. What it is doing is emphasizing that the others do exist. Because as women and minority cannot hide, gays and lesbians can and do, all of them, and within the Fire Department, there are a number there. I know them. They like their job. They like their job a lot.

How to solve it? Partnering. The police department has done exactly this with an organization, that I'm also involved in San Fernando Valley, a gay pride organization that takes place in a lot of the CBS, Studio City. This is the program for last year. You will see here this Officer Mike Jones and his husband. This is Officer Lisa Phillips and her partner. It's a good thing.

The police department used to be behind the Sheriff's Department in terms of what they were doing with this issue, as a consequence of this partnership, the police department has not only caught up with the
Sheriff's Department, but lapped them by far. There is
an opportunity to do that here in a very big way that
will be beneficial to the whole city.

In addition to that, there is also a DVD, which
actually documents that, which I'll leave with you. It's
a very interesting story of how this all came out. Good
things.

In addition to that, we already had outreach to
the department a willingness to meet with us, and there
will actually be a meeting with the gay and lesbian
caucus here in just a couple of weeks. We're looking
forward to it. We think it's going to be a fascinating
meeting.

We are going to spend 80 percent of our time
learning about the Fire Department, and oh, yeah, we will
talk about that too, but that's who we are. We're going
to sit talk more with planning issues than others.

So, in conclusion solve this problem, and the
way to solve it is to put a little extra emphasis on this
one area, not to the exclusion of others, but perhaps to
a little bit more. That will help in a big way. Keep
the attention on this problem. We can solve this, have
just -- make the attention and we'll work with it. Thank
you very much for you time, and good luck.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Waters.
Miss Cori Tipton, followed by Brenda Lee, and again I encourage everybody. I know this is difficult, but I do encourage as many people to come up here and speak. This is not the last time you will be given the opportunity, but certainly we would like to hear from you.

CORI TIPTON: Commissioners, Fire Chief. My name is Cori Tipton, I've been a member of the Fire Department for eighteen years, and a captain for the last five. I'm currently the President of SIRENS, Special Association of Fire Service women. Over the past two years, I've spoken with numerous women about the inequities they are dealing with within the Fire Department, unequal treatment, hostile work environment, discrimination, sexual harassment, and even sexual battery.

These are not just isolated incidents, and the development of an organizational culture with -- some members have come up and told us it is not organizational. The number of complaints that I've dealt with over the last few years tells me that it is organizational.

The complaints came to light with the anonymous letter last year. I applaud the person who sent the letter, but I think it is truly an indication of why it was sent anonymously and what's going on within this department. The audits now shed some light on this
subject, and if I don't stand up and try affect some
change in this department, the next woman will find it as
difficult as I did to come on.

When I leave here today, my cell phone is going
to start ringing. Some of the calls will be friends,
coworkers, family, congratulating me on standing up and
trying to make this department better, trying to make it
better for the next women to come on. Some of the calls
will be anonymous callers. They'll think it's amusing to
tell me to watch my back, tell me to leave the job, call
me nice expletives over the cell phone, always listed as
an unknown number on my cell phone by the way.

That's a reality, and it stands up every time I
speak up for the women in this department and point out
what an amazing job they do. Every single day, what an
amazing job they do.

I leave you with this. The most successful
organizations in America, and actually the most
successful organizations across the world do not just
tolerate diversity. They seek it out. We need to seek
out diversity, and the members of this department need to
understand that they need to value diversity and realize
that obtaining it does not compromise our ability to
fulfill our mission, and I'd like to repeat that.

"Obtaining diversity does not compromise our ability to
fulfill our mission."

We should be interested in making the Fire Department a professional workplace, where everyone feels free to share their talents and abilities.

If we accomplish these goals, the SIRENS Organization, the women of this department and myself, believe we will hire a wider base of candidates, including women and people of color, who are much more likely not only to stay, but to succeed in the fire service. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you. Brenda Lee followed by Mark.

Brenda Lee, go ahead.

BRENDA LEE: So, your family comes to the fire station. We all have families. We all have people we love, and the supervisors there say, "Well, nice rack." I'm sure each and everyone one of you would want that said of your loved ones, right? "Nice rack." And when she leaves, "Oh, you got that ring out of a gum ball machine, didn't you." Who do you think you are trying to fool? Each and every one you have families. You might not look like me. You might not act like me. You might not talk like me, but we have people that we love.

