

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

**MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006 AT 9:00 A.M.**

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.

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
March 28, 2006**

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.

ATTACHMENT A

CITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING

In the matter of:)
)
Special Meeting)
_____)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006

9:00 a.m.

Reported by:

Melinda Bates

Job No.

LFD9682

1 CITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
2 BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
3 SPECIAL MEETING
4 TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006
5 9:00 a.m.
6

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

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

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

25 JANET JACKSON: Yes. Roll call for the Tuesday March

ATTACHMENT A

1 28th, 2006, special meeting of the Board of Fire
2 Commissioners. We have President Sotelo, Vice President
3 Furillo, President Commissioner Tolentino, President
4 Commissioner Hudley-Hayes. Absent, we have probationary
5 Friedman, who is in court today and wanted it to be known
6 that he very much wanted to be here today, but had an
7 unavoidable court appearance that could not be
8 rescheduled.

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

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

13 (Pledge of Allegiance)

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

16 (Moment of silence).

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

24 Again, we see this as an opportunity to hear
25 directly from people about the work that we are doing

1 relative to the audit. There were many of you that were
2 unable to give input through the audit process, and I
3 wanted to make sure that you hear from us, and we hear
4 from you, that you are encouraged, and that your voice
5 counts.

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

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

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

19 (Commissioners shook their heads in the
20 negative.)

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

1 will be happy to hear those as well.

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

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

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

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

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

1 a result.

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

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

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

21 Another issue that I take exception to is so
22 called "hazing". Firefighters spend 24, 48, 72 hours at
23 a time with each other, with all of the same internal
24 pressures and issues that everybody has. Where we differ
25 is we respond to emergencies that the average person

1 cannot tolerate. To help cope, we joke, we tease, we
2 play pranks on each other.

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

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

17 A handful of disgruntled employees out of a
18 4,000 member organization. Commissioners, please do the
19 math. There is nothing institutionalized. There is
20 nothing rampant. The Los Angeles Fire Department has
21 important work to do. Please support those of us who do
22 the work. Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

24 Jacqueline Zarate.

25 JACQUELINE ZARATE: I'm here today -- I'm Jacky

1 Zarate. I'm here as President of the Los Angeles City
2 Chicano Employee's Association. I am the former sexual
3 harassment counselor for the Fire Department. I recently
4 changed jobs. I'm now working in the Personnel
5 Department, in the Public Safety Background Investigation
6 Unit.

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

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

23 It was very disappointing. And to think that it
24 wasn't racist, or to think it wasn't sexist is wrong,
25 because it happened here over and over again. And the

1 thing that's, I think, is uncomfortable for me is --
2 serving as a sexual harassment counselor, we were not
3 given the authority to do investigation. We were
4 advisory to the Department. And on those occasions,
5 where people came to us soon enough, early enough, that's
6 handed off to the Department to investigate.

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

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

25 I realize I'm running out of time, but I just want to

1 say that I believe that a lot of the stuff that was in
2 the audit was accurate, and I think this Department needs
3 to take a stronger look and readdress the issue of
4 discipline and how sexual harassment and discrimination
5 is handled in this department.

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

8 JAMES SMITH: I have some documents here, if I may.

9 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Sure. After you speak, you can
10 hand them over.

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

22 I spent six years in the United States Marine
23 Corps, where I served honorably. I served in Iraq and
24 was a decorated Marine in combat. Upon returning home
25 from Iraq, I pursued my dream in becoming a Los Angeles

1 fireman. 14th months I spent on this fire department,
2 and in this package you will see I have evaluations from
3 my task force commanders and show nothing but standard
4 performance and excellent people skills and ability to
5 operate as a fireman for the City of Los Angeles.

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

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

18 I was called down and spoke with the Operations
19 Commander with the union representation. During that
20 discussion my experience in Iraq was brought up. I
21 became emotionally distressed during that time, thinking
22 about my friends and what I had done for my country. It
23 was a suggestion that I go and see the department
24 psychologist, and upon going and seeing the department
25 psychologist, and if I was cleared, I would be allowed to

1 come back to the Los Angeles Fire Department. I did
2 that. And in this package here, you will see the
3 evaluation from the department psychologist releasing me
4 to come back to work.

