



## Services and Public Safety Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

9:00am–10:30am

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and In-Person at 291 Geary Street, Suite 200

### Minutes

**In attendance:** Don Thomas (Club Donatello), Maxine Papadakis, Tammy Brock (167 Powell LP), Brenna Carrick (Newmark Knight Frank), David Lohnes (Nintendo), Jordan Buckley (Frame Ventures), MCraig, Missy, Joe Garrity (SFPD), Capt. Kevin Knoble (SFPD), Lt. Dean Hall (SFPD), Capt. Stephen Jonas (SFPD), Dmitri Shimolin (AVS), Miracle Matua (Block by Block), Don Lepana (Block by Block), Jaffar Mendieta (Block by Block), and Israel Ginez (Legion).

**Staff:** Daniela Vasile (COO), Ben Horne (CFO), Sokhom Mao (Director of Services), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), and E. Ryan Santamaria (Intern).

#### 1. Welcome, introductions, & brief announcements

Don Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Then, everyone in the room introduces themselves.

#### 2. Public Comment

Maxine Papadakis brought to the committee's attention an increase in crime in the Ellis O'Farrell Garage and inquired about additional security. Lieutenant Dean Hall informed the group that SFPD will do more passing calls and will contact LAZ, the garage operator, and address the issue. Tammy Brock inquired about the legion guard's uniform and noted the lack of uniformity with the hats. Daniela informed her that new hats are currently in production.

#### 3. **ACTION** to Approve Committee Meeting Minutes

Services Committee Minutes from March 2025.

Don directed the Committee to review the previous Services Committee meeting minutes sent out in advance.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved March 25, 2025, meeting minutes, as motioned by Maxine Papadakis and seconded by Sokhom Mao.

#### 4. Committee Updates

##### a. Alliance staffing update.

Daniela introduced the four new Alliance members: Sokhom Mao (Director of Services), Hollie Chiao (Marketing and Communications Associate), Marlenne Mendoza (Project Coordinator), and E. Ryan Santamaria (Intern).



b. District360 project updates.

Daniela stated that Legion is moving forward with developing an app to help track service requests. Legion has purchased iPhones for the team and will begin testing by the end of this week. The next phase is mapping and route tracking.

c. Block By Block office update.

Daniela informed the committee that Block by Block, Legion, and Heart Safety Ambassadors have relocated from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Flood Building to the ground floor in the former Anthropology space that was formally occupied by SF Travel ambassadors. The relocation was a result of increased staffing levels, which led to elevated noise levels in the building's hallways, causing disturbances to neighboring tenants. Ben explained that the Alliance holds the lease with the Flood building and will be released from it and the new lease will be under Block by Block. Member Services will remain on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Discussion took place regarding a secondary location in case a retailer is interested in that space. The Alliance is exploring the Visitor Information Center space at Hallidie Plaza.

d. Union Square Derby Alley working group update/DPW

With ongoing support from the community and DPW, the gate at Derby Alley has been fixed. The Alliance is in the process of exploring floodlights and security cameras for the alley.

e. Bigbelly program updates

The Alliance has been actively exploring alternative trash bin options as the grant funding for Big Belly units comes to an end. In the meantime, the Alliance will continue to place trash bins throughout the district as the City begins rolling out its new citywide trash cans. At this time, no official timeline has been provided for the distribution of the citywide bins.

5. **SFPD Updates – Captain Kim, Lt. Hall (Central Station), Acting Captain Kevin Knoble (Tenderloin), Captain Stephen Jonas, Ofc. Martin Ferreira (Graffiti Abatement)**

SFPD General Updates

Lieutenant Dean Hall noted that Captain Kim had another meeting to attend and provided the updates for Central Station and Union Square. Lieutenant Hall gave an overview of the first five months of 2025 compared to last year, with total city crime down by 27% and specifically, for the Union Square, it is down 43%. He attributed the recent decrease in crimes to the success of Nintendo's opening and thanked the Nintendo team. He then shared an incident with Burberry and the swift action of PD using the drone and thanked the Alliance for their support during the incident. Discussion took place on how to share and spread the positive work of SFPD with the public.

a. Hospitality Zone Task Force.

The boundaries for the hospitality zone South of Market is going to be 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, down to Folsom. They have had a dedicated number of officers that are providing more foot patrol and visual presence.

b. Drone as First Responder.



Captain Stephen Jonas shared a video with the committee highlighting a recent incident at Burberry, where two suspects were apprehended by SFPD after robbing the store using drone technology which is known as the Drone First Responder (DFR). He noted that the use of drones and other technological advancements has significantly improved the speed and efficiency of apprehensions.

The drone is currently stationed at the Hall of Justice while a new office space for the Real Time Investigation Center is being finalized. Captain Jonas expressed his appreciation to Chief Scott and Assistant Chief Lazar for their support in launching the drone program, as well as to the Union Square Alliance for their continued partnership.

