File No. 200679 **Committee Item No.** 4
Board Item No. _____

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA PACKET CONTENTS LIST

Committee: Rules Committee **Date** Oct. 5, 2020

Board of Supervisors Meeting **Date** _____

Cmte Board

Cmte	Board	
☐	☐	**Motion**
☒	☐	**Resolution**
☐	☐	**Ordinance**
☐	☐	**Legislative Digest**
☐	☐	**Budget and Legislative Analyst Report**
☐	☐	**Youth Commission Report**
☐	☐	**Introduction Form**
☐	☐	**Department/Agency Cover Letter and/or Report**
☐	☐	**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**
☐	☐	**Grant Information Form**
☐	☐	**Grant Budget**
☐	☐	**Subcontract Budget**
☐	☐	**Contract/Agreement**
☐	☐	**Form 126 - Ethics Commission**
☐	☐	**Award Letter**
☐	☐	**Application**
☐	☐	**Form 700**
☐	☐	**Vacancy Notice**
☐	☐	**Information Sheet**
☐	☐	**Public Correspondence**

OTHER **(Use back side if additional space is needed)**

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Completed by: Victor Young **Date** Oct 1, 2020
Completed by: _____ **Date** _____

FILE NO. 200679 RESOLUTION NO.

[Urging to Declare June 19th be Observed as Juneteenth]

Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to declare that June 19th shall annually be observed as Juneteenth, urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to officially designate June 19th annually as a federal holiday to honor the Black community, and encouraging all businesses in the City, both public and private, to either close on June 19th, pay workers overtime pay that they would typically get on a paid holiday, and/or allow the many workers and students in the City who want to attend Juneteenth events to honor and celebrate Juneteenth celebrations and commemorations that take place to take the day off or leave work and school early with no adverse academic or employment consequence.

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as “Juneteenth Independence Day,” “Emancipation Day,” “Emancipation Celebration,” and “Freedom Day,” is the oldest African American holiday observance in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strong survival instinct of African Americans who were first brought to this country stacked in the bottom of slave ships in a month-long journey across the Atlantic Ocean known as the “Middle Passage;” and

WHEREAS, Events in the history of the United States that led to the start of the Civil War in 1861 centered on sectional differences between the North and the South that were based on the economic and social divergence caused by the existence of slavery; and

WHEREAS, In 1862, the first clear signs that the end of slavery was imminent appeared when laws abolishing slavery were adopted in the territories of Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, In September 1862, President Lincoln issued the celebrated Emancipation Proclamation, warning the rebellious Confederate states that he would declare their slaves "forever free" if those states did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation occurred only in Confederate states that were under Union Army control; and

WHEREAS, On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery throughout the United States and its territories; and

WHEREAS, Spontaneous celebration erupted throughout the country when African Americans learned of their freedom; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, is considered the date when the last slaves in America were freed when General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order No. 3, almost two and one-half years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, For former slaves, the Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring each other, praying, and gathering remaining family members together. Juneteenth continued to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth education and celebrations declined in America in the early part of the 20th century; but the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s saw a resurgence of interest in Juneteenth, along with renewed community celebrations of the day; and

WHEREAS, Observance of Juneteenth, a reminder of emancipation, spread from Texas to the neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, as well as Alabama, Florida, and California, where many African American Texans migrated; and

WHEREAS, The state of Texas is widely considered the first state to begin Juneteenth celebrations; informal observances have taken place there for over a century and it has been an official state holiday in Texas since 1980; thirty-nine states, including California since 2003, and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth as either a state holiday or a state holiday observance; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, the era of the "Modern Juneteenth Movement" began when a group of Juneteenth leaders from across the country gathered in New Orleans, Louisiana, to work for greater national recognition of Juneteenth; and

WHEREAS, Today, Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement; it is a day, a week, and in some areas, a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings; it is a time for reflection and rejoicing; it is a time for assessment, self-improvement, and planning for the future; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, celebrates the abolishment of slavery, and reminds all Americans of the significant contributions of African Americans to our society; and

WHEREAS, A growing number of American and African American cultural institutions have sponsored Juneteenth cultural events designed to make all Americans aware of this celebration; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations are a tribute to those African Americans who fought so long and worked so hard to make the dream of equality a reality; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is an important day in American history, one that remains meaningful to millions of African Americans and is why lawmakers are now pushing for Juneteenth to become a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, On June 19, 2020, Democratic Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Democratic Senator Kamala Harris, and Republican Senator John Coryn announced their intentions to introduce bills in Congress to officially recognize the day as a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is currently observed in some form in 47 states and the District of Columbia. Hawaii, North Dakota and South Dakota are the only states that currently do not recognize the holiday, while New York, Virginia, Oregon and Philadelphia announced the week of June 15, 2020, that they will also recognize the day as an official holiday; and

WHEREAS, For years, Congressional leaders in both the House and Senate have passed resolutions to recognize Juneteenth as Independence Day, but legislation to declare it a national holiday has stalled; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors declares that June 19th shall annually be observed as Juneteenth in the City and County of San Francisco; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the President of the United States and the United States Congress to officially designate June 19th as a federal holiday to honor the African American community and the relentless systems of racism and oppression that impact every aspect of African Americans' lives; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors encourages all entities and businesses in the City, both public and private, to either close on June 19th, pay workers overtime pay that they would typically get on a paid holiday, and/or allow the many workers and students in the City who want to attend Juneteenth events to honor and celebrate Juneteenth celebrations and commemorations that take place to take the day off or leave work and school early with no adverse academic or employment consequence; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Board of Supervisors urges the people of San Francisco to join in celebrating Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant role

that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how for the majority of our history were recognized only as property and not as human beings and due to this still experience the ramifications of their legal disenfranchisement to this day.