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

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

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

23 And in closing, I know my time's up, I'd just
24 like to say that since that time, I've been urged to come
25 back on the job. Seven days after, the 10th of August,

1 on the 17th, I took my C-pat. I currently re-enrolled
2 myself back in the process, took a written examination
3 again. I scored a hundred percent on my oral interview.
4 I was given five veteran's points, 105 total, and I'm now
5 in the background process.

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

12 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

13 JAMES SMITH: Thank you very much.

14 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Raymond Hime.

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

25 Sitting here earlier, I was looking at that

1 banner right there, and I was looking at the that sign.
2 It's really great because it shows firefighters actively
3 involved in what we do, which is fight fires.

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

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

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

1 ride the ambulance.

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

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

20 Where have they been? Okay. See, I disagree
21 with the concepts that we have, this institutionalize
22 racism, but if that's the premise that we are going to
23 accept, okay. We have it. Where have these chiefs been?
24 Are they floating in some Catharial mass up here and the
25 only time they appear is when there is a problem? I

1 don't know how you can see it.

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

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

13 RAYMOND HIME: Is it? Okay. That's my point. Thank
14 you very much.

15 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

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

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

19 BRUCE GALIEN: Chief, Commission, thank you very much
20 for allowing us to be here today. My name is Bruce
21 Galien. I'm a Captain II at Fire Station 90. I have 31
22 years of seniority on the job. I've seen a lot of
23 changes in 31 years. I've gotten to know a lot of
24 people. I'm speaking today for myself and a lot of those
25 other people. It's not just Bruce up here speaking. It

1 goes on.

2 We were talking earlier on about sexual
3 harassment, that perceptions -- your perceptions are your
4 reality. In fact, the perceptions that we have, in our
5 level at least, is that communication has dropped down to
6 nothing. We don't understand what it is our bosses want
7 or need. We get conflicting orders. We get conflicting
8 messages.

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

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

24 Input from the field. We're looking for input.
25 We should be looking for input from the field, when there

1 is a problem or there is an issue, we don't get the
2 opportunity to address those issues. Hey, there's a
3 problem in the field here. How would you guys fix it?
4 What would be your best operation? How could we best
5 serve you guys? What do you guys need out there in the
6 field to make your job better? And we would like to have
7 the opportunity to have that input.

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

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

23 I just want to say that this is a great job.
24 The department as a whole is a great department, and we
25 want to keep it that way. Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Galien.

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

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

17 I wanted to touch a little bit on the audits
18 this morning. Something that I think you are all aware
19 that I have been very careful not to do too much of when
20 I've been to the meetings that we've had. One of things
21 that I think is clear is that the findings of the audit
22 are fairly consistent of what most observers have
23 articulated about this particular department. That is
24 that those findings resinate pretty strongly from people
25 who had some experience with this Department.

1 Having said that, it's also clear to me that the
2 manifestations of discrimination in the Los Angeles Fire
3 Department are breeding in a culture that has been
4 homogeneous for generations. It's resistant to change,
5 and it's been subject to very little public scrutiny, and
6 while there are elements of both firefighting and the
7 Los Angeles Fire Department that are unique in the United
8 States, there is also a consistency of cross fire
9 departments around the United States, and there is much
10 to be learned from other fire departments, which I think
11 is a real positive aspect to all of this.

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

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

24 The timing of what you've been asked to do is a
25 concern to me. I'm concerned because these issues and

1 the culture that created them, it didn't arise overnight.
2 That rushing to make some kind of change may, in fact,
3 sacrifice not just quality, but a long-term real change,
4 which would be unfortunate, and we will be back here
5 again in a few years.

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

15 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

16 Vicky Barker followed by Eric Mattson.

17 VICKY BARKER: Good morning, Commissioners. Again,
18 My name is Vicky Barker, and I'm the legal director of
19 the California Women's Law Center. Since its founding in
20 1989, the Law Center has worked to ensure the legal
21 rights of women and girls, and eliminating sexual
22 harassment. And sex discrimination in the employment has
23 been an issue prior to this, since the beginning.

24 And along with that, we have worked very hard to
25 increase opportunities in the numbers of women in jobs

1 such as the Fire Department.

