



San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 21, 2025
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room

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Meeting URL

<https://sfwater.zoom.us/j/81316304034?pwd=5XMr6VUUuf2rksVvOmp2lgcQaODtgR.1>

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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:

Moisés García, Chair (D9)

Cal Law (D1)

VACANT (D2)

Sally Chen (D3)

Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)

Scott Brown (D5)

Barklee Sanders (D6)

Elizabeth Steele Teshara (D7)

Amy Nagengast (D8)

VACANT (D10)

Jennifer Clary (D11)

Maika Pinkston (M-Environmental Org.)

VACANT (M-Regional Water Customers)

Jodi Soboll (M-Engineering/Financial)

Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large Water User)

Andrea Baker (B-Small Business)

Michelle Pierce (B-Environ. Justice)

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

Staff Liaisons: Lexus Moncrease and Lupita Garcia

Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

London N. Breed
Mayor

Kate H. Stacy
President

Joshua Arce
Vice President

Avni Jamdar
Commissioner

Steve Leveroni
Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
General Manager

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 5:34 pm

Present (10): Law, Chen, Jacuzzi, Sanders, Steele Teshara, Nagengast, Clary, Soboll, Perszyk, Baker

Absent (4): García, Brown, Pinkston, Pierce

OUR MISSION: To provide our customers with high-quality, efficient, and reliable water, power and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care.



Staff/Presenters: Ronnie Versher Jr., and Vice Commissioner Arce

Members of the Public: Peter Drekmeier, and Gloria Berry

2. Approve [November 19, 2024](#), Minutes

Motion was made(Baker) and seconded (Steele-Teshara) to approve the November 19, 2024, Minutes.

Minutes approved without objection.

Public Comment: None

3. Report from the Chair

- Welcome members, staff, and the public
- Ohlone Tribal Land Acknowledgement

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.

- **Gloria Berry**, a resident of District 10, stated she is concerned about community benefits which the SFPUC now calls the SIP Program and there is no urgency or concern that so much money is given to nonprofits due to all the projects going on in District 10 and the community is not seeing the benefits that are meant to address the harm. There is concern that the SFPUC has strategically taken itself out of the loop by stating they have no influence on what a nonprofit is receiving because the contractors have direct communication with the nonprofits allowing the harm to continue. The contracts are not transparent and there is no information to the public on who the awards are being awarded to. The Social Impact Partnership (SIP) dashboard is only updated semi-annually, and it should be updated at least monthly to be able to hold people accountable. Additionally, the funds are unrestricted so there is no dictation on how the nonprofits are supposed to carry out the contractor's desires, whether it be outreach or another program area. There are no reporting requirements and does not allow for the public to see what the funds were used for. There is a newsletter that is sent out with one picture from somewhere in the community and that is supposed to be suffice – we need to have deliverables reported that matches the money that is given. The CAC is being used as a body to say outreach is being done to the community.

5. Presentation and Discussion: Commissioner Visit, SFPUC Commissioner, Vice President Joshua Arce

- **Vice Chair Perszyk** stated that SFPUC Commissioner SFPUC Joshua Arce will be introducing himself and will return to the next Full CAC meeting for a Q&A discussion.
- **Commissioner Arce** commented that he wanted to come by and introduce himself. His name is Joshua Arce and is one of the newest Commissioners to the Public Utilities Commission, he commented that he sits on the Rate Payer Advocate seat on the Commission.

