

File No. 260434

Committee Item No. 6

Board Item No. _____

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA PACKET CONTENTS LIST

Committee: Public Safety and Ngbh Services

Date: July 23, 2026

Board of Supervisors Meeting:

Date: _____

Cmte Board

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| ☐ | ☐ | Motion |
| ☐ | ☐ | Resolution |
| ☐ | ☐ | Ordinance |
| ☐ | ☐ | Legislative Digest |
| ☐ | ☐ | Budget and Legislative Analyst Report |
| ☐ | ☐ | Youth Commission Report |
| ☒ | ☐ | Introduction Form |
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| ☐ | ☐ | MOU |
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| ☐ | ☐ | Form 126 – Ethics Commission |
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OTHER

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☒ | ☐ | <u>FYI Referral 042726</u> |
| ☒ | ☐ | <u>Mission Local Article 031926</u> |
| ☒ | ☐ | <u>SFPD Presentation 052126</u> |
| ☐ | ☐ | _____ |
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Prepared by: Monique Crayton

Date: July 17, 2026

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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San Francisco 94102-4689
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Fax No. (415) 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

TO: Derrick Lew, Chief, Police Department
Paul Henderson, Executive Director, Department of Police Accountability
Carmen Chu, City Administrator, Office of the City Administrator
Daniel Tsai, Director, Department of Public Health

FROM: Monique Crayton, Assistant Clerk, Public Safety and Neighborhood
Services Committee, Board of Supervisors

DATE: April 27, 2026

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors' Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee has received the following Hearing request, introduced by Supervisor Stephen Sherrill on April 21, 2026:

File No. 260434

[Hearing - Status of the Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit]

Hearing on the Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit, inquiring about the plan to hire a Hearing Officer, restart hearing proceedings, address the existing case backlog, and improve proceedings through dog behavioral course requirements; and requesting the San Francisco Police Department, Department of Police Accountability, City Administrator's Office, and Department of Public Health to be present.

If you have any comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.

CC:
Office of Chair Dorsey
Office of Supervisor Sherrill
Steven Lopez, Police Department
Sgt Stacy Youngblood, Police Department
Carl Nicita, Police Department
Giannina Miranda, Police Department
Sophie Hayward, Office of the City Administrator
Angela Yip, Office of the City Administrator
Liam Chok Office of the City Administrator
Dr. Naveena Bobba, Department of Public Health
Sneha Patil, Department of Public Health
Raghda Karajah, Department of Public Health

COVERING THE POLICE

Dog bites in S.F. are rising. In the Tenderloin, they're skyrocketing.

San Francisco's dog court has been on hiatus for seven months, and consequences for bite incidents are slim



by **ELENI BALAKRISHNAN**
March 19, 2026, 4:00 am



Illustration by Neil G. Ballard.

At a Tenderloin community meeting this past November, Captain Matt Sullivan said that, in the previous four months, more than 27 percent of the department's dog-bite reports took place in the Tenderloin police district.

He wasn't surprised. Just walking down the sidewalk, Sullivan told the 20 or so attendees, he often thought, "I got to be prepared to jump out of the way for some of these dogs."

Eric Rozell, a deputy director at the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, shared a similar story at another recent community meeting. In the past year and a half, he said, four of his colleagues at the nonprofit have been bitten by neighborhood dogs.

Rozell witnessed one of those bites in person.

One day, as he walked down the street with a colleague, "a dog just jumped up and grabbed him by the arm," Rozell said.