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

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

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

23 My second point is that, it kind of echoes what
24 Miss Liebman said, is that a Band-Aid approach is not
25 going to solve this problem. You know, when you got a

1 cultural problem like this, you have to address it
2 systemically, and you have to look at the department as a
3 whole, and it's very difficult to achieve a cultural
4 change like this.

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

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

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

23 And finally, you need a critical mass of
24 employees of who either are being discriminated against
25 by either people of color or women, to institute this

1 change. And frankly, the critical mass is not here in
2 this department.

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

5 VICKY BARKER: Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Eric Mattson followed by Scott
8 Gould.

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

14 The audits reveal what was already well known within
15 the department, that Bamattre and some chief officers do
16 what they please when it comes to meting out arbitrary
17 and unjust discipline. And then when employees object,
18 they make them fight them through administrative means.

19 Then if the administrative means don't work, they
20 next step is for the employee to take us -- take us to
21 file a costly lawsuit. But even then, the City of L.A.
22 usually takes ownership of the lawsuit filed against the
23 chief officers, sparing the chief officers from
24 liability.

25 If Chief Bamattre and chief officers were affected

1 directly and held accountable, they might make entirely
2 different decisions. The taxpayers are not aware they
3 are paying for all of this, and there are enormous sums
4 of their hard-earned money that is being squandered by
5 the LAFD and the City of L.A. on these issues.

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

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

22 I have talked with many other firemen and chiefs from
23 other departments who have read the audits and the
24 newspaper articles, and one question always gets raised.
25 What happened do the LAFD? It used to be the department

1 that everybody looked up to. Years ago, I encouraged
2 young men who wanted to be firemen, including my two
3 sons, to test with L.A. because they were considered
4 number one, but no more.

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

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

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

18 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

19 Mr. Scott Gould, followed by Jerry Thomas.

20 SCOTT GOULD: Good morning. Thanks for being here.
21 I've been with the LAFD for 24 years. I worked for three
22 public service agencies, Department of Defense and two
23 other fire departments. Before I came to the LAFD, I had
24 never seen this kind of treatment by an administration
25 before. This is not how other fire departments operate.

1 This is contributed to the low morale. The reasons,
2 for example, there is double standards between Chief
3 officers and subordinates. Whenever a subordinate
4 challenges a chief officer's accusations, the subordinate
5 is rarely given any credence whatsoever. This has caused
6 firefighters to become ambivalent, unhappy, and
7 unmotivated.

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

18 Another reason, I had called the battalion chief
19 for help was when I was confronted with a potentially
20 volatile situation with a citizen, who was at the fire
21 station. The battalion chief refused to come and help.
22 The situation deteriorated. The same battalion chief
23 issues me a reprimand, and the chief refused to hear my
24 version of the facts. This citizen happened to be a
25 personal friend of the battalion chief.

1 Firefighters have a deep-seeded animosity toward
2 certain chiefs because of these inequities. The
3 mismanagement, hostility, chronymism, a favoritism reigns.
4 The 1996, HRBC recommendations were implemented and then
5 ultimately ignored. The Human Resources Bureau was
6 implemented, and this has become nothing more than a
7 facade.

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

16 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

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

22 JERRY THOMAS: I am retired Jerry Thomas, Captain II,
23 with 31 years with the Fire Department. You know, I am
24 not disgruntled, and I experienced some indignation and
25 discrimination and racism in the 31 years on the Fire

1 Department, but I've been a captain for eighteen years,
2 and I have never, never taken that out on white
3 firefighters or non-black firefighters.

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

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

20 The displayed treatment is real. The gentleman
21 just spoke just before me, it's real. We know it's real.
22 Perception is reality, but you know what, I lived in
23 reality. So I want the Board to stay focused. Don't be
24 discouraged. It's real. Leadership starts from the top,
25 and your organizations is only as strong as your

1 leadership. Value is definitive, and it reflects what it
2 said 10 years ago.

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

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

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

21 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you. Roger Krueger and
22 William Zaring followed by John Hagerman.

23 WILLIAM ZARING: Thank you, Fire Commission and Chief
24 Bamattre. I didn't come prepared, but I had the
25 opportunity to be here. I'm William Zaring, another

1 speaker didn't show up. I have 32 years on the job, and
2 the first thing I would like to address is this audit,
3 and I would like to give you an example.