Commissioner Arce pointed out that prior to Chair Garcia's presentation at the Commission meeting last Tuesday, where Chair Garcia presented a great report on the CAC Priorities, he planned on stopping by and introducing himself. Commissioner Arce further commented that he wanted to share a few things he brings to the Commission and commented that he's attended about 3-4 Commission meetings so far, and his top priority is affordability, it's a core element to the agency, it's the first section in the annual submission to the Mayor's budget office, and then the Board of Supervisors is all about the agency's goals, not just to provide high quality services, whether its water, wastewater, or power services but to provide world class quality with reliable and green environmental stewardship. All these different components help make the agency stand out across all agencies across the country but to do so at affordable rates and there's some important programs that provide customer assistance that's aggressive in terms of even having a more expansive definition of who is eligible for the low-income rate payer assistance programs. I think a lot of great things are in place and I know there's always more that we can do. There's a lot of capital investments we're making, particularly on the wastewater side. There are things we want to do in line of our energy independence in terms of delivery clean energy through CleanPowerSF, and doing what we need to do to purchase PG&E's assets so we can achieve our own energy independence, which is something I fully support. I always keep an eye on the impact that these investments and costs can have on ratepayers. Its something important to me, and then the last thing I just wanted to share with you regarding the way I look at being a rate payer advocate is we're going to be doing a budget process over the next year and I really want to know everything that goes into how we determine rates everything from forecasting, to looking at our capital needs, looking in terms of how much we determine how much water we need based on our assumptions and different modeling that we're doing, and all that's important to me to know how it all impacts rates. It's an important part of the great work that the Community Benefits team does here at the PUC. In my day job, I work with the Northern California Laborers Union, who is one of the State's fastest growing labor unions. And so, it's important part of the work we do within the labor movement, that pairing with community, as agencies that are helping to fund this work is creating local opportunities is a great way to give back to those ratepayers that are helping to finance this stuff. Commissioner Arce commented that he got his start as a civil rights lawyer here at UC SF school of law. Back in the day tenant rights work, housing, discrimination workers and employment discrimination took me into environmental justice work. I was mentored by a woman, well known to this agency and the City, Dr. Espanola Jackson, in various activities around environmental justice. Then spent prior to my current role with NorCal labors, I spent about 6 years as the city's director of workforce development, working with folks here at the agency and other agencies and different training program. Commissioner Arce thanked the Committee for letting them introduce himself.

Public Comment:

- **Peter Drekmeier**, Policy Director for the Tuolumne River Trust, commented at last week's SFPUC Commission meeting, Chair Garcia gave a great presentation on the CAC and will be missed on the CAC. We are fortunate to have a strong CAC, and he appreciates all the hard work everyone does. He believes there should be a training ground to become Commissioners and the list of priorities for this fiscal

year are great and appreciates Commissioners coming to meet with the CAC. He likes that there will be a discussion around rates next Full CAC meeting with Vice President Arce because the SFPUC will have a meeting on the budget on February 11th.

- **Gloria Berry** commented that the community expressed at the SFPUC Commission meeting the offensiveness of using Dr. Espanola Jackson's name and requests that Vice President Arce stop using her name to promote himself as a good doer. She commented that Vice President Arce has stated through multiple public comments on community benefits and to name City Build as the go to of what is being done locally, to hire locally, is an insult. City Build only holds two classes a year and the space is not being used for the remainder of the year and can be used for other Black contractors and is requesting an initiative made to use culturally competent hiring because the City does do this for certain positions and preferences often goes to people that are bilingual and Black people speak a language that involves code switching and asked for CAC members to be bold and question commissioners actions since people include community outreach as presentations given to the CAC.

6. Presentation and Discussion: [SFPUC Community Benefits Update](#), Ronnie Versher Jr., Director of Community Benefits, SFPUC

Presentation:

- SFPUC Community Benefits Division Update
- Community Benefits (CB) History
- SFPUC Guiding Policies
- Arts Program Overview
- Arts Program Highlights
- Education Program Overview
- Education Program Highlights
- College Hill Learning Garden Overview
- College Hill Learning Garden Highlights
- Environmental Justice Program Overview
- Land Use Program Overview
- Southeast Community Center Overview
- SECC Resident Partners
- Southeast Community Center Highlights
- Social Impact Partnership Program Overview
- Social Impact Partnership Highlights
- Social Impact Partnership Dashboard
- SIP Registry
- Youth Workforce Program Overview
- Youth Workforce Program Highlights
- Thank You

Discussion:

- **Member Nagengast** asked how many people work for Community Benefits.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that 22 individuals work for Community Benefits ranging in portfolio areas.

