

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

**MINUTES  
TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2006 AT 3:00 P.M.**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners convened Tuesday, April 4, 2006 at 3:05 p.m. in the Fire Commission Meeting Room, City Hall East, 200 N. Main Street, Los Angeles.

Present: President Dalila Sotelo, Vice President Jill Furillo, Commissioners Andrew Friedman and Casimiro U. Tolentino. Fire Chief William Bamattre and Deputy City Attorney Janet Jackson. Commissioner Genethia Hudley-Hayes arrived at 3:11 p.m.

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

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**2. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Approval of the Minutes – Regular meeting of December 20, 2005

ACTION: The minutes were approved as submitted. (Furillo/Tolentino)

B. Activities/Events/Meetings

President Sotelo announced that the Board would conduct a public hearing relative to the audits on April 11, 2006 at the African American Firefighter Museum located at 1401 Central Avenue from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. She said that the meeting would be hosted by the Stentorians and thanked the organization.

Fire Chief Bamattre reported on significant Department activities and events that occurred since the last Board meeting. President Sotelo reported that Commission Firehouse Friday visits are on going and that the visitation schedule is available at the Board Office for review. She indicated that invitations from fire stations are welcomed and that scheduling could be arranged through the Board Office.

C. Request for future Agenda items

None.

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- D. Continued discussion and further consideration of the Board of Fire Commissioners' Action Plan related to the Fire Department audits:
1. Public Comment
  2. Status report and recommendations from the Board of Fire Commissioners' Committees
  3. Discussion, consideration, and recommendations relative to the Board of Fire Commissioners' Draft Action Plan

DISCUSSION: Bea Lopez, EEO Director, reported that staff had synthesized all the responses received and that they had categorized them according to each of the audit recommendations. She distributed a handout and said that it is her expectation, that the essence of all the responses had been correctly extracted; she proceeded to provide an overview of the synthesized recommendations.

Commissioner Tolentino suggested that each section be reviewed followed by questions from the Board. The first segment opened for discussion was Leadership and Discipline. President Sotelo provided an update on the Joint Labor Management Committee discussions relative to the Leadership and Discipline recommendation component. Vice President Furillo indicated that she would like to have a clearer understanding of the current promotional process. Commissioner Tolentino added that there is a need to further understand what current systems are in place so that a determination can be made as to what portions need modification. He indicated that effective utilization and enhancement of the mechanisms that are now in place could establish a solid foundation to be utilized now and by future management as well. Vice President Furillo indicated that she would like to see a complete assessment of the process established 10-years ago to determine where it failed; an assessment of the prior process could serve as a guide to what is being developed now. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes agreed and remarked on the need to determine why the current policies are not being enforced. She said that prior to making structural changes, a review must take place to determine if there is a need to get rid of some policies that may be conflicting or no longer of value to the Department. Commissioner Friedman said that he echoed the commissioners' remarks on specificity and that the Department has many policies that should be reviewed prior to implementing changes.

Members of the organizations were invited to provide further detail on the responses they submitted relative to the audit recommendations.

Armando Hogan, President, Stentorians, provided additional information on their response relative to policy and process. He indicated that the challenges with current policy application and enforcement are mainly that they are not enforced fairly and equitably throughout. Mr. Hogan remarked on the importance for implementing policies, practices, and procedure processes; and, the need to place sufficient oversight mechanisms to ensure that irrespective of personal opinions on particular matters, those processes function throughout the administrative course and are effectively available to the members. In response to Vice President Furillo's inquiries on the captain and chief officer promotional exam process, Mr. Hogan indicated that one of the

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challenges is that personnel files are not reviewed as part of that process. Therefore, when an individual is good at taking a test but is a terrible leader or has had behavior problems it creates problems at a higher level. Discussion ensued relative to measures of leadership performance for the exam processes.

Deputy Chief Mack, Bureau of Training and Risk Management, provided a brief overview on the civil service promotional process and the Fire Department's three whole score process. Fire Chief Bamattre said that the current exam process does lack a review of the employees' personnel file and disciplinary history but explained that action had resulted ten-years ago, the HRDC plans' efforts were to make the process objective and to protect employees. Discussion ensued relative to the promotional exam processes. John Miller, President, Chief Officers Association (COA), indicated that he is a firm believer that future performance can be best demonstrated by past performance. He commented on the aspects of accessing the member's personnel file, performance evaluations, and training records to determine an employee's abilities for promotional positions; and, the lack of training regarding performance evaluations, which he thinks is part of the whole leadership and supervision dilemma that the Department is facing. Mr. Miller provided an overview of the exam process, noting that the system does not assess important areas such as leadership, coaching, mentoring, and supervision abilities. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that in 1995 the intent may have been for subjectivity and objectivity but she is beginning to think that the process has gone overboard. She said that the testing process appears to be content specific and does not allow for a determination of the persons' ability to manage--which is part of the difficulties the Department is dealing with. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes said that there is an apparent need to analyze and identify the necessary management skills and then figure out how to include those into the testing process.