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

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

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

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

25 Secondly, okay. Discrimination, sexism, it

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

10 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you. Roger Krueger? No.
11 Okay. John Hagerman, followed by Randy Souza.

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

23 I would go to those construction sites and get all
24 those men to work for a common goal. The majority of
25 those men spent time in prison, because construction work

1 is a tough job. The men on my construction jobs
2 respected each other more than the men in your engine
3 houses do. The necessary component that's missing here
4 is respect for each other.

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

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

23 The design of your home that we are trying to
24 rebuild, the design of it promotes two things. If I
25 speak out, quite possibly what you hear you may not like.

1 Therefor the boss never receives the true message.

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

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

17 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

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

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

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

1 which is typically being done.

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

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

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

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

21 Then, I go through the three-hole score process,
22 that says was not fit to be a captain. Well, I wasn't
23 given the chance for probation to play its role, and to
24 let me perform and see if I am fit to be a captain or
25 not.

1 I may not have been able to go before a Board
2 and give a nice interview, or whatever, but at least I
3 should have been placed somewhere in the hiring process.
4 I went through a whole testing process that involved
5 experts from outside the department that was supposed to
6 be able to evaluate people to see if they were fit or
7 not, and that's where we ended up on the list in the
8 process.

9 So, I would like to see that the testing process
10 is looked at very hardly. I know that in the Union's
11 audit, that they have also addressed this issues. But
12 again, this is something I think that needs to be
13 addressed. I know that I worked with two candidates from
14 the AO's process, and they failed the three-hole score.

15 These gentlemen were with me time in, and they
16 worked very hard for what they went through. They went
17 through the testing process. They performed. They
18 answered questions, and they were put high on the list,
19 and within an hour, there was three personnel on the
20 Board that told them they were not fit to be AO's.

21 Now, what is that message sending to those
22 chiefs that were out there, grading them, and watching
23 them perform, and also answering their questions. So I
24 would like to take a good, hard look at the whole testing
25 process. I heard about these complaints, and here I am,

1 I'm going through it again. I don't know if I'm going to
2 get through the 20 month. Thank you.

3 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Souza.

4 Mr. Paul Waters followed by Cori Tipton.

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

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

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

21 However, if it is a good working environment for
22 gays and lesbians, it is absolutely a good working
23 environment for the other two. Therefor, an opportunity
24 to solve this problem would be to, perhaps, put a little
25 extra emphasis on solving that final problem as a way to

1 also address the other two, and as a way to do that is to
2 consider partnering with community organizations in a
3 public/private partnership as a way to do that.

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

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

22 The police department used to be behind the
23 Sheriff's Department in terms of what they were doing
24 with this issue, as a consequence of this partnership,
25 the police department has not only caught up with the

1 Sheriff's Department, but lapped them by far. There is
2 an opportunity to do that here in a very big way that
3 will be beneficial to the whole city.

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

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

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

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

25 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Waters.

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

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

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

21 The complaints came to light with the anonymous
22 letter last year. I applaud the person who sent the
23 letter, but I think it is truly an indication of why it
24 was sent anonymously and what's going on within this
25 department. The audits now shed some light on this

1 subject, and if I don't stand up and try affect some
2 change in this department, the next woman will find it as
3 difficult as I did to come on.

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

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

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

1 fulfill our mission."

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

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

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

13 Brenda Lee, go ahead.

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

24 And in having that, we should also have the
25 ability to have our positions, chief, assistant chief,

1 firefighter, and care about one another. I've gone to
2 fire stations where people haven't talk to me all day.
3 Some of those faces I see out in the crowd. Never talk
4 to me never indulge me. Did that stop me from going to
5 work? No.

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

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

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

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

22 I don't know where you were raised or where you
23 come from. I know we all come from different places, but
24 I think we all need to take a look in the mirror every
25 morning we get up and ask yourself, "Am I a good person?"

ATTACHMENT A

1 You probably can't answer that question. Some of you
2 problem can't, and that's too bad. Thank you.

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

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

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

21 Now whether that's good, bad, or indifferent, I don't
22 know, but it didn't stop me from doing my job. It hasn't
23 affected my life personally. I look out in this crowd,
24 and I think everyone of these people that are here today
25 are my friends. I feel accepted, but I think there needs

1 to be a little bit of maturity on this job, and if people
2 have a problem with whether it's getting a bucket of
3 water thrown on them, or getting shaved, I've had both
4 happen to me, I never took that as being racial or it
5 being harassment or anything else. It was part of that
6 station's comradery.