And in having that, we should also have the ability to have our positions, chief, assistant chief,
firefighter, and care about one another. I've gone to
fire stations where people haven't talk to me all day.
Some of those faces I see out in the crowd. Never talk
to me never indulge me. Did that stop me from going to
work? No.

And I tell you why, it didn't stop me, because
I'm not going to let you stop me from supported my
family, and also showing the community --

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Miss Lee, could you direct
your comments to the Commission.

BRENDA LEE: -- and also showing the community
that, yeah, there aren't just men on the Fire Department.
Yeah, there aren't just white women on the department.
Yeah, there aren't just white men on the department.

It really hurts me that a supervisor can make
these remarks in front of people and laugh about it, and
expect an individual not to do anything about it. I know
that if you don't care about your loved ones, I'm sorry,
I care about my loved ones. And not only do I care about
my loved ones, I acknowledge that other people are human,
and I speak to them.

I don't know where you were raised or where you
come from. I know we all come from different places, but
I think we all need to take a look in the mirror every
morning we get up and ask yourself, "Am I a good person?"
You probably can't answer that question. Some of you problem can't, and that's too bad. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you. Followed by Mark. I'm sorry, Mark, I'm going to butcher your name. Can you pronounce that for me.

MARK KHITIKIAN: Good morning, Chief. Good morning, Commission. I don't have anything prepared as well this morning, but after hearing some of these comments, I'm pretty much disappointed in a lot of our members, and I'm not here to tell you that the department is perfect. I know we have problems, but I'll tell you that I have been on the job 32 years.

When I came on the job in '73, I was called a "camel jockey." I was called a "sand nigger." I was called a "carpet rider." I always put that -- I was treated fairly. I got good evaluations, and I went dirt bike riding with the crews that I worked with, and we laughed, and we scratched, and we went to fires, and everything was good. I took that as being part of the Fire Department.

Now whether that's good, bad, or indifferent, I don't know, but it didn't stop me from doing my job. It hasn't affected my life personally. I look out in this crowd, and I think everyone of these people that are here today are my friends. I feel accepted, but I think there needs
to be a little bit of maturity on this job, and if people
have a problem with whether it's getting a bucket of
water thrown on them, or getting shaved, I've had both
happen to me, I never took that as being racial or it
being harassment or anything else. It was part of that
station's comradery.

When a bell went off, we went to a fire. The people
that threw water on me or shaved me and watched my
reactions to those incidents, and I didn't get mad. I
didn't get upset, but they knew they could count on me to
do the job. I wasn't going to fall apart on them and
run, and I think some of that hazing -- I'm not saying
all the hazing is good, but some of that hazing had a
pretty good purpose, and that purpose was to find out
what kind of person you were.

If you fell apart after getting bucketed, people
wonder, well, what's going to happen when this guy goes
to a fire? Is he going to turn and run? If when things
get hot or things get tough, is he going to fall apart?
So the job has become a social experiment.

We're looking for perfection in every aspect of this
department, and it's not perfect, and it probably won't
be perfect, but I think we need to understand that we
work 24 hours a day in a fire station. There is going to
be some joking. There is going to be some levity. There
is going to be some comments made.

For Christ's sake, you can't be so sensitive over something that is said. Every time something that is said that is considered or perceived to be negative, it's doesn't mean it's racial. It doesn't mean that because you're black, because you're white, because you're yellow that you are not accepted.

I work with a number of black firefighters, black females, white females. The station I work at now, we have every race, every -- well, we don't have any females, but I could tell you that everybody is accepted. We work together well. We have a good time, and when the alarm goes off to go to a fire, we can all trust one another.

So, I like this job. I think we have a good department. Again, I know it is not perfect. We got some areas to improve on, but let's take this thing in context and not go off the deep end. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

Mr. Richard Fields. Richard Fields and -- Miss Revelles, do we have any more cards? No.

Okay. Again, those of you in the back, hello. If you want to speak, come forward and let us know your thoughts. Thank you. Mr. Fields, go ahead.

RICHARD FIELDS: Good morning, Chief, Members of the
Fire Commission.

As I stand before you this morning, what I see is a Commission that is committed to a goal, no matter what race you are, what gender you are, whatever your background is. I see you as an organization that is committed to a goal, and that is the great equalizer of who you all are, whatever background you come from.