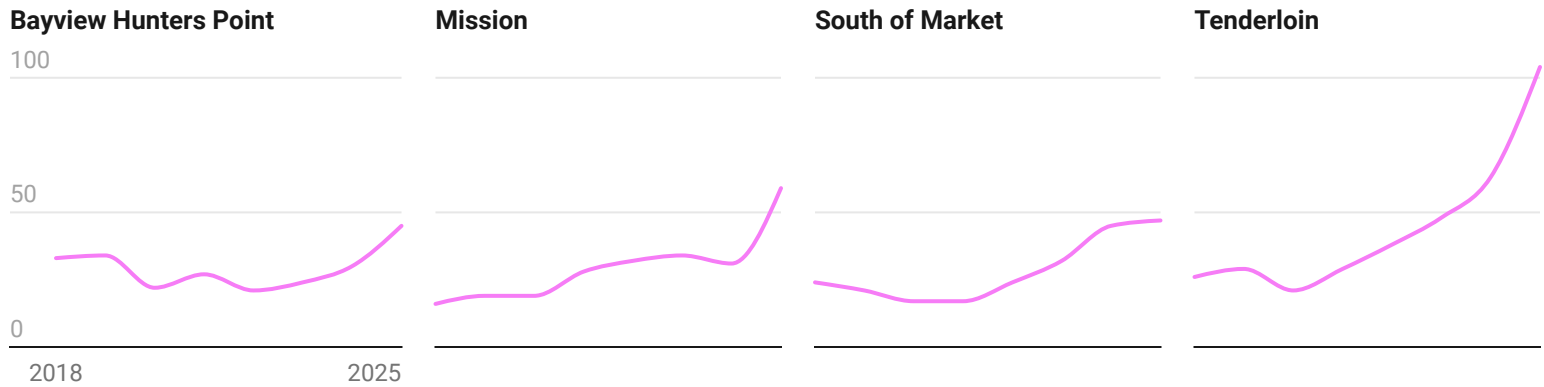
While Rozell waited for medics and police to arrive, he said, the pitbull, despite being on a leash, "lashed" and "snapped" at multiple passersby, including a senior.

"If you have more people on the street with dogs, they're not getting fed as often, not getting the naps that they normally take," Rozell added, "I just imagine the dogs are probably more irritable than normal, too."

In response to frequent bites, the Tenderloin district police station in November launched dog-enforcement operations with the tongue-in-cheek working name, "Paw Patrol." One officer, who Sullivan said took an interest in the issue, is now the station's resident "dog lieutenant."

Dog bite reports in the Tenderloin are skyrocketing

The number of police incident reports filed for dog bites or attacks, by year and neighborhood.



Counts exclude bites reported with Animal Care & Control.

Chart: Kelly Waldron • Source: [San Francisco Police Department via S.F. Open Data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Lt. William Elieff and Tenderloin officers have gone out on patrol to educate residents about regulations like leash laws, and occasionally run enforcement operations. On one Sunday in February, they issued 11 citations for dogs being off leash or unregistered.

“Some of these dogs are very aggressive and it’s problematic, and we have all these dogs that bite people,” said Elieff, who recently arrived at Tenderloin station. “We don’t want to penalize people who are responsible. At the end of the day, we want to just educate the community.”

Dog-bite incidents rising across San Francisco

It’s a concern citywide. The police department told *Mission Local* that SFPD only began keeping records of dog bites in mid-2024. That half-year, it documented 446 bites reported to police or Animal Care and Control. In 2025, there were 926 reported dog bites in San Francisco.

Census [data](#) and pet ownership [data](#) from the American Veterinary Medical Association shows that over 155,000 [households](#) in San Francisco have at least one dog, which would suggest that the vast majority of dogs in the city are not biting anyone. San Francisco famously is home to more dogs than children. But it’s likely that the true total number of bites is significant, since many people who get bitten are unlikely to report it.

Reddit and Nextdoor threads show residents trying to track down bad-acting dog owners. Sometimes they seek advice after being bitten.

