

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
Citizens' Advisory Committee**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2021  
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**PARTICIPATE VIA BLUEJEANS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SOFTWARE**

**Meeting URL**

<https://bluejeans.com/482962115>

**Phone Dial-in**

408.317.9253

**Meeting ID**

482 962 115#

This meeting is being held by Teleconference Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Sixteenth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency Dated February 25,2020

During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) emergency, the San Francisco Public Utilities Citizens Advisory Committee's (SFPUC CAC) regular meeting room, 525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room, is closed. CAC Members and SFPUC staff will convene CAC meetings remotely by teleconference. Members of the public are encouraged to submit their public comment on agenda items in advance of the teleconference meeting by emailing comments to [cac@sfgwater.org](mailto:cac@sfgwater.org). Comments submitted no later than 12 PM Tuesday the day of the meeting will be read into the record by SFPUC CAC Staffing Team members during the teleconference meeting and will be treated as a substitute to providing public comment during the meeting. Persons who submit written public comment in advance on an agenda item or items will not be permitted to also provide public comment on the same agenda item(s) during the meeting.

**Mission:** The purpose of the SFPUC CAC is to provide recommendations to the SFPUC General Manager, the SFPUC Commission, and the Board of Supervisors regarding the agency's long-term strategic, financial, and capital improvement plans ([Admin. Code Article XV, Sections 5.140 - 5.142](#))

**Members:**

**Anietie Ekanem, Chair (D10)**

Marrisa Evbuoma (D1)

Suki Kott (D2)

Steven Kight (D3)

VACANT (D4)

Emily Algire (D5)

Amy Zock (D6)

VACANT (D7)

Amy Nagengast (D8)

Moisés García (D9)

Jennifer Clary (D11)

Austin Hunter (M-Environmental Org.)

Nicole Sandkulla (M-Regional Water Customers)

Mark Tang (M-Engineering/Financial)

Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large Water User)

VACANT (B-Small Business)

VACANT (B-Environmental Justice)

**London N. Breed**  
Mayor

**Sophie Maxwell**  
President

**Anson Moran**  
Vice President

**Tim Paulson**  
Commissioner

**Ed Harrington**  
Commissioner

**Michael Carlin**  
Acting  
General Manager

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor appointed, B = Board President appointed

**Staff Liaisons:** Tracy Zhu and Mayara Ruski Augusto Sa

Staff Email for Public Comment: [cac@sfwater.org](mailto:cac@sfwater.org)

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **1. Call to order and roll call at 5:31pm**

Members present at roll call: (11) Ekanem, Evbuoma, Kott, Algire, Zock, Nagengast, García, Clary, Hunter, Tang, Perszyk

Members absent: (2) Kight, Sandkulla

Staff: Michael Carlin, Eric Sandler, Laura Busch

Members of the Public: Jessica Fontenot, Michelle Pierce, Ted Loewenberg, Carol Steinfeld, Rianna

### **2. Approve November 17, 2020 Minutes**

Motion was made (Clary) and seconded (Tang) to approve the November 17, 2020 Minutes

AYES: (11) Ekanem, Evbuoma, Kott, Algire, Zock, Nagengast, García, Clary, Hunter, Tang, Perszyk

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (2) Kight, Sandkulla

Public Comment: None

### **3. Report from the Chair**

- Welcomed members, staff, and the public
- Invited everyone to take a moment to honor COVID-19 victims
- Welcomed Acting General Manager Michael Carlin and invited him to say a few words
  - Acting General Manager Michael Carlin introduced himself and stated his priorities are vaccine for frontline workers, ensure SFPUC's financial solvency, and racial equity efforts.
  - Chair Ekanem thanked Acting GM Carlin for taking the initiative to come to the meeting and talk to the CAC members. Chair Ekanem invited members to ask questions to the Acting GM Carlin.
- Member García asked what the plans are to vaccinate field workers and what is the process for selecting the new general manager. Acting GM Carlin answered that the SFPUC has employees in seven different counties and the protocols are different in each

county. Acting GM highlighted that he has been insisting on the need to vaccinate all field employees in all seven counties.