Pat McOsker, President, UFLAC indicated that he agreed with Mr. Hogan and Miller's comments about the need to promote people that are good managers and to treat people fairly. He said, that the promotional process is something UFLAC negotiated; it is an absolute working condition issue and before it substantively changed it would require negotiations. Mr. McOsker indicated that the idea of objectivity vs. subjectivity in testing is something UFLAC is very concerned with; he expressed concerns of personnel file and performance reviews.

Mr. McOsker proceeded to comment on the three-whole interview process and provided an overview of the union's negotiated agreement relative to that process. In response to questions from Vice President Furillo, Mr. McOsker provided information on the grievance process and on the stigma employees face if they do initiate a grievance. Chief Bamattre responded that there had only been a few grievance cases filed as a result of the promotional exams and provided general information on the review process available to candidates that fail the exam. President Sotelo requested that the process be provided to the Board in writing so that they have an opportunity to review it.

Cori Tipton, President, Sirens, said that the associations were asked to provide preliminary input on the audit recommendations there had been no requests for specificity. However, she did have something specific to discuss relative to the evaluation process and the importance of developing a mentoring program for both

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males and females. She commented on the importance of diversifying the Department and to formalize a mentoring program by bringing together members of different supervisory levels and holding them accountable to that program. Ms. Tipton called attention to the possibility of enhancing the current evaluation process so that supervisors can learn about leadership, mentoring, and diversity. She said that mentoring is not just teaching someone to do a job better, that it also provides an opportunity for the mentor to learn. At the request of President Sotelo, Ms. Tipton provided overview on the Los Angeles Police Department's Ombuds Office, including the Woman Coordinator position that assists sworn and civilian female employees. She recommended that the Fire Department look at the models and processes established by LAPD. Ms. Tipton spoke on recruitment issues and challenges that the Fire Department is experiencing.

Mr. Henry Olvera, Los Bomberos, commented on the control measures previously established by the HRDC recommendations. He said that there was a sound plan developed but that it seemed to him that it missed a follow through on the implementation of the strategic aspects. He touched on the organization's expectations relative to the strategic implementation plan; ultimately they would like to see a document developed that has a strategic implementation aspect to it. President Sotelo assured him that the main goal is to develop a strategic implementation plan that would address all the issues outlined in the audit. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes provided additional comments on the subject matter and indicated that the Board is working to develop and implement a process that would go well beyond everybody's expectations.

Ms. Abby Liebman, Liebman & Associates, commented that it is difficult to look at any of the particular issues or recommendations in isolation; and, on problems that may arise if one looks at the specificity of leadership without articulating values that reflect a commitment to diversity, professionalism, and inclusion. She provided her opinion on the problematic areas found in the audits. Ms. Liebman commented on the need to articulate the core values from the moment people set foot in drill tower; the need for officers to embrace the core values and for accountability; and, on the promotional system and effective evaluation tools. She said that there is a need for an objective analysis to identify leaders that live by the core values, i.e. the notion of diversity, not being discriminatory. She said that the City Personnel should have the resources available to help the process move in the right direction and urged for integration between the various aspects of what was recommended in the audit---which is something she thinks the auditors failed to do. Commissioner Tolentino responded that integration of the recommendations has been an objective and focus at subsequent meetings held by the Board. He explained that the Commission Committee meetings have focused on very specific recommendations and they are moving forward to integrate all the work. Commissioner Tolentino indicated that there are specific core values in place but that perhaps they are not specific enough to communicate them to the Department. He told Ms. Liebman that the Commission would welcome her input or suggested language to facilitate communicating the leadership and vision statements out to the Department. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes indicated that she is not sure that she has seen enough specificity in the articulation of core values and that perhaps that is what is missing. Discussion ensued among the Board on the subject matter.

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Captain Alicia Mathis commented on the existing mentorship program and provided an overview of the high school, college, and Explorer programs. She indicated that the programs are successful but that V-hours are often cut or not available to facilitate a full mentorship program. Captain Mathis provided insight into the mentoring program and how it helps candidates prepare for the testing process; the need to strengthen existing programs and consistency of continued commitment to the programs. She commented on the need to establish strong core values and for a commitment that will treat people right.

President Sotelo indicated that a synopsis of the recommendations was available for review and that comments from the stakeholders needed to be submitted to Ms. Lopez by April 10<sup>th</sup>.