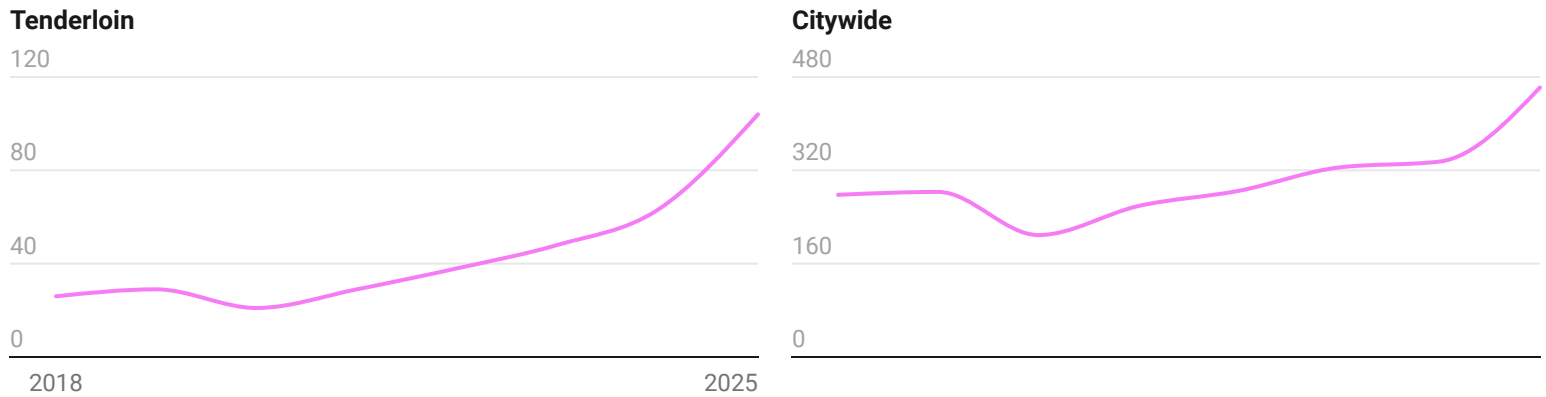
“Dog bit my dog at Fort Funston and owner fled,” reads one [post](#).

“Pitbull lunged at a baby” at Beach Chalet athletic fields, reads another.

The police department can respond to animal attacks, as does Animal Care and Control, the city-run shelter, which sends out officers to reports of bites.

Dog bites reported to police are increasing citywide

The number of police incident reports filed for dog bites or attacks, by year and area.



Counts exclude bites reported with Animal Care & Control.

Chart: Kelly Waldron • Source: [San Francisco Police Department via S.F. Open Data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

After a dog bite is reported, Animal Care and Control attempts to reach the owner and tells them to keep the dog at home for 10 days. If the dog’s owner is homeless or unable to, the agency will quarantine the dog.

Animal Control spokesperson Deb Campbell said the agency may then follow up with the owner, warn them to keep the dog on-leash (and possibly muzzled) in public, and “advise them that a Vicious and Dangerous Dog hearing may be requested.”

Those Vicious and Dangerous Dog hearings, held by the Department of Police Accountability, have been suspended since 2024.

The suspension, announced by department head Paul Henderson in a May 2024 letter to the city administrator, Animal Control, and police department, declared that his department no longer had the resources to staff the program.

“Over the past five years, the burden of managing the VDD hearing program has steadily increased,” Henderson wrote, emphasizing that without additional funding his agency would stop taking cases. “Given that there are more dogs than children in San Francisco, it is important for the City to prioritize maintaining a strong VDD program.”

Dog court on hiatus

The Department of Police Accountability briefly resumed hearing cases in early 2025. Its last hearing, records show, was on July 22, 2025. According to the SFPD, 61 cases are pending a hearing.

The SFPD still has a dedicated Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit, which investigates reports of aggressive dogs. As of press time, the unit's website still said that Vicious and Dangerous Dog hearings occur within 15 days of a bite or, if the dog and owner are unknown, within 90 days of a biter's identification.

It is unclear how police and Animal Control policies concerning dangerous dogs are enforced, especially with the court on hiatus. So, many bite victims are left to their own devices.

In places like the Tenderloin, where homeless people often keep dogs for protection as well as companionship and many spend much of the day on the sidewalks, bites are often never even reported.



Toni Machada poses for a picture with her dog Jelly in 2023, at an encampment behind Best Buy. Photo by David Mamaril Horowitz.