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

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

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

1 is going to be some comments made.

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

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

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

19 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you.

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

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

25 RICHARD FIELDS: Good morning, Chief, Members of the

1 Fire Commission.

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

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

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

23 Right now what we have are examples of people
24 who have gotten up here and have spoken about -- are just
25 evidences of a lack of integrity. Integrity is not

1 always popular. Integrity does not always have the most
2 friends in the room, but the integrity is just what's so.

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

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

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

23 The fact is, is that we have a responsibility to
24 uphold a standard that this Mayor says we have given the
25 oath to this city to do, and if we don't do it, we are

1 just held accountable, and that starts from the top.

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

9 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Excuse me.

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

12 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Fields.

13 RICHARD FIELDS: Thank you.

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

16 WILLIAM PARKER: Good morning, Board, Chief. My name
17 is William Parker, I've been a member of this department
18 for 25 years. I stood before the city council the last
19 time we talked about these issues. The issues are real.
20 That's not a question, I don't believe.

21 The fact that somebody stands up here and says they
22 never seen anything or never participated in anything,
23 that's -- never seen, that's really hard for me to
24 believe. So what we need to do is we need to find real
25 solutions to real problems for the final time.

1 We've been doing this for 10 or 12 years. Let's get
2 to the root of the problem. We have some issues with
3 leadership. We have some issues with accountability.
4 People are not held accountable for the actions that they
5 take. Some of the supervisors and some of the stations
6 don't take responsibility for some of the things that go
7 on in the stations. I'm not telling you something that
8 doesn't exist, this really happens. The bottom line is
9 that this department, the Board, has to take
10 responsibility and be held accountable for the actions
11 that go on in the fire stations.

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

20 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Thank you, Mr. Parker.

21 Mr. Pat McOsker.

22 PAT MC OSKER: Thank you, Madam President, Members of
23 the Commission. I'm getting here late. I'm at a little
24 bit of a disadvantage as to what everyone had to say, and
25 maybe that's a good thing, actually. I'm kind of in the

1 dark right now, but I'm going to say what's on my mind.

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

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

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

21 Everyone comes from a different place in life.
22 Everyone has had a slightly different experience on the
23 Fire Department. I don't doubt that some people, like
24 me, haven't had a problem, haven't been discriminated
25 against, haven't been harassed or harangued. I also

1 don't doubt what others had to say on that subject, if it
2 differs slightly from that.

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

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

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

23 10 years ago we had some partial fixes, and we
24 had some knee-jerk reactions, and I think we are still
25 paying the price for that. You've heard me say over and

1 over, that I think it's really really important that we
2 change the way that we test and train and treat rookies
3 in the field. I think we kind of plant the seeds there.
4 It's a cancer that grows, if you will, on skepticism, and
5 scrutiny, and mistrust of one another.

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

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

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

23 What I'd like to do is I'd like to give an
24 opportunity to the commissioners, if they want to respond
25 relative to anything. Our formal responses will not be

1 coming out until later, but the first thing I want to
2 assure everybody is the reason that we have the court
3 stenographer here is because your comments are very
4 important to us. We did want to document them, so we can
5 include them in whatever action plan we come up with as a
6 commission.

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

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

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

24 COMMISSIONER FURILLO: A couple. I just also wanted
25 to thank everybody for coming out and to let you know

1 that this hearing is only a beginning still, of a
2 process. It's not the end, and we really encourage
3 everyone to let us know where you are coming from, how
4 you feel about the audits, what your experiences have
5 been, to help us -- to help us give better leadership to
6 this process, and I personally want to say that I am
7 available to anyone who wants to speak to me about any of
8 these issues, and I welcome your comments. Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Tolentino.

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

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

25 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes.

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

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

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

23 We are all going out to fire stations, not just
24 because we want to talk to people about the audit or want
25 to hear about the audit, but also because we want to

1 really understand how the Fire Department works. So, if
2 there are people, or a message that you can take back
3 from the Commission, if people were not comfortable, or
4 they couldn't get here today, every station that we visit
5 provides an opportunity for people to share their
6 thoughts with us, and sometimes it's easier to do it that
7 way, because I've come to understand that visiting fire
8 stations is that you are with your family.