Our fire department is committed to a goal, where we should be. We are committed to a goal of integrity and providing a service to this community that they can't get anywhere else. When you open up the Yellow Page, you don't find fire departments. There's one number to call, and when the public asks for help, they don't take a tally of how many blacks, how many women, or color ratio, anything like that. They want their emergency evaded.

When they ask for help in the EMS call, they want that heart attack to go away. They want that stroke to be a evaded. They want to get their family member to the hospital as soon as possible, and they expect the people who come out to them are professionals, and that is what we need to provide for them.

Right now what we have are examples of people who have gotten up here and have spoken about -- are just evidences of a lack of integrity. Integrity is not
always popular. Integrity does not always have the most
friends in the room, but the integrity is just what's so.

If we go back to integrity, if everything that
we say and what we do has integrity, then it alleviates
all questions. It alleviates so many questions of why
did this happen? The quality of my work has my name on
it, that's integrity, and when I don't do something, it
has my name on it, that is integrity. So that you can
say, hey Richard, you didn't do what you were supposed to
do, and my integrity says, you know what, you're right.
I didn't do what I was supposed to do.

If we get back to a level of integrity on this
department, then the climate, the language about our job
will begin to shift. It won't matter if it's a women
doing the job, if it's a female doing the job, if it's a
three-percent minority doing the job, it's the person who
is doing the job.

The quality of our work is the great equalizer,
but what has become the climate is that, well if the
person doesn't do their job, well, it has to be because
they're gay. If a person doesn't do their job, it has to
be because they are black, or because of consent decree.

The fact is, is that we have a responsibility to
uphold a standard that this Mayor says we have given the
oath to this city to do, and if we don't do it, we are
just held accountable, and that starts from the top.

The Chief has to be in power. He has to be in power to direct this fire department as it sees. That is leadership, and when that empower comes down that chain of command, to his deputies, to his AC's, to his battalion chiefs, and to the firefighters who carry those things out, if that integrity is rampant among the Fire Department in our language about what we do --

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Excuse me.

RICHARD FIELDS: -- and the people we talk about will change.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Fields.

RICHARD FIELDS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Mr. William Parker followed by Mr. Pat McOsker.

WILLIAM PARKER: Good morning, Board, Chief. My name is William Parker, I've been a member of this department for 25 years. I stood before the city council the last time we talked about these issues. The issues are real.

That's not a question, I don't believe.

The fact that somebody stands up here and says they never seen anything or never participated in anything, that's -- never seen, that's really hard for me to believe. So what we need to do is we need to find real solutions to real problems for the final time.
We've been doing this for 10 or 12 years. Let's get to the root of the problem. We have some issues with leadership. We have some issues with accountability. People are not held accountable for the actions that they take. Some of the supervisors and some of the stations don't take responsibility for some of the things that go on in the stations. I'm not telling you something that doesn't exist, this really happens. The bottom line is that this department, the Board, has to take responsibility and be held accountable for the actions that go on in the fire stations.

No one should have to come to work and hear themselves called names or referred to as something that's outside of their name. I've also been a member and on the Board as the President of the Stentorians. Armando Hogan is not able to come here today. The organization will make their position known at a later time with regard to these issues, but I'm just here to let you know how I feel.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Parker.

Mr. Pat McOsker.

PAT MC OSKER: Thank you, Madam President, Members of the Commission. I'm getting here late. I'm at a little bit of a disadvantage as to what everyone had to say, and maybe that's a good thing, actually. I'm kind of in the
dark right now, but I'm going to say what's on my mind.

By the way, I was testifying before the Mayor and the rest of the EERC regarding our contract just now. That's why I was a little late this morning. So I hope the members -- I think the members will probably forgive me for that.

But I just want to start by thanking the Fire Commission for the way that you've conducted yourselves ever since the audits have come out. You have been completely constructive on this. You have been very very open to hearing from everyone. I think today's meeting here is evidence of that. You've been reaching out and wanting to hear from everyone and that's a good thing.

I don't know what everyone said today, but I bet you heard a little bit of everything. You probably heard some people say there is no problem here. You probably heard others say there are deep problems here, and the whole range in between that. I think if that's the case, it just points out that everyone has a different perspective.