“The homeless credo is if you get bitten, you don’t say anything, or you’re a rat,” said Aaron Wilson, who was bitten twice while he was living at the now-closed Candlestick Point RV park. Instead of reporting a dog or its owner, he said, “you’re supposed to take it.”

Wilson was bitten in December 2024 by Sophia, his neighbor’s dog, as he was cruising around on his bicycle at the RV park. In February 2025, he was bitten by Scruffy, a stray dog who lived at the lot.

Afterward, Wilson had to get rabies shots injected into his wounds. Now, he is afraid of dogs — and he sees them everywhere.

“I never had a problem with dogs, but now I do,” said Wilson. “I’m scarred for life every day I get to look at this dog bite ... the mental anguish goes on.”

Searching for Scruffy, or Scrappy

Wilson is one of those people awaiting justice in dog court. He has spent much of the past year and a half tracking down documents about his bites. Wilson estimates he has spent some 200 hours over the last 15 months trying to find out what will happen with his case and the dogs that bit him and his neighbors.

Animal Control was never able to catch Scruffy (also known as Scrappy), though Campbell said her colleagues visited the RV park 11 times between 2022 and 2025 looking for him.

The agency only has a record of him biting once — the time involving Wilson — but Scruffy/Scrappy appears frequently in department records, at times reported to have a “bleeding injury” or a limp, or suffering himself from bites from other dogs.

An Animal Control report from March 2025, a month after Wilson was bitten, discusses the closure of the RV park, and states that “we will catch ‘Scrappy’ eventually, but most likely would need to dart him.”

In February this year, after a security guard reported that the dog was hit by a car and injured, Campbell said, Animal Control officers went out twice to look for him again. He was not found.

“As of [Feb. 6], Scruffy was in the vicinity of the old Vehicle Triage Center,” Campbell said in a statement.

Sophia, the other dog that bit Wilson, is known by Animal Control to have bitten at least one other person, and is suspected in two other bites. Sophia’s current whereabouts are unknown.

“The owner vacated with the dog,” Campbell said. “Our understanding is that there may be a Vicious & Dangerous Dog Hearing through the SF Police Department.”

Mauricio Castro, another former RV park resident, was also bitten by Sophia, he says, though he never filed a report that time, or the three other times he was bitten while living at the RV lot.

Castro, who has kidney cancer, was recently moving out of his car and into supportive housing. In the years he was homeless, he said, he and his dog suffered multiple dog attacks and bites.

One Animal Control report shows that Castro was also bitten by a pit bull in 2014, near Silver Terrace.



Bites to Mauricio Castro's arm in November 2024. Photo from an Animal Care and Control report.

“Homeless vic was walking past a hill when 2 dogs charged out,” the report reads. “He fell and was bitten on the arm, knee and shoulder.”

Records show that the case was closed a few months later. Animal Control did not provide further information about what became of the dog.

The bite from Sophia is the worst, says Castro. When he was sleeping in his car, he said, the cold would seep in and he could feel the ache in his bones.

Now that he's housed, Castro hopes a friend will help him track down the documentation he needs to file all the proper reports for his four dog bites. Keeping his affairs in order while living in his car was difficult.

“Me hicieron pedazos,” Castro said in Spanish: *They busted me up*. He is thinking of the statute of limitations, which for filing lawsuits about dog bites in California is two years. “I need to do it before time runs out.”

The estimated number of dogs in San Francisco was updated after publication of this article. The number of bites in 2025, originally reported in this story based on SFPD data, was also adjusted with data from Animal Care and Control.



tired of the squalor

March 19, 2026, 10:58 am at 10:58 am

▼ **Expand comments**

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POWERED BY NEWSPACK



May 17, 2026

To: Supervisors Sherrill and Mahmood
Government Audit and Oversight Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

The San Francisco Dog Owners Group (SFDog) strongly supports dedicated funding and staffing to immediately restart Vicious and Dangerous Dog (VDD) hearings, commonly known as dog court, and to ensure the process is protected from future budget cuts.