- Member Clary asked what the current water bill debt in San Francisco is. AGM Sandler replied he would get the latest number from his teams, but he mentioned he believes it is around four and half million dollars for water and sewer. Acting GM explained that wholesale water customers are up to date as there is no forgiveness under their contracts. The SFPUC was a strong advocate for relief for utilities across the country for the next stimulus package.
- Thanked former District 5 representative Ted Loewenberg and invited him to share a few thoughts.
- Welcomed and introduction of new member, District 5 representative Emily Algire
- Reminder about recruitment for CAC seats: District 3, District 6, District 7, Small Business (B), Environmental Justice Organization (B)
- Chair Ekanem stated his interest in the recruitment of youth members as public members and invited the members to provide feedback.
- Invited Member Eli Perszyk to Report Back on the Water CAC report on [Asset Management Policy](#) adopted by SFPUC Commission on December 22, 2020.
  - Member Perszyk mentioned that the Water CAC's feedback about the policy was incorporated into the policy. Specifically, the CAC input resulted in the addition of an industry standard for asset management, alignment of the asset management budget with capital budgets, as well as incorporating statements about collection of data and condition assessment and risk factors.
  - Resource: [Asset Management Policy memo for the Commission agenda](#)

Public Comment: None.

4. **Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

Jessica Fontenot, Community Engagement Coordinator and Bayview Hunter's Point resident, stated that the traffic change and closure of Gerrold St. is an adjustment and the community is adjusting. The construction project is moving along and the SFPUC projects have been a highlight in the neighborhood. The project was not shutdown during the pandemic and local businesses and workers were allowed to keep working. They focus on high levels of local participation, and it is great to see fellow residents and local businesses benefit from work in the neighborhood.

5. **Presentation and Discussion:** [SFPUC FY 2021-22 Budget Themes and Priorities](#), Eric Sandler, Chief Financial Officer and General Manager of Business Services; and Laura Busch, Budget Director

**Introduction:**

**AGM Sandler** highlighted that many of SFPUC's employees have been deployed as disaster service workers and have been working in the direct COVID-19 response. The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the SFPUC's finances with the reduction of commercial and residential revenues

and there was a need to reorganize the SFPUC's finances according to what might happen in the future. The budget was reprojected according to projected revenues, and a revised budget was adopted in October 2020. While reworking the budget, the SFPUC has been working on how to assist customers dramatically impacted by the pandemic, and emergency assistance programs were released to aid single-family residential customers, nonprofits, and small businesses. AGM Sandler introduced Laura Busch, who proceeded to present an overview of budget priorities and themes.

**Staff Busch** explained that normally the budget would be closed after the two year budget was adopted by the Commission and Board of Supervisors. However, COVID required reopening the budget to adjust revenue projections and rebalance the budget.

**Presentation:**

- Budget Process: included a list of when major tasks took place
- Budget Approach: adjusting the second year of the fixed two-year budget (FY21-22)
- The FY21-22 Budget Priorities: Original; Commission Hearing; Mayor's Budget Instructions
- FY-22 Operating Budget Key Changes: includes a breakdown

**Discussion:**

- **AGM Sandler** provided an update to Member Clary's question about delinquent balances. As of December 2020, the delinquent balance for water and sewer accounts was just under \$8 million and the delinquent balance for CleanPower and Hetchy is just under \$4 million dollars.
- **Member Clary** asked what the budget shortfall from the originally adopted two-year budget is.

**Staff Busch** responded that there is no shortfall for water, wastewater and CleanPower. Hetchy has no additional revenues, but significant additional costs related to transmission and distribution through PG&E. The cost will rise by \$11.4 million next year, and that will need to be balanced out.

- **Member Clary** asked if the reduction of activity in downtown San Francisco has not affected the revenue.

**AGM Sandler** responded that the budget prepared in February 2020 was rebalanced in July 2020, based on revisions to demand. The wholesale water sales are increasing. Hetchy Power sales are primarily to City departments, such as the Airport and Muni, and the impact of the sale to them is significant. The wholesale distribution changes will triple the cost of transmission and distribution, which is a very big hit.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked about racial equity programs and budget for those programs.

**AGM Sandler** explained that the SFPUC has put together a racial equity plan based heavily on human resources and HR related activities. The Commission has adopted a racial justice policy, that outlines focus areas, such as water as a human right. This policy is outward facing and the racial equity plan is more about internal processes involving staff. The investments are primarily for positions to form an equity and innovation group, and some of that work will need

to be contracted. There is also significant investment in human resources and IT.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked about recruitment to diversify the workforce with the upcoming retirements and if budget has been set aside for outreach and recruitment.

**AGM Sandler** answered that many employees are eligible to retire in the upcoming years and the SFPUC has an aggressive budget proposal for racial equity.

- **Member García** commented that Justine Hinderliter has presented and that he is glad that the SFPUC is investing on racial equity.
- **Chair Ekanem** asked if this type of investment is mirrored on the SFGOV side as well.

**AGM Sandler** replied that many of the large departments are trying to develop standardized systems.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked to what extent will education and art programs will keep getting funding.