- **Member Clary** commented that the CAC wrote the Environmental Justice Policy, and it was not a do no harm policy.
- **Member Clary** asked what is the SFPUC's goal in terms of how many touches should an SFUSD student have in their K-12 education.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that it is hard to assess that outcome. The SFPUC does make sure that it is in front of the 50-55,000 young people that are within SFSUD. An anecdote related to workforce portfolio shared is of a young man a few years back who was at John O'Connell High School and the SFPUC did a deep dive with them which is where he learned about the SFPUC. The young man went to Los Medanos College and did their electronic maintenance technician program and has since come back as an employee. It is an experience that the SFPUC aims to replicate because it supports young people from San Francisco to identify family sustaining wages that are in San Francisco. There is also the important piece, especially with the events happening in Flint, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi that if more Black and Brown people can know the type of opportunity they have available to manage their water and wastewater systems then they would look for these jobs and the actions taking place in these communities would not happen because it impacts their community directly.

Member Clary commented there should be some kind of metric for how the SFPUC invests in all of its community benefits programs, including education and asked how the SFPUC determines what it is going to fund.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that he does not look at this as something to fund because it does not cost to communicate with SFUSD, instead it is looking at staff time because there is no resource allocation for funding SFUSD. The SFPUC is able to do teacher preparation time through different grants that may provide funding, and staff is working with SFUSD to identify where some of their needs are and there is no set budget for doing this. SFPUC works with curriculum builders and the California Academy of Sciences to describe the SFPUC's work and jobs that are connected to that work and how to incorporate it to the textbooks with the goal of creating career awareness.

- **Member Soboll** commented that the reason she is an engineer today is because of a program when she participated that exposed her to engineering and asked if this curriculum is in response to what teachers and educators have requested.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that the curriculum is in response to what educators have requested and that this work is important to expose young people to the SFPUC infrastructure that is described as invisible and there is an agency behind providing utilities such as water.

- **Member Nagengast** commented that there is demand for SFPUC staff to talk to educators because the College Hill Learning Garden 2024-2025 is fully subscribed and has been for a long time.

- **Member Clary** commented that she is unsure of how the SFPUC measures and determines its investment.
- **Member Chen** asked how does the College Hill Learning Garden function and how it is funded.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that the Water Enterprise took the initiative for development and will need to go back to ask what the funding options were to build it. A nonprofit, Education Outside, used to execute the garden, however, it was no longer able to support the garden and rather than solicit another service provider, the SFPUC decided to bring the operations in-house and connect more closely with the education value the SFPUC has. The SFPUC hired 2 full-time staff members that set up and deliver the programs.

- **Vice Chair Perszyk** asked to clarify particle matter (pm) 2.5 offsets.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that for the biosolids projects which is a 2.5- or 3.5-billion-dollar project there was an environmental justice report that identified various strategies to help mitigate some of the work that the particle matter would go in. When people think about the Bayview, they first identify the smell and the new biosolids facility should help solve some of the smell. There is work done collaboratively with Infrastructure and Wastewater to identify solutions that help mitigate the risk of particle matter going into the air. Currently, the SFPUC has identified a number of offsets that could help mitigate the next phase which would be to do an internal process to look at what the options are and the SFPUC did a peer analysis to see what other agencies have done. After this step, the SFPUC will engage community around the options that we think are viable and we want to hear from the community whether or not they agree with those options.

- **Member Clary** asked if environmental justice is nestled under Community Benefits because it is important not to conflate the two otherwise it turns into paying for pollution. An example is when the Southeast Community Center (SECC) was built, it was to offset the increased size of the wastewater treatment plant, but it is not mitigation because mitigation would be to reduce the smell or remove the plant.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that most people at the agency work on environmental justice. Community Benefits is there to support the agency by doing research support and is there to talk internally about the issues that are relevant and need to be elevated.

- **Member Clary** asked what the staffing looks like for the environmental justice group.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that there is an environmental justice manager and analyst on his team who coordinate and work collaboratively with other environmental justice staff members who sit on different enterprises and bureaus, such as infrastructure.

- **Member Law** asked how the partners at the SECC are chosen.

Staff Versher Jr. responded they work with the Real Estate division and did a public Request for Proposal (RFP) and to support the RFP process, held community sessions at the contract assistance center to help community organizations learn how to apply for the RFPs.