Everyone comes from a different place in life. Everyone has had a slightly different experience on the Fire Department. I don't doubt that some people, like me, haven't had a problem, haven't been discriminated against, haven't been harassed or harangued. I also
don't doubt what others had to say on that subject, if it
differs slightly from that.

The two audits that came up, you know, the one
thing that they really agreed on, I think, or perhaps
were were silent on, and therefor agreed on, was that
firefighters weren't in anyway the problem, that
individual firefighters were bad people, because we're
not. Firefighters are good people.

You know, left unmolested, if you will, with the
proper, you know, procedures and policies in place and
enforced, we'll get along better than anybody, in any
work force. I'll guarantee you that. Because
firefighters are good and compassionate people, and we
learn how to get along in the fire house, and we learn
about compassion in the streets every day.

And like I said, if everything is done right,
and with your help, I believe that this fire department,
the LAFD, will be a work force where people will get
along better than anybody. But I think some changes do
need to be made. They need to be positive changes. The
right ones, not just knee-jerk reactions. You know,
we've had that in the past.

10 years ago we had some partial fixes, and we
had some knee-jerk reactions, and I think we are still
paying the price for that. You've heard me say over and
over, that I think it's really really important that we change the way that we test and train and treat rookies in the field. I think we kind of plant the seeds there. It's a cancer that grows, if you will, on skepticism, and scrutiny, and mistrust of one another.

You know, animosity has developed because of the way that we do it now. We need to change that. Actually, I think that mistake was made 10 years ago, because of the scrutiny that we had then, the way people were treating one another. The knee-jerk reaction was really a bad fix to that situation. So, I hope that gets changed for the positive.

But again, I want to thank you, and I want to say, firefighters aren't the problem. We aren't perfect. We're absolutely not perfect, but we are not the problem here. The problem really is the system and the policies, enforcement, accountability, those kinds of issues, that are really management issues, to be honest with you, and that's why I'm glad that all of you have been chosen by the Mayor to lead the Fire Commission here. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. McOsker. Okay. Miss Revelles, is that it? Okay.

What I'd like to do is I'd like to give an opportunity to the commissioners, if they want to respond relative to anything. Our formal responses will not be
coming out until later, but the first thing I want to assure everybody is the reason that we have the court stenographer here is because your comments are very important to us. We did want to document them, so we can include them in whatever action plan we come up with as a commission.

Again, your participation and your honest dialogue here has helped us understand in a broader sense, where we need to be as a commission, in terms of our response. So I think it's critical that you know that the testimony you gave here today is entered into, in our records, so we can formulize our opinion.

And then also, I want to encourage everyone -- we are going to stick around for probably 20 minutes after this meeting if there is any individual comments that you want to make to one of the commissioners. You can feel free to do that. I just wanted to go ahead and encourage those of you who did not feel comfortable or want to speak in public because of the echo in this room, I know it's kind of an issue, you will have the opportunity to talk to us one on one.

Mrs. Furillo, I don't know if you want to make any comments.

COMMISSIONER FURILLO: A couple. I just also wanted to thank everybody for coming out and to let you know
that this hearing is only a beginning still, of a
process. It's not the end, and we really encourage
everyone to let us know where you are coming from, how
you feel about the audits, what your experiences have
been, to help us -- to help us give better leadership to
this process, and I personally want to say that I am
available to anyone who wants to speak to me about any of
these issues, and I welcome your comments. Thank you.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Tolentino.

COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: Just a few thoughts. I
appreciate everyone providing comments. I know how
difficult it is to share some of these very difficult
situations, and that, as a commissioner, I speak for all,
because we are very serious about what we are doing here.
We want to get the input. We want to get a broad brush
of what's going on, and also the context of some of these
issues, because we sometime just get, kind of a broad
conclusion without knowing and seeing where all these
comments and experiences are coming from.

As Commissioner Furillo indicated, if folks are
more comfortable speaking to me individually, or any of
us individually, please feel free to do so. You can get
a hold of us at the Commission Office, and I will be
happy to return your phone call. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes.
COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: One of the first things I want to say is that I applaud every speaker's courage. It takes a lot of courage, irrespective of what your perspective is, to come and stand and speak while you know that your colleagues and people that you are going to go back and work with are listening to you, listening to your comments.