SFDog is one of the largest nonprofit dog advocacy groups in San Francisco. We advocate for responsible dog ownership and off-leash recreational opportunities for well-behaved dogs. Responsible dog ownership includes training, socialization, and understanding how dogs should behave in shared public spaces.

In 2014 and 2016, I served on a committee that helped select a VDD hearing officer from a pool of applicants after the position became an independent contractor. The committee interviewed and evaluated all the candidates and made recommendations that the City Administrator's Office accepted. I've advocated for the importance of dog court – including for an independent VDD hearing officer – for over a decade.

Dog court is intended to be a structured, fair process that helps resolve serious situations involving aggression, neglect, or unsafe conditions before they escalate further. A functioning hearing process protects both public safety and animal welfare. Many cases can be resolved through training plans, behavioral support, veterinary care, fencing in backyards, and stronger owner accountability. San Francisco's dog court has long been viewed as a national model because it emphasizes individualized solutions rather than one-size-fits-all punishment.

But, unfortunately, for nearly a year, San Francisco has allowed VDD hearings to lapse. The lack of a hearing officer has left a significant number of cases without a formal path toward resolution or intervention. It's critical to restart hearings promptly and address the backlog of cases already investigated by the San Francisco Police Department's Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit. Delays in the hearing process create uncertainty for victims, dog owners, neighborhoods, and the dogs involved, while reducing opportunities for early intervention.

The VDD hearing officer must be impartial, not beholden to any one City department, making decisions based on evidence (what happened and why) and an understanding of dog behavior. The goal is a fair outcome for everyone involved – dog owners, victims, neighbors, and the dogs themselves.

SFDOG also supports a continuing education requirement for the VDD hearing officer, including consultation with experts in animal behavior and veterinary science, such as researchers at University of California, Davis, to ensure their decisions reflect best practices and the most up-to-date understanding of dog behavior.

SFDOG applauds Supervisor Sherrill's efforts to secure dedicated funding to responsibly restart the VDD hearing process and restore this important public service.

Sincerely,

Sally Stephens, Chair SFDOG
www.sfdog.org

From: [D. Dolloff](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Viscous Dog Hearings
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 4:39:06 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

As a resident of SF and recalling the horrific death of Diane Whipple, I am writing to ask that SF:

- Appoint a hearing officer and immediately resume VDD hearings
- Provide dedicated funding so the program is not vulnerable to budget cuts
- Require continuing education for hearing officers, including consultation with experts in animal behavior and veterinary science such as researchers at the University of California, Davis.

SF is home to many dogs and I greatly appreciate that. However, bad things do happen. SF needs to be proactive and have systems in place to keep viscous dog issues from becoming tragedies. If not, SF could be complacent and viewed as liable in future cases.

Thank you,

Diane D.

From: Bev Ulbrich
To: Crayton, Monique (BOS)
Cc: Beverly Ulbrich
Subject: Vicious and dangerous dog court
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 3:37:31 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi. As a dog behaviorist in San Francisco for over 20 years, I have a very long history with the San Francisco VDD Court. It had been running very well and then it stopped. If it's going to be run as poorly as it was running at the end, it is indeed useless.

But if it gets set up again like it was when it actually worked, it's vital to our community and the survival of our pets.

Below are links to 3 of the brief articles/posts where I've written about it.

I know the original two hearing officers very well. But the last one was a disaster, and the entire process was broken.

Please let me know if you would like any further information from me on this topic. I understand it thoroughly from being a Dog behaviorist as well as having to attend hearings on behalf of other people and their dogs, and then finally for my own almost murdered dog.

The dog who picked my dog up in its mouth and shook her trying to kill her, was let off completely free without a warning, to be adopted by someone else so it can attempt to kill again. Like I said, it was completely broken. They were no longer even following the San Francisco laws that were created for these types of incidents.

It became a total waste of time and money for everyone, and there was no protection offered whatsoever for our San Francisco pets.

