

MEETING NOTES

Special Member Meeting – November 4, 2019 — 7:00 PM
SF LGBT Community Center – Rainbow Room, San Francisco CA 94103

I. Standing Items (10 min)

- I. Welcome & Check In
 - i. Called to Order at: 7:06 PM by Carolyn Wysinger, *President*
 - ii. Welcome: Members welcomed by Carolyn, introductions were made.
 - iii. Board Members in attendance: Suzanne Ford (*Treasurer*), Nguyen Pham (*Secretary*), Bruce Beaudette, Alex U. Inn
- II. Appointment of Facilitator, Vibe Watcher & Stack Monitor
 - i. Facilitator: Carolyn Wysinger
 - ii. Vibe Watcher: Bruce Beaudette
 - iii. Stack Monitor: Suzanne Ford

II. Formal Business – Police & Pride Discussion

Fred Lopez, *Interim Executive Director*, read an introductory statement detailing the events of the parade interruption on Sunday June 30. Stated that cooperation and collaboration with law enforcement is necessary to produce an event of the scale of SF Pride. Pointed out the open investigation by the Department of Police Accountability into the allegation of excessive force used against the demonstrators. Spoke about the efforts that Pride made to encourage the District Attorney to drop the charges against two demonstrators. Stated that the intention of this meeting is to honor the membership's wishes and that the staff and board are in the room to listen, to take points made at this meeting into consideration moving forward.

Floor opens for member discussion. Comment cards available for those who may not want to speak on microphone.

Cheryl: Thanked board for the report, and made comment that she hoped next time something like this happened, Pride would not take so long to give such a report. Also asked what news board has with status of two charged individuals.

Alex: Questioned what the board deliverables would be from this meeting.

Carolyn: Responded that this discussion would continue beyond tonight, and Pride needs help from the community.

Alex: Action items from tonight should be recorded, read back. SF Pride should be able to decide what is acceptable actions/attitude from Police at our event, remarked there was too much display of them at the Parade. Many in our community, especially black and brown

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folks, feel hurt by past actions of SFPD. If white supremacy group wanted to march, Pride would say no. Recommends Pride say no to police in the parade.

Dana: Stated that she is here for others who couldn't or wouldn't be in the room. Pride should condemn the police for their behavior at the 2019 event. Not wanting cops at Pride is not anything comparable to homophobia or racism, as social media comments have suggested. Police do not deserve to be in the Parade. They have not earned that right. Yes there are queer and trans cops, they need to work within their system to make it better before they get to be in pride. How many police are we required to have at the event/for a permit? How are the police who work at the event chosen to do so?

Tyler: Did the new District Attorney drop the charges? Has Pride asked them to? He requested, through the sunshine act, any written communications between SF Pride and the Police, especially during the month of June, but received almost nothing. If the agreement between SFPD and Pride is in writing, it would be good to see that.

Fred: DA has not dropped the charges. Pride has not contacted new DA office yet.

Bruce: Referred to police situation in Toronto, and how the local impact of the celebration affects homeless and transitional housed people. Statistics show that # of homeless youth are queer. Pride should consider how we and police are interacting with community.

Brooke: Spoke of previous experience as legal counsel with Pride and a few events: burning man, other lgbtq organizations, organizations for black and brown people, largely activist organizations. Has a history with the police, and it might be helpful to provide some history. Despite their attempts to control things aggressively and with unwarranted conditions, police are there to protect and serve. She recalled they wanted to shut down certain stages, primarily hip-hop, at pride because they might be prone to violence. Police target black/brown communities.

We need the police to protect us from people trying to kill us. That's true. Calls into question whether to call a cop when a person of color is in trouble. Often decides it's not worth the risk, because it's more likely that the cops hurt or kill the person who needs help. That's a huge problem for a police department. The police are making safety contingent on their ability to work in these restrictive authoritarian ways. Suggested we consult with some top civil rights lawyers about taking a more aggressive stance with the Police.

Larry: Was at an event for new year's eve in 1995, recalls seeing a large group of Police standing around about 3:00 AM. Went over to ask a simple question and recalls being tossed aside, assaulted. He and others successfully sued the Police, he is still triggered by the sight of them. Change might not come soon given the glacial pace of the DOJ, but the Police

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should not be in the Parade in uniform, their numbers should be decreased, none should be visible and walking around the celebration site. Pressure the police to respect everyone.

Alex: Asked why or why not would we want the police in the Parade? And this could include all law enforcement. May 2013 to May 2019, 9 out of 13 people shot were people of color. Investigations into those crimes are still happening. Charges have not been brought against these officers. 2015 The DOJ came in and had to investigate the racist culture that implicated 14 officers. We still have a culture of denial that the officers have done anything wrong. 2016 the department was found to have deficiencies in every area assessed. More dialog with the Police is needed about their attitude, especially at our event. Also, this is an issue that can't sit just with the Pride board, the community needs to be standing behind the board. All members should be in the room in the discussion.

Member: Possible solution could include recruiting legal advocates to begin the dialog with Police. It's shameful how little our community supports SF Pride. SF Pride needs to create more engagement with the community. LGBTQ+ Police should be working with us to deal with those SFPD that are openly prejudiced, make sure they aren't close to the front lines (Parade and Celebration). Feels a lot safer knowing the people protecting me are my queer brothers and sister, who are proud standing with us, in whatever places we decide the police are appropriate. Then give pride another level of protection right outside the gates with cops who are not racist. What does "police out of Pride" mean? There should be a community meeting with the Police about their involvement with SF Pride.