**AGM Sandler** has no informed answer to that question but offered to bring back information about that.

**Staff Zhu** mentioned that remote options were available during shelter in place and programing has been transitioned to remote learning.

**Chair Ekanem** commented that there needs to be budget to support those programs.

**Member Kott** commented that the tours are good public relations.

- **Member Nagengast** asked what percent goes to each priority theme in the fiscal year 22 budget themes.

**Staff Busch** answered that the last presentation slide highlights that more than 50% of the new proposals is for purchase, transmission and distribution, 13% will go towards racial equity, 7% for COVID adaptations, and 24% in core functions for water and wastewater. It is difficult to quantify how much money will go towards financial sustainability and economic recovery in terms of the percentage of the budget. The capital plan is intact, and the investments are moving forward and the SFPUC will maintain staff levels.

**AGM Sandler** commented that there are no layoffs in the budget proposal and positions are being filled and that is one of the ways with which the SFPUC is trying to act as a recovery mechanism.

- **Member Nagengast** commented that the themes are helpful and asked if the themes are actually being done and what are the criteria to make them more tangible.

**AGM Sandler** thanked Member Nagengast for her input.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked what the metrics of success are for the future.

**AGM Sandler** said that that is terrific feedback and metrics will be included in the next two-year budget.

- **Member Evbuoma** asked about water stations for unhoused individuals and if more policies like that are going to be rolled out.

**AGM Sander** explained that there are different committees that address different concerns, such as water as human right committee. A good chunk of the activity falls under those committees and their focus areas. There is a whole new set of ideas that will be emerging from them. The SFPUC is at the beginning of thinking though what water as a human right means for the agency, such as the work with emergency assistance, reducing shutoffs and reducing high fees that disproportionately impact the low-income customers.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked about funding for training programs and specifically for trades and if it is possible to extend the funding.

**AGM Sandler** responded that the SFPUC continues to support CityBuild. Training, developing, and internship is part of the racial equity plan, and that is a feature of the action plans throughout the organization.

- **Chair Ekanem** asked how the PUC will be dealing with the individual consumer debt that has occurred and what will be the transition process to not unduly burden the same people.

**AGM Sandler** answered that this is the focus of the SFPUC's attention right now. There is work happening in the federal and state levels to try to secure funds to address the growing consumer debt. The proposed COVID package has funding for utility debts. The SFPUC is looking at the long-term affordability and relooking at the capital planning and programs as decisions are made.

Public Comment: None

6. **Presentation and Discussion: Stormwater Branding Effort**, Chris Colwick, Communications Manager, SFPUC; Miriam Stone, Strategy Director, Noise 13; and Peter Judd, Creative Director, Noise 13. This presentation was postponed and will be included in the agenda for the next meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

## 7. Staff report

- Introduction of new CAC Liaison Mayara Ruski Augusto Sa
- Thanked the Wastewater CAC for pushing the SFPUC to publish data on air emissions
- Member Nagengast asked about the weekly updates from the General Manager. Staff Zhu clarified that the weekly updates were suspended by the Acting GM, and its purpose and utility will be reevaluated by the Acting GM with the Commission.
- Member Kott asked if the findings of the wastewater testing for COVID publicly available. Staff Zhu mentioned that there are news article about it and that we would inquire with staff for additional information.

Public Comment: None

## 8. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

- Stormwater Branding – *tentatively February*
- Auxiliary Firefighter Water System - Full CAC – *tentatively February*
- Racial Equity Plan Update
- Commissioner Visits
- Agency-wide Planning & Policy on Climate Change & Adaptation
- Interagency Working Group on Sea Level Rise
- Contracting Process
- Education Resolution
- PUC Properties and City Department Partnerships
- Water Equity and Water Access for Homeless
- Workforce Programs
- Water Rights and Raker Act
- Water Use and Parks
- Flooding Protection
- Water Quality Report
- Green New Deal
- Micro Hydroelectric Power
- Prop A Bond Funding

### Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Skilled and Diverse Utility Workforce [adopted February 19, 2019](#)
- Resolution Honoring the Life, Activism, and Contributions of Dr. Espanola Jackson to the Local Community [adopted on April 19, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Balboa Reservoir [adopted March 15, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None

## 9. Announcements/Comments

- The next FULL CAC meeting will be on February 16, 2021. Visit [www.sfwater.org/cac](http://www.sfwater.org/cac) for confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda and materials.
- Member Clary announced that two pieces of legislation were introduced. Senate Bill 222 which will establish a state-wide low-income water rate assistance program and Senate Bill 223 will improve protections for low income households threatened with water shut offs. Member Clary suggested supporting that in a future meeting.

## 10. Adjournment

Motion was made (Clary) and seconded (Kott) to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM