

SBRMBNA Notes August 13, 2018

Attendees: 15 including 2 officers and 2 directors

Welcome and Introductions by NA President Alice Rogers

Speaker: Sheriff Vicki Hennessy

- Hennessy has been with the SFSD since 1975 when she joined as a deputy. The Sheriff at that time – Richard Hongisto – was recruiting for diversity. Hennessy was one of the women he recruited. She is San Francisco’s (City and County) first female Sheriff. She is no relation to former Sheriff Mike Hennessy who served for 32 years.
- Every county in California is required to have an elected Sheriff.
- Department budget is \$336M; much of this is paid by other City departments for services rendered.
- Sheriff Hennessy oversees one of the largest Departments in the City and County of San Francisco. SFSD has 90 bailiffs, 80 deputy sheriffs, and 200 non-sworn personnel.
- The SFSD oversees and provides protection for the jails, courts, civil process (evictions), SF General Hospital, Laguna Honda, City Hall, etc. Dogs are used for explosive and drug detection. The Department now has two body scanners, eliminating the need for body searches.
- Motto is “Keep people safe.” That means everybody – citizens, SFSD personnel, prisoners, etc. Sheriff Hennessy is very proud of the fact that there has been no successful suicide attempt while she has been Sheriff. She attributes this to assuring that deputies make their rounds every 30 minutes – more often if they feel someone is at risk.
- SFSD personnel attend SFPD’s Police Academy (But, they are not paid as much as SFPD personnel).
- Jail population is currently 1404 with 1500 out on felony pre-trial release. Inmates average 11 charges, but some might have 200 or more. The jail population is not diverse.
- SFSD has implemented a risk assessment tool (the “Arnold” tool) for those arrested to determine how likely it is they will be repeat offenders. This assessment helps the judge determine if the arrestee should be

released on their own recognizance or recommended for assertive case management.

- The idea of a new jail came up a few years ago at a bad time. The Mario Woods killing had occurred, and people were just generally against investing in a new facility. The proposal had been for 384 new beds to replace the 2000 beds of closed jails. Despite the award of an \$80M grant, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted against a new jail and the grant money was returned.
- Sheriff Hennessy is hoping to renovate an empty jail in San Bruno. It is a cavernous cement structure where “pods” (vs. “linear” jails) could be built.
- The “glass” jail at 425 7th Street was built to be a “work / furlough” jail – one where low-level offenders would go about their normal jobs / business during the day and then check in at night. It was not meant for the felons currently housed there.
- St. Mary’s and St. Francis Hospitals are the only two psychiatric wards available. It is very difficult to recruit psychiatrists because of the low pay scale.
- IT issues (antiquated systems or no system at all for data) inhibit SFSD from accurate, efficient tracking.
- As information, the Humphrey Decision (California) is still being hashed out. It focuses on what amount of bail a person can afford. A defendant could not be imprisoned solely due to poverty, emphasizing that setting unaffordable bail is only justified for those who are deemed too dangerous to be released before trial.

Submitted: Katy Liddell, Alice Rogers