Simone: More community involvement is needed. The Board will need to take the lead on that. They need to demonstrate they support the community. This is similar to, but not the same, as corporate involvement. SF Pride should block the Police from participating. They should also sue the Police for not going along with our operational policy. The board needs to lead on these things so that people can say "I want to be a part of the sf pride community". Given all of the evidence that police have violated and committed violence against our community, no faith they will protect our community in any capacity. Police have power, and they want to have power over other people. The power dynamic fuels the violence. Police out of Pride would still mean they need to protect us, but we do need to find out what is the minimum number we need for our event. Are there other ways we can have safety in our community? Is it different than for other kinds of marches?

Suhai: We talked a lot about finding solutions. No discussion yet about the cause of these problems. To solve a problem, what is causing these issues? Did the protesters who got arrested behave in a different way, that caused them to be arrested? If we decide to hold the police accountable, and it comes to light that the protesters were doing bad behavior, we should also talk about the issues that trigger the police to act the way they do. There are police who do behave ways that they shouldn't, but the police have

plausible deniability if we give them the grey area to claim that it was the behavior of the protesters.

Dana: It's about police culture. Pride Sunday was a culmination of a building of aggressions that started with the Trans march on Friday. No police at all is unrealistic. Not in the parade at all is entirely possible. Community should be a part of what they do, how they are chosen, no law enforcement in the parade. It helps them recruit from our communities. Internalized trans and homophobia are real, and people become cops for a reason, people get bullied and they bully on down the chain. Speaking for people who don't feel safe being here. More information is needed to find out how many cops are needed, we should decide where they will be allowed to work. Individual board members are very responsive, and we've seen growth, but there is very much trust to win back, and that work is on the board.

Steve: Spoke of an experience being detained after dyke march, and aggressive behavior of police. There's a long pattern of police misbehavior, why should they be allowed to participate in the parade? Number of police needs to be reduced. Shared work with Sunday Streets and how they got numbers of police presence to go to perimeter. Higher standards needed for the police, corrective action plan. Asked it is possible for a brief update at each member meeting on the status with the DA, police investigation.

Laurence: Disputed the idea that a need for more security is due to the concern about terrorism, given statistics he cited. Pointed out the aggressive tactics that were used to detain the people at the parade on market street, 6 police to one person. Stated that a formal written agreement between police and largest outdoor event is better suited to avoid negligence.

Bruce: Stated that his sense is Mayor Breed would support LGBT Community no matter what, though suggested she address police attitude. She and LGBT elected officials could put pressure on the police chief, as well as others in City Hall. Encouraged pride to record future meetings for those who cannot attend for whatever reason.

Doonie: SF Pride needs to develop a plan of action to get people involved. There are a lot of youth that want to support. Part of community outreach that can have some type of committee, going into schools, on campus at colleges, and students are looking for ways to get involved, so if pride can have a plan of action to communicate to them, then they can get involved.

Brooke: Ask BALIF (Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom) to form a committee to help us figure out how to deal with pride's other police issues. Hire a security expert to help pride figure out many police are really needed. Work on getting more of pride's fair share from the City given how much revenue event brings in for them, via Grants for the Arts.

Written comment submitted: Could Police be stationed at central points in the celebration site and called in only when necessary, not patrolling?

Carolyn: Encouraged people to keep attending member meetings, join if not a member. Dialogue will continue. Upcoming meeting dates and locations can be found on our website.

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 PM

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS, SUMMARIZED:

- Pride could ask the police to not march in the parade
- Pride board should lead the SF LGBTQ+ community in taking a stance on political issues
- Police are obligated to protect us, even if we do not comply with their demands
- Pride doesn't benefit as much as it should from the revenue it brings to the city
- Limited police presence within the perimeter of the event
- Pride board needs the community's support
- People may not feel safe without a lot of the safety and accessibility measures at event
- Meetings like these may not feel safe and accessible to at risk community members

ACTIONABLE ITEMS, WORKING LIST

- Develop safety activities community groups could take over from the police
- Speak to the prosecutor's office re: two arrested at parade protest
- A potential statement or resolution from the board condemning the actions of the police at pride
- Answer "practical" questions, how many police are required, how are they chosen
- Create a plan of action to communicate to youth and others, so they can get involved
- Regular updates on the status of police involvement, and the status of the two arrested and charged for the protest
- Find volunteer lawyers to assist
- Independent security expert to consult

Mission Statement

The mission of the San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Celebration Committee is to educate the world, commemorate our heritage, celebrate our culture, and liberate our people.

Financial Protocol

No expenditure can be incurred without going through the Executive Director in advance. This includes reimbursement of expenses outside of the set guidelines. If you expect to have an expenditure, prior approval must be sought from the Executive Director as soon as possible. Procedures exist and checks and balances are in place to ensure that all expenditures go through a proper approval process with the Board. All expenditures are accounted for during the annual budgeting and audit process.

Public Comment

The public comment portion of the meeting is an opportunity for those with no say in the formulation of the agenda (i.e. those who are not members) to speak during the meeting. Public comment is offered in a spirit of open communication and the organization being receptive to new ideas and constructive suggestions. The Chair of the meeting may adopt a flexible approach in allowing public comment but will not tolerate personal attacks and/or indecorous behavior.