- **Vice Chair Perszyk** asked how much oversight the SFPUC provides to SIP and the level of involvement SFPUC has in deciding what happens since this is the topic that the CAC has heard the most concern about.
- **Staff Versher Jr.** responded the voluntary piece of SIP is when a firm is bidding on an open solicitation RFP, they have the option to contribute to social programs for contracts of 5 million dollars or more. If they are interested and put SIP as part of their bid, they receive bonus points that are prorated out based on the number of contractors. SFPUC does not have input on this process on what organization the contractors decide or if they contractors decide to participate. If the contractor who decided to participate in SIP wins the bid, it goes into their contract agreement that they have to do this work. In the bid, they are not asked to identify a specific nonprofit but are asked it to identify out of the 4 program areas: public education, job exposure, training and internships, small business, and environment and community health.
- **Member Soboll** asked how the SFPUC measures the outcomes and hears feedback from contractors who are awarded big contracts in the Bayview and Hunters Point who are supposed to be using local contractors and provide growth-oriented jobs to the local community impacted by these projects because through public comment at previous meetings, it is understood that the contractors are not doing what was originally intended and stated they would do.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that the program alluded in this is Local Hire which does not sit in Community Benefits. Community Benefits is doing a lot of work around career exposure and connect people to these types of opportunities. An example of a program that is directly operated under Community Benefits prior to the pandemic is City Works that worked with a nonprofit called Young Community Developers (YCD) to connect young people to the jobs they were interested in. YCD received the resources to recruit and pair young people to the internships.

- **Member Soboll** asked if there is ever the opportunity for a program to team up with a construction project the SFPUC is doing so that it helps with job exposure and work experience opportunities.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that this has been identified as an area of growth and is currently working towards. Currently, there are some young people that go through those types of experiences and later get brought on. This would be something that is done with Department of Human Resources (DHR), SFPUC's internal Human Resources Services (HRS) and the workforce program within Community Benefits

and folks on the Enterprises since there is 1 workforce manager that works in each of the Enterprises.

- **Member Baker** commented that her interaction with the SIP program is through her organization as they are a SIP recipient.
- **Member Nagengast** asked if the SIP program beneficiaries are different than the City contract mandated 10 – 20% local business enterprise (LBE) requirement and if they are encouraged to register as an LBE.

Staff Versher. Jr responded that a beneficiary may possibly be registered as an LBE, and majority of beneficiaries are 501(c)(3) registered nonprofits and public schools or public-school systems.

- **Member Sanders** asked that since the SIP dashboard is only updated twice a year, can a public records request be made to receive more information about specific contracts relating towards the specific SIP program areas during anytime.

Staff Moncrease responded that yes, a public records request can be made and SFPUC staff will conduct a diligent search to see if responsive records exist.

- **Member Law** asked if the construction companies select the nonprofits themselves or if the SFPUC has any input on the nonprofits.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that the SFPUC cannot dictate the selection of nonprofits as it would be a conflict of interest for the SFPUC.

- **Member Soboll** asked what kind of nonprofits help with Youth Workforce Programming and how they related to the careers.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that it can be several different organizations throughout San Francisco and the SFPUC has built a curriculum centered around some of the areas such as flooding that nonprofits are able to teach to young people.

- **Vice Chair Perszyk** asked if his team would be interested in talking to infrastructure regarding the improvement of the local hiring coordination.

Staff Versher Jr. responded yes, his team would be interested, and it is one of the current goals to provide a better through line through Community Benefits to identify what the local hire opportunities are and better access to information.

- **Member Clary** asked when the most recent Community Benefits report is expected to be released.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that the team is currently working on finalizing that report and will share it with the CAC Staff Liaison to distribute to CAC members when published.

- **Member Clary** asked for an organization chart to understand what the SFPUC environmental justice program is like since it is spread across every enterprise.

Staff Versher Jr. responded that he would work to identify how to filter the EJ landscape at the agency.

- **Member Barker** asked for the nonprofits listed under the SIP registry, what descriptions do contractors receive and how many nonprofits are registered and from the estimated registered nonprofits, how many are actually receiving donations.