There may be many of you who have spoken, who have never said any of this, not even to your colleagues. So here you are, and you actually are speaking, from what I can see, very passionately, and you're speaking about your journey with the Los Angeles Fire Department.

I think this Commission is committed to making sure that it becomes more than just another plan, that it becomes more than just a set of boxes that you check off. It is going to be, however, a very difficult task for all of us to walk this road together and create lasting change. This is not something that is going to just happen over night. This Commission is committed to making sure that we begin to make the steps that will change the climate and the culture for the better and for everybody in the Fire Department.

We are all going out to fire stations, not just because we want to talk to people about the audit or want to hear about the audit, but also because we want to
really understand how the Fire Department works. So, if there are people, or a message that you can take back from the Commission, if people were not comfortable, or they couldn't get here today, every station that we visit provides an opportunity for people to share their thoughts with us, and sometimes it's easier to do it that way, because I've come to understand that visiting fire stations is that you are with your family.

Whether it is dysfunctional family or not, I'm not here to say whether it is or not, but sometimes it is easier when we are in a fire station, and we are talking to people who are actually on the same shift, who actually have the same experiences, and who actually create some of the culture in that fire station.

So I really want to thank everybody that came today, and also we can all be reached through the Commission Office. The number is (213) 978-3838, because we always say that, "Call us at the Commission Office," and somebody says, "Well, what's their telephone number?" That's it. That's our phone number, you can call and ask to speak to any one of us.

And you can also call and invite us to your fire station. That will be nice, because we've been inviting ourselves. But if there is any fire station, where somebody really would like for us to come, and they
really want to have a conversation with us, call us up
and we'll come. We can only come two at a time. Three
of us can't come together, but two of us can always come
to any fire station. So, thank you very much.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Commissioners. I did
want to let everyone know that the process from here is
that we are going to be preparing our action plan as a
result of all the various committee meetings that we've
had, all the various hearings that we've had, just our
individual one-on-one meetings that we've had.

That action plan is going to be a draft, and it's
going to come out Tuesday, April 3rd. I believe it is a
Tuesday, and we'll be distributing that through the
Commission Office. So anyone who wants to receive a copy
of that draft, action plan, needs to call the Commission
Office, so you can take a look at what our preliminary
findings have been and what our preliminary
recommendations are.

We worked with all the employee organizations,
including UFLAC, Stentorians, the SIRENS the Los Bomberos
and have also worked with the Department to come up with
various input to that action plan. So it synthesises a
lot of input over the last couple of months.

From that, we will also then entertain your
feedback. We are going to have another one of these
public hearing meetings on April 11th. We will probably do it in the evening for those individuals that weren't able to come out in the morning. So we will be having that on April 11th, and to give you another opportunity to talk with the Commission.

And then our final action plan to the Mayor will be adopted and finalized by April 25th. So you have until April 25th, to really give us your input and to give us your thoughts about the Department. So thank you very much.

Before we close this public hearing on this particular issue, I wanted to first thank the Department for accommodating us. You know it's very difficult to have a public hearing out in the field, and to make sure that we are getting enough staff support to do that, and also encouraging members to come.

So the Department did make an effort to try to ensure that we had participation by covering the hours, and making sure that people felt welcome to come, and that they wouldn't have to do it on their own personal time. So I wanted to thank the chief and staff for that. I really appreciate that.

I want to acknowledge, also, the Commission staff Blanca Revelles has done an amazing job in getting this meeting together in a short period of time. She got
everybody here and made sure that we are all set up. So I just want to publicly thank Blanca for all her hard work, and I wanted to introduce you to our other staff, Bea Lopez, and she's our EEO Director, and also we have a new staff person here with us today, and I'm sorry. It's Ardis --

ARDIS NISHIKANA: Nishikana.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: You can introduce yourself to her, and she will be talking with you at length.

So thank you very much for those of you that came. Again, we are going to stay about 20 minutes after this meeting so we can talk. We do have an agenda item before us. So if you will indulge us a little bit and be patient. We need to review this item on the supplemental agenda, and then we will go ahead and adjourn the meeting.

Chief, if you could, please, I guess, introduce the item. It's the reconsideration of the intergovernmental contract to provide EMS and Fire Dispatch Services to the City of Santa Monica.

