FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Police Department

CBQ NO.: 205

REQUESTED BY: Vela

DATE REQUESTED: 08/04/2023

DATE POSTED: 08/08/2023

REQUEST: Please describe in detail the duties of the proposed four additional data reporting FTEs and the need for those positions. Please also explain why those four positions are only funded for a partial year.

RESPONSE:

There are four proposed positions related to data reporting as follows:

(1) **Program Manager 3:** The proposed Program Manager 3 will assume program management over Versadex, the department's records management system (RMS), and assist with the migration of the backend database used by the technology from an outdated limited function server to a modern cloud-based server capable of supporting functional public data sharing tools. As the department's largest data system, RMS holds information on many policing activities, and a substantial portion of the data should be accessible through a public dashboarding platform. These data include information on crimes, calls for service, and policing action including arrests and warnings. Currently, RMS is managed using a distributed knowledge approach where no single individual is responsible for ongoing maintenance and documentation of the system and the information curated therein. As a result, functional changes within the system have occurred with limited consideration of downstream effects. This creates a substantial challenge to public data, as data integrity must be maintained for the public data to be valid and reliable and support transparency. Adopting an RMS Program Manager will provide the department an individual to assume the responsibility of assuring that public data feeds from RMS are functional and accurate.

(2) **Business Process Consultant:** The proposed Business Process Consultant will assume lead status over the team being implemented (other positions described below) who will develop and maintain the department's public facing data tools. This includes deployment of new dashboarding technology to provide public access to publicly available department data through visualization and summary tools as well as the ability to download source data for analysis, review, or documentation purposes. This also involves coordinating implementation of the new public data technologies to allow retirement of outdated public data tools (e.g., CrimeViewer, APD Incident Reports Database) which are the subject of public complaint due to lack of functionality and carry technology risk due to being developed in platforms that are no longer officially supported. As well, this position will interface with the department's other units that process public information requests (PIRs) to insure the department's new public facing data program serves the transparency purposes it is intended to as well as supports

operational efficiency to assist the department in modernizing its PIR program. For reference, the department currently has over 20,000 outstanding PIRs, and under state law, making source data and dashboards available will reduce the number of requests that must be manually processed as the department moves to a customer support focused self-service orientation for many PIRs. To achieve this, the Business Process Consultant will have to guide the public data team to insure that public data serves both the public data and the PIR purposes and that the proper tools are made available to meet the legal requirements to reduce the PIR burden.

(3) **Business Process Specialists (x2):** The Business Process Specialist positions will form the workgroup led by the Business Process Consultant position explained above. The Business Process Specialists will work to develop and deploy dashboards and functions within the new public data tools to support transparency and reduce the PIR workload. This will involve working with initial partners (e.g., council members, city management) to deploy dashboards of interest related to specific information requests prioritizing reporting on CIURs and management questions that reflect items which are commonly asked and would likely be of greater public interest. The positions will set development standards (e.g., standardized formats and functionalities) and will produce development schedules to balance delivery across major domains of public information ensuring relevant units participate in material production (e.g., call for service information-Communications, investigative closure rates-investigative units, response to resistance information-Force Review Unit) and to achieve milestones (e.g., Council dashboards beta-tested, deployed, public dashboards beta-tested, deployed). Finally, these positions will work to document all development and produce ancillary materials to support the public information program such as FAQs for the website.

(4) **Partial-year funding:** These positions were included in budget as partial year funding to reduce the FY24 costs. While full-year funding would be preferential as partial-year funding will slow progress on public data, it was deemed important to secure all of the positions contemporaneously within the constraints on budget. Securing all four positions in FY24 with partial-year funding will be more likely to render a functional public data workgroup than securing fewer positions funded for a full year with the intent to attempt to secure the additional positions in FY25. Given the complex interplay between RMS management, operations, end user groups, and the variety of disparate projects necessary to achieve the full vision of transparent public data, fewer positions, even if funded earlier, would likely be less successful in making meaningful progress as too many aspects of the overall project would remain on hold awaiting the additional personnel.