

July 15, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL [DARRYELLE.PRESTON@SFGOV.ORG] & FIRST CLASS MAIL

LaWanna Preston
Labor Relations Director
City and County of San Francisco
Police Department, Headquarters
1245 3rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94158

Re: Police Commission Hearing July 15, 2020

LaWanna:

This letter will confirm my telephone conference with you late yesterday afternoon when I called to discuss the Police Commission (“Commission”) meeting this evening. In particular our client, the San Francisco POA (“SFPOA”) has serious concerns over Agenda item 5 which states in relevant part as follows:

Discussion and possible action to adopt draft resolution expressing support for Black lives and direct the Chief to install BLM posters/signs within every police station (DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION)

(See Item No. 5 at <https://sfgov.org/policecommission/meeting/police-commission-july-15-2020-agenda>). The Commission website then provides a link to its draft resolution that states in relevant part:

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Police Department shall, in each of its district stations and within 30 days of the passage of this resolution, display a poster or sign of at least 32 x 24 inches that prominently and exclusively features the expression “Black Lives Matter;” and

...

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Police Department has an immediate obligation to maintain and replace any sign that is altered, including disfigurement, impairment, or fading from its original condition;

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<https://sfgov.org/policecommission/sites/default/files/Documents/PoliceCommission/PoliceCommission071520-ResolutionExpressingSupportforBlackLives.pdf>

Since the posting of the Agenda a number of SFPOA members have contacted the SFPOA to express concern over the matter. Initially I want to reiterate what President, Tony Montoya and others at the SFPOA have publicly stated for the last several months: the SFPOA is unequivocally intolerant of any form of police abuse or racist behavior. The Association has committed extensive resources and efforts to work with the Police Department to examine, uncover and address evidence of systemic injustice. As you are personally aware, over the last several months the SFPOA has initiated efforts to implement reforms announced by Mayor Breed as well as those emanating from the Department of Justice. While the Commission and the public at large may not be aware, throughout these last several months, the SFPOA has willingly collaborated with the Police Department and successfully negotiated a number reform-based policies. The effort continues.

The Police Commission is fully aware that many of the abuses by police officers reported in the national media over the last several months, including the aggressive responses by some police departments to peaceful protests, has not implicated San Francisco police officers. While San Francisco police officers have an exemplary track record of engaging in constitutional policing, the SFPOA continues to engage the Department to enact policies which provide greater degrees of transparency, training and accountability.

Although the last several months has seen significant improvement in the working relationship between the Police Department and the SFPOA, recently the Police Commission has taken steps to impede the recalibrating of the relationship with the Department and the community. Moreover, despite recent progress and specific DOJ recommendations that the City collaborate with the SFPOA to further the reform efforts, the Commission seems determined to inject politics and division into the process.

Make no mistake about it, the SFPOA supports the notion that all black and brown lives matter. The basic premise that people of color should not be victimized by racist policies and practices is one fully embraced by the SFPOA. While the SFPOA shares in the Commission's stated objectives of bias-free policing, equality, and effective community policing, the Commission's public endorsement of a specific political organization ("Black Lives Matter") and directive that the San Francisco Police Department prominently display posters in support of that same political organization, establishes a new precedent that raises concerns about introducing political agendas and wedge issues into the safe harbor of police stations. Police stations are places for the citizens of San Francisco to seek help and assistance when they have become victims of crimes. They are not places for political endorsements or alignment with political organizations.

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Finally, we've all agreed that implementation of the Mayor's reform agenda and the DOJ's reform recommendations are essential to reinvent the Police Department and achieve meaningful reforms. This proposed resolution does nothing to advance the reform agenda and in fact will hinder the relationship building that has occurred over the last few months. Therefore, on behalf of the SFPOA, we ask that as the liaison to the Commission that you request that they consider the positions set forth herein and not approve any resolution which places politics over reform.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration and we look forward to the City's response.

Sincerely,

RAINS LUCIA STERN
ST. PHALLE & SILVER, PC



Rockne A. Lucia, Jr.

RAL:tw

cc: Tony Montoya, President, SFPOA
Tracy McCray, Vice-President, SFPOA
SFPOA Executive Board
Chief William Scott
Mayor London Breed