CHIEF BAMATTRE: Thank you, Commissioners. Before we lose a lot of members, I just want to take the opportunity, also, to thank all of those members that came out today. I don't share the same fear that you're intimidated, and you're not -- you don't have the courage
to speak out. I go out to fire stations. I haven't seen
anybody intimidated in the stations, in some of the
questions that they ask me.

What may be more comfortable for you, if you'd rather
put your comments in writing and submit that to the
Commission, that will give you an opportunity to have
your voice heard and have your opinions heard.

Certainly, we would encourage you at the next meeting,
and we will do everything we can to accommodate getting
members there to come forward.

As I've often said, as we work through some of
these difficult issues, some of you may think it's my
values. It's not my values. It's your values. It's the
values of our department, and we got a little over a
hundred work locations, with three platoons. So we got
three hundred work locations, that's a lot of
firefighters out there, and a lot of officers out there,
and it's something we got to approach from a collective
effort to address these issues as we move forward. So
thank you for coming out today.

The item before us is a report that addresses a
desire and request on both the City of Santa Monica and
the City of Los Angeles to provide dispatch services to
the city of Santa Monica. By contract, I believe this
was before the Board last commission meeting.
There were some changes that were requested. Those changes have been made, and this contract is ready to move forward to the Mayor's office and the Council. If there is any questions that the Commission still has, we can address those with staff.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Chief. I understand that the changes were not extensive, but I did want to make sure that UFLAC got a copy of this report, so that they could take a look at it, but if the Commissioners don't have any issues or any other questions --

Mr. McOsker.

PAT MC OSKER: Thank you, Madam President. Actually, we haven't received a copy of it yet. As you will recall, and with your help, several months ago, it was set aside for a little bit, until we reached an agreement, and we signed a letter of agreement regarding this new additional work for OCD dispatchers. So, I would just ask that you pass a motion that's contingent on our review of the contract.

It probably is not any increased work or anything that we would be overly concerned about, but I would like to see, since we do have an agreement on this, with exactly what the changes are.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: From our review of it, the changes were kind of structural in terms of explanation in the
staff report. They weren't major changes. So let's put a time on that, Mr. McOsker. But I think we can go ahead and entertain a motion to adopt this and move this forward.

COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: I just have one. I'm prepared to make a motion on that, but I do have one caveat. As I look through this, I'd like to make sure that the minute that we begin and enter this contract, that we begin to keep baseline data. I want to make sure that we are understanding what the recoverable costs are, what the gaps are, and I want to make sure, from my perspective, how much additional pressure it puts on our technological ability within the Department. Because we are trying to work through all of those things in terms of interoperability, so I want to make a motion with that caveat, that I want to make sure that we begin to keep baseline data from day one on this contract, on those issues.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Chief Bamattre, is there any issue with that?

CHIEF BAMATTRE: Yes. Now, we have the run information, the incident information, for both cities, based on historical Santa Monica. The workload will be about 1100 incidents. The contract has been, the model run, that we have a provision that we will come back
after the first year with accurate data, what the impact
has been both financially and on the workload.

COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: Okay. And we need to
make sure we get that reported, Chief Bamattre, if we
can, as we begin to go through the next budget process.
I mean, the Commission needs to be able to have that
information and needs to be able to see it, as the
Department begins to formulate its budget for the
following year.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Furillo.

COMMISSIONER FURILLO: I just wanted to know how long
would it take for the Union to have a chance to just take
a look at it?

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: A day.

COMMISSIONER FURILLO: Okay.

CHIEF BAMATTRE: Actually, this just moves it forward
to council, then it will be going before two committees,
that -- council also. So there will be quite a bit of
time between now and when it finally gets approved.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: I think what we'll do is just do
it simultaneously. We can adopt the report, and then
simultaneously or concurrently, UFLAC will get an
opportunity to take a look at it, and if there are any
issues, it can come back and be addressed at the city
council committees. So we'll just do it that way.
Okay. So do I have a motion to adopt this item?

COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: So moved.

COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: So moved.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: All in favor?

COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: I.

COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: I.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Any opposed? Okay. The motion to adopt the budget -- I mean, to adopt the report to move it forward is adopted. So with that, we are going to go ahead and take a motion to adjourn this meeting. Again, we'll be around for the next 20 minutes if you wish to talk to us one on one? Do I have a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: So moved.

COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: Second.

PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, everyone for participating. I appreciate it.

(Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.)