Here is some of my information:

<https://www.poochcoach.com/sf-dangerous-dog-court/>

<https://www.poochcoach.com/irresponsible-and-incorrect-conclusion-to-dog-mauling-case/>

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr)

[story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02NxHXTyFVvqHQTDWawm1mgdbCPNBh7mxPmAK2AYJaDe7ZpVR5NULxm5oXDr3BRvc3l&id=100070227797709&mibextid=wwXlfr)

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Beverly
Owner & Canine Behaviorist,
The Pooch Coach
Manager, Musik - SF Dog Actor & Model
Wrangler, Dogs for TV & Film
415-307-1461

VICIOUS AND DANGEROUS DOG UNIT



CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Police Department

May 21, 2026

OVERVIEW OF SFPD ROLE

Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit (VDDU) Responsibilities

- Investigates reported aggressive dog incidents
- Reviews bite reports and supporting evidence
- Coordinates with SF Animal Care & Control (ACC)
- Makes recommendations regarding disposition of animals
- Prepares cases for Vicious & Dangerous Dog hearings

Organizational Structure

- VDDU housed within General Work, Investigations Bureau
- Staffing:
 - Officer
 - 960 Retired Lieutenant



INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

Investigations generally include:

- incident reports
- victim/witness interviews
- review of bite history/prior incidents
- medical/veterinary records
- photographs/video evidence
- coordination with ACC

Referral Process: Cases meeting Health Code criteria are prepared for VDD hearings. Possible outcomes may include:

- registration requirements
- obedience/behavioral training
- containment/muzzling conditions
- other restrictions authorized by law



HEARING PROCESS

SFPD investigates and prepares cases. Hearing administration is separate from VDDU investigative operations.

SFPD's Role in Hearings:

- prepares investigative file
- presents evidence/recommendations
- coordinates witnesses
- maintains records/audio recordings

Other Agencies' Roles:

- ACC: Provides animal behavior assessment, custody records, and input on public safety risk.
- Hearing Officer: Presides over hearings and issues determinations/orders.



CURRENT DATA

Dog Bite Incidents

- 438 reported dog bite incidents year-to-date in 2026
- 1,027 reported incidents in 2025

Geographic Concentration – higher activity observed in:

- Tenderloin Police District
- Mission Police District
- Southern Police District
- Bayview Police District

HEARING BACKLOG

Current Status

- Approximately 66 dogs currently awaiting VDD hearings
- During hearing pause, VDDU continues:
 - investigations
 - evidence collection
 - referrals
 - coordination with ACC

Operational Impacts

- delayed adjudication
- delayed mitigation measures
- delayed final case resolution



Questions?

SAN FRANCISCO
POLICE DEPARTMENT

Introduction Form

(by a Member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor)

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- ☐ 1. For reference to Committee (Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment)
- ☐ 2. Request for next printed agenda (For Adoption Without Committee Reference)
(Routine, non-controversial and/or commendatory matters only)
- ☒ 3. Request for Hearing on a subject matter at Committee
- ☐ 4. Request for Letter beginning with "Supervisor inquires..."
- ☐ 5. City Attorney Request
- ☐ 6. Call File No. from Committee.
- ☐ 7. Budget and Legislative Analyst Request (attached written Motion)
- ☐ 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- ☐ 9. Reactivate File No.
- ☐ 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the Board on

The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following (please check all appropriate boxes):

- ☐ Small Business Commission ☐ Youth Commission ☐ Ethics Commission
- ☐ Planning Commission ☐ Building Inspection Commission ☐ Human Resources Department

General Plan Referral sent to the Planning Department (proposed legislation subject to Charter 4.105 & Admin 2A.53):

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Note: For Imperative Agenda items (a Resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Agenda Form.)

Sponsor(s):

Sherrill; Mahmood; Mandelman

Subject:

Hearing - Status of the Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit

Long Title or text listed:

Hearing on the Vicious and Dangerous Dog Unit, inquiring about the plan to hire a Hearing Officer, restart hearing proceedings, address the existing case backlog, and improve proceedings through dog behavioral course requirements; and requesting the San Francisco Police Department and the Department of Police Accountability to present as well as the City Administrator's Office and the Department of Public Health to be present.

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: /s/ Stephen Sherrill