



June 23, 2025

Connie Chan  
Supervisor, District 1  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**Re: Managerial Impacts in FY25 Budget Descriptions**

Dear Supervisor Chan:

On June 18, 2024, you passed the Ordinance adopting and implementing the decision and award of the Arbitration Board under Charter Section A8.409-4, as required by law. This action established the successor Memorandum of Understanding between the City and County of San Francisco (“The City”) and the Municipal Executives’ Association (“MEA”), effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027.

On June 21, 2024, you followed with a motion that Department Heads place 10% of their salaries on reserve after approving those same salaries only three (3) days earlier. MEA protested the motion and informed you and the rest of the Board about the impropriety of your request.

This June, as a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, you have continued your opposition to MEA-represented employees by making statements suggesting that the City should “chop from the top,” without clarifying who the “top” refers to. Although MEA is not specifically mentioned in your comments, it is evident that your budget proposals include many positions that implicate or fall directly within the MEA bargaining unit, particularly mid- to senior-level management roles.

**Managerial Classifications Under Pressure**

A recurring theme of the Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) is the proposed elimination, downgrading of management roles, and denial of upward substitutions, often justified by prolonged vacancies or a narrower-than-expected span of control. A few examples:

- **Digital Services (Manager VI):** Although the position oversees six staff members, the recommendation is to eliminate this vacant position. The BLA notes a broader concern about the proliferation of upper-level managers, arguing that growth at the manager/director level has “far outpaced” total city staffing (20% vs. 6%). The takeaway is that these jobs are perceived as high-cost and low-touch in terms of direct service delivery.
- **Bureau of Street Environmental Services (Manager V):** This position has been vacant since June 2020 and is now slated for deletion.



- **Policy & Communications Manager:** Potential downward substitution is on the table due to the division's "low span of control"—just 34 FTEs compared to 50–100 elsewhere.
- **Manager I Reclassification (Real Property):** An attempt to upgrade a Principal Administrative Analyst to Manager I was denied. The stated reason? "Inadequate justification." However, the subtext is that there is heightened scrutiny of upward moves into management classifications.

Beyond these specific roles, there are numerous vacant Manager II through VI positions, some dating back to 2020, that are now flagged either for elimination or to be held open for cost savings.

A pattern emerges across the board; there is a clear narrative from the BLA: managerial positions are costly and do not provide direct services. This argument resurfaces consistently and seems to be shaping a skeptical policy direction—if not outright hostile—toward managerial growth.

### **Rise of the Span-of-Control Metric**

One trend that stands out is the use of span of control as justification for either retaining or eliminating roles. The implication is that, unless a manager supervises a large number of FTEs, the position may not be deemed necessary. That is a significant shift—one that pressures MEA to provide more robust, evidence-based arguments for maintaining or upgrading MEA-represented positions. The narrative you continue to push is that you're only focusing on headcount, compelling departments to justify MEA's position based on headcount rather than savings to the City.

The message sent to City employees is that they should not strive for promotive classifications within MEA, as your continued animus puts them in the crosshairs of being cynically viewed as City employees who do not provide direct services to City constituents. The broader trend is troubling: long-vacant positions are being cut, there is skepticism about moving people into higher-level roles, and a cost-focused lens is being applied across the board. I would expect that your colleagues on the Board of Supervisors recognize that managerial roles may cost more, but they also do more without the benefit of premium pay. In a tight budget environment, that fact alone should not make our Association members targets.

### **Bottom Line for MEA**

The broader trend is that long-vacant positions are being eliminated, there is skepticism about promoting individuals to higher-level roles, and a cost-centered approach is being applied universally. That said, we must acknowledge that managerial roles may be more expensive, and in a tight budget environment, that fact alone makes them targets; however, there is a reason why MEA salaries may be viewed skeptically.

MEA challenges the narrative that our members do not deliver value, particularly in areas such as coordination, oversight, and policy leadership. The work they do involves complexity, risk, and collaboration across multiple departments. Excessive cutting of management undermines accountability and the strategic capacity essential for City operations to run smoothly.

Connie Chan, Supervisor  
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MEA is submitting our appeal to City Supervisors, requesting that they explore creative solutions to address the City's budget cuts. MEA hopes that the Board takes this opportunity to reset its relationship with the City's managers. The "chop from the top" solution you offer will not be beneficial to the City or its constituents. The Association stands ready to collaborate with you towards the worthy goal of viewing our membership as vital contributors to the City.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 971-7701, or [criss@sfmea.com](mailto:criss@sfmea.com).

Sincerely,



CRISS ROMERO  
Executive Director

cc: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
Stephen Sherrill, District 2  
Danny Sauter, District 3  
Joel Engardio, District 4  
Bilal Mahmood, District 5  
Matt Dorsey, District 6  
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MEA Board of Directors, and Membership