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

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

22 And you can also call and invite us to your fire
23 station. That will be nice, because we've been inviting
24 ourselves. But if there is any fire station, where
25 somebody really would like for us to come, and they

1 really want to have a conversation with us, call us up
2 and we'll come. We can only come two at a time. Three
3 of us can't come together, but two of us can always come
4 to any fire station. So, thank you very much.

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

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

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

24 From that, we will also then entertain your
25 feedback. We are going to have another one of these

1 public hearing meetings on April 11th. We will probably
2 do it in the evening for those individuals that weren't
3 able to come out in the morning. So we will be having
4 that on April 11th, and to give you another opportunity
5 to talk with the Commission.

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

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

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

23 I want to acknowledge, also, the Commission
24 staff Blanca Revelles has done an amazing job in getting
25 this meeting together in a short period of time. She got

ATTACHMENT A

1 everybody here and made sure that we are all set up. So
2 I just want to publicly thank Blanca for all her hard
3 work, and I wanted to introduce you to our other staff,
4 Bea Lopez, and she's our EEO Director, and also we have a
5 new staff person here with us today, and I'm sorry. It's
6 Ardis --

7 ARDIS NISHIKANA: Nishikana.

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

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

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

21 CHIEF BAMATTRE: Thank you, Commissioners. Before we
22 lose a lot of members, I just want to take the
23 opportunity, also, to thank all of those members that
24 came out today. I don't share the same fear that you're
25 intimidated, and you're not -- you don't have the courage

1 to speak out. I go out to fire stations. I haven't seen
2 anybody intimidated in the stations, in some of the
3 questions that they ask me.

4 What may be more comfortable for you, if you'd rather
5 put your comments in writing and submit that to the
6 Commission, that will give you an opportunity to have
7 your voice heard and have your opinions heard.
8 Certainly, we would encourage you at the next meeting,
9 and we will do everything we can to accommodate getting
10 members there to come forward.

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

21 The item before us is a report that addresses a
22 desire and request on both the City of Santa Monica and
23 the City of Los Angeles to provide dispatch services to
24 the city of Santa Monica. By contract, I believe this
25 was before the Board last commission meeting.

1 There were some changes that were requested.
2 Those changes have been made, and this contract is ready
3 to move forward to the Mayor's office and the Council.
4 If there is any questions that the Commission still has,
5 we can address those with staff.

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

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

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

24 PRESIDENT SOTELO: From our review of it, the changes
25 were kind of structural in terms of explanation in the

1 staff report. They weren't major changes. So let's put
2 a time on that, Mr. McOsker. But I think we can go ahead
3 and entertain a motion to adopt this and move this
4 forward.

5 COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: I just have one. I'm
6 prepared to make a motion on that, but I do have one
7 caveat. As I look through this, I'd like to make sure
8 that the minute that we begin and enter this contract,
9 that we begin to keep baseline data. I want to make sure
10 that we are understanding what the recoverable costs are,
11 what the gaps are, and I want to make sure, from my
12 perspective, how much additional pressure it puts on our
13 technological ability within the Department.

14 Because we are trying to work through all of those
15 things in terms of interoperability, so I want to make a
16 motion with that caveat, that I want to make sure that we
17 begin to keep baseline data from day one on this
18 contract, on those issues.

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

21 CHIEF BAMATTRE: Yes. Now, we have the run
22 information, the incident information, for both cities,
23 based on historical Santa Monica. The workload will be
24 about 1100 incidents. The contract has been, the model
25 run, that we have a provision that we will come back

1 after the first year with accurate data, what the impact
2 has been both financially and on the workload.

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

10 PRESIDENT SOTELO: Commissioner Furillo.

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

14 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: A day.

15 COMMISSIONER FURILLO: Okay.

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

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

ATTACHMENT A

1 Okay. So do I have a motion to adopt this item?

2 COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: So moved.

3 COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: So moved.

4 PRESIDENT SOTELO: All in favor?

5 COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: I.

6 COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: I.

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

13 COMMISSIONER HUDLEY-HAYES: So moved.

14 COMMISSIONER TOLENTINO: Second.

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

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

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