SFPD is actively working with the Union Square Alliance to establish a dedicated drone dock on the Union Square Building rooftop, which will serve the district directly. They are currently in the process of securing roof access and leasing negotiations for this initiative.

Discussion took place regarding who can operate the drone to which Capt. Jonas noted only sworn officers can do so.

c. Graffiti Abatement

This item was not discussed.

**6. Hospitality Zone RFP 230 Updates**

a. March and April Reports.

Jaffar Mendieta informed the committee that Block by Block recently has hired new ambassadors and now has a different approach to training to ensure accountability and accuracy in data collection. Jaffar highlighted that the team has been receiving appreciation from stakeholders and the public, boosting the team's morale. Jaffar also shared that as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, Block by Block expanded their coverage of the safety zone. The committee discussed the daily challenges faced by the ambassador team. In response, Jaffar shared that interactions involving the unhoused population continue to be among the most difficult. He mentioned that a new pre-shift briefing now takes place at Hallidie Plaza, focusing on the best practices for conducting wellness checks. Jaffar also noted that many unhoused individuals are becoming more familiar with the ambassadors and, as a result, are increasingly receptive to engaging and moving along, emphasizing that consistency in outreach has been key. The committee proposed creating a "Day in the Life" video following an ambassador to highlight the realities they face on the ground and the positive impact they make throughout the district.

b. Staffing, Schedule & Deployment.

Jaffar restated that they are fully staffed. Discussion took place regarding how the ambassadors interact with the unhoused to ensure that the environment is safe and clean. Jaffar further explained that the team provides pamphlets filled with resources that offer different programs and assistance throughout the city. Additionally, he mentioned that the deployment has not changed.

c. Discussion and possible **action** to revise deployment to extend grant through December.

Ben reminded the committee that the HEART safety grant began in December 2024, set for 2 years and was then reduced to 1 year. With the DDC now engaged in downtown revitalization efforts, they are considering delivering clean and safe services directly. However, the timeline and



how this would align with the Alliance's current services remain unclear. The Alliance is proposing scaling back services, withdrawing from extended areas, and reducing the number of ambassadors to extend the grant through December 2025. A deployment plan and schedule will be presented at the next Alliance Board of Director's meeting.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved renewals of contracts for recommendation to the Board of Directors, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Maxine Papadakis.

## **7. March and April 2025 Operations Reports**

### **a. Jaffar Mendieta, Operations Manager, Block by Block**

Jaffar noted that Block by Block experienced a decrease in statistics during the period of his onboarding. He explained that this drop occurred as he was becoming familiar with the system and overall structure. He noted that graffiti abatement has increased every month and that Block by Block has added a new trash can in their garage, which indicates that the team has been performing at a higher quality through their service. Jaffar acknowledged that the implementation of new training, leadership, accountability and overall high standards and expectations, has resulted in improved performance in the field.

### **b. Jackson Alcantra, Security Manager, Legion Corporation**

Since Jackson Alcantra was not present, the Managing Director of Legion, Israel Ginez, provided the Legion updates to the committee. He reported that dispatches were significantly higher in March, and the Self Initiator (SIA) remained the same. Israel concluded that Legion is starting training with the new District360 app to better track the guards walking path and collect accurate data.

## **8. Contract updates, discussion, and action to approve for recommendation to Board of Directors:**

### **a. Delay of 10B return to January 2026**

Ben informed the committee that the Alliance would like to further delay the return of 10B officers to January 2026. With the addition of services through the Heart Safety grant, the additional presence of 10B is not recommended.

**Action:** The Committee unanimously approved renewals of contracts for recommendation to the Board of Directors, as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Maxine Papadakis.

## **9. Security Camera program updates – AVS**

### **a. SFPD camera access**

Dmitri Shimolin acknowledged the Burberry success story mentioned earlier as well as the overall efforts of the Central Station, the RTIC team, Tenderloin Station, and the MOU between SFPD and the Alliance for direct access to the camera system in the district allowing for quick swift action. The infrastructure of 530 cameras from the Union Square Alliance and 300 cameras in the Tenderloin have been very effective so far.

### **b. Recent/Current camera projects and LPRs updates**



Dmitri provided the committee with an update on his ongoing efforts to expand camera coverage throughout Union Square and greater San Francisco. He emphasized the importance of capturing all angles within the district to ensure that the most relevant footage is available when video requests are made. He also expressed his appreciation to the City for launching the new Real Time Information Center (RTIC) program and advocated for the continued use and investment in technology to support law enforcement.

Dmitri then shared highlights from his recent trip to Japan with the Chamber of Commerce for the World Expo. He noted the lack of visible security measures in airports, particularly in relation to goods. As an example, he showed a photo of a designer handbag displayed on a pedestal in the middle of the airport, unsecured by any tags or alarms, showing the minimal security presence.

#### **10. Upcoming Events and Meetings**

- a. Alliance Board of Directors Meeting – May 22, 2025, 9 a.m. (The Beacon)
- b. Next Services Committee – July 22, 2025

#### **11. Adjourned: 10:33 a.m.**