Staff Versher Jr. responded there are 70 to 100 nonprofits registered and have the ability to share what they do in the program areas that they think would be beneficial for a form to support and it is encouraged for the nonprofits to spell out various opportunities. The registry is new, so the donation information is not available.

Staff Tulier-Laiwa further responded there are close to 200 program opportunities because each nonprofit may have various program areas.

Public Comment:

- **Gloria Berry** commented that she raised this subject last March and was told by this body that it would be on the agenda. She gave her card to almost everyone and no one informed her about the meeting and needed to find out through a different avenue. She has reached out to Chair García multiple times, and he has not responded. She is thankful for Member Sanders mentioning Treasure Island as it is often forgotten about and there are a lot of hazards on Treasure Island. Through SIP, Treasure Island Museum gets some of the SIP funds and other organizations, but it is unclear as to what they are doing to help the community. When it comes to environmental justice, art is wonderful but there should also be funds for testing in the community. All of the projects and sewer that is coming into District 10 is affecting the community. There are concerns regarding Staff Versher Jr. because he was a former board member at Ignited and there is a potential conflict of interest because these are his former colleagues and are they receiving the funds to do deliverables in the community. Her daughter is a teacher and has not received the curriculum. The outreach to the community regarding RFPs is horrible yet on the SIP website through contractors, they state they are spending money on outreach – there is no outreach in the community, they come present at meetings and count that as outreach. The SIP dashboard is not up to par for the public.

7. Discussion and Possible Action: Amendment to the SFPUC CAC Rules of Order, Vice Chair Eli Perszyk

- **Member Clary** asked if we want an addendum to item 5 on page 2 in the SFPUC CAC Rules of Order that will have a provision for filling leadership vacancies.

Staff Moncrease responded yes, that is correct.

- **Vice Chair Perszyk** proposed for the next meeting, if people are interested in leadership positions, they can nominate themselves for elections.
- **Member Clary** asked if members could vote if the addendum is not in writing.

Member Jacuzzi commented he would like to see it in writing.

- **Member Clarry** proposed that the draft addendum language be added to next month's agenda, and it vote then.
- **Member Chen** asked if naming the timing is more related to an officer's term.

Member Clary stated the language continue to state the term still ends on the even number year so all officers' terms end at the same time.

Members will review the proposed written addendum and vote at the next Full CAC meeting in February.

Public Comment: None

8. Staff Report

- No staff report

Public Comment: None

9. SFPUC Communications

- [SFPUC Wildfire Mitigation Plan 2024](#)
- [Capital Financing Plan FY 2024-25](#)
- [Quarterly Audit and Performance Report, FY 2023-24, Q4](#)
- [Hazards and Climate Resilience Plan 2025 Update](#)
- Water Enterprise
 - [Water Supply Conditions Update \(September 3, 2024\)](#)
 - [Water Enterprise Capital Improvement Program Report, FY 2023-24, Q4](#)
 - [Hetch Hetchy Capital Improvement Program Report, FY 2023-24, Q3](#)
 - [Alternative Water Supply Annual Progress Report](#)
 - [Alternative Water Supply Planning Annual Progress Report](#)
 - [2009 Water Supply Agreement Quarterly Update](#)
 - [Onsite Water Reuse Program Update, FY 2022-23](#)
 - [Recent Wastewater Enterprise Bond Sale Results](#)

- [Supplemental Appropriation of Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response \(ESER\) 2010 and 2014 General Obligation Bonds Interest Earnings](#)
 - [Water System Improvement Program Annual Report](#)
- Wastewater Enterprise
 - [Water Enterprise Capital Improvement Program Update, FY 2023-24, Q3](#)
- Power Enterprise
 - [CleanPowerSF Update, FY 2023-24, Q4](#)
 - [PG&E Interconnection Report, FY 2023-24, Q4](#)

Public Comment: None

10. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

- [CAC Advance Calendar](#)

Public Comment: None

11. Announcements/Comments Please visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

Public Comment: None

12. Adjournment at 7:19 pm

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