E. Status report from the Board of Fire Commissioners Committees:

1. EMS Committee [Commissioners Furillo/Friedman]
2. Human Relations Development Committee (HRDC)  
[Commissioners Sotelo/ Hudley-Hayes]
3. Personnel/Employee Relations Committee  
[Commissioners Tolentino/Hudley-Hayes]
4. Technology Committee [Commissioners Hudley-Hayes/Tolentino]

DISCUSSION: None.

**3. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

A. Significant Incidents/Activities

Fire Chief Bamattre provided an overview of significant incidents and activities that occurred during the period of March 7<sup>th</sup> through April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

B. Budget status report

Fire Chief Bamattre indicated that there were no changes in the budget status and that release of the Mayor's bluebook is expected on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Vice President Furillo asked for information and clarification on the preparedness process and outreach to organizations that mobilize large protests such as the recent school walkouts. Fire Chief Bamattre provided an overview of the public gathering permit process, which is under the jurisdiction of LAPD. He indicated that neither the public safety resources or event organizers anticipate the large turn out that resulted from the media coordinated efforts. He said the problem was mainly due to lack of coordination and monitoring of the Spanish speaking media. The Fire Chief reported that LAPD has taken a lead role to develop and coordinate better monitoring mechanisms for future events. President Sotelo requested that a more detailed overview of the incident be forwarded to the Board. Commissioner Hudley-Hayes requested that the report include unanticipated

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resource impacts and that the technology aspects be reported to the Technology Committee. Commissioner Tolentino reported that he had attended the Women's Expo and said that LAFD was well represented at the event.

**4. CONSENT ITEMS**

MOTION: Commissioner Tolentino motioned for approval of items B and C and consideration of items A and D as special.

SECONDED: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

- A. [BFC 06-025] - Brush Clearance Unit/Program - Copy of the overview presentation of February 21, 2006.

ACTION: Item Called Special

- B. [BFC 06-034] – Fire Department's transmittal dated March 7, 2006, submitting a request for approval of donated computer equipment valued at \$1,000.00 from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Department's Recommendation: The Board accepts the donation of five laptop computers from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for use by the Los Angeles Fire Department Arson/Counter-Terrorism Section.

ACTION: Adopted

- C. [BFC 06-035] – Fire Department's transmittal dated March 16, 2006, submitting the February CAO Monthly Financial Summary Report.

ACTION: Received and Filed

- D. [BFC 06-039] – Fire Department's transmittal dated March 7, 2006, submitting a request for approval of Second Amendment to Helitanker Contract (C106984) with Erickson Air-Crane Inc. to assist in fire suppression during the fire brush season. The term of the contract will terminate on June 30, 2007; compensation cost is not to exceed one million six hundred fifty-one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,651,200) for a 129-day performance period.

ACTION: Item Called Special

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

- A. [BFC 06-025] - Brush Clearance Unit/Program - Copy of the overview presentation of February 21, 2006.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Hudley asked if the Department has enough resources and budget to handle the brush clearance program. Chief Berry indicated that they recalled staff from the field to complete the inspections and provided relevant information.

MOTION: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes motioned to receive and file the report.

SECONDED: Commissioner Tolentino

AYES: 5; NAYS: 0

- B. [BFC 06-039] – Fire Department’s transmittal dated March 7, 2006, submitting a request for approval of Second Amendment to Helitanker Contract (C106984) with Erickson Air-Crane Inc. to assist in fire suppression during the fire brush season. The term of the contract will terminate on June 30, 2007; compensation cost is not to exceed one million six hundred fifty-one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,651,200) for a 129-day performance period.

Department’s Recommendation: The Board: 1) approves the contract amendment, thereby exercising the last of two, one-year extensions incorporated into Erickson Air-Crane Inc. Contract No. C106984. 2) the Board Office transmit the contract amendment to the Mayor’s Office.

DISCUSSION: President Sotelo requested clarification on the compensation for lending the aircraft to other Fire Departments. Chief Bamattre explained that the automatic mutual resource aide agreement with the County of L.A. dictates that if the established set hours are exhausted, then the hourly rate is reimbursed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Pat McOsker, President, UFLAC commented on past issues relative to contracting of the helicopter. He said that he hopes this will be the only equipment that is contracted out and on how he would like to see the option of purchasing considered. President Sotelo called for the matter to be referred to the Joint Labor Management Committee.

MOTION: Commissioner Tolentino motioned for approval with the caveat that the matter is forwarded to the Joint Labor Management Committee prior to the next RFP release.

SECONDED: Commissioner Hudley-Hayes

AYES: 5; NAYS: 0

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**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. (Hudley-Hayes/Furillo)

ATTEST BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
DALILA T. SOTELO, President

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

Date: August 1, 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.