



COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Public Safety Committee

The Public Safety Committee convened in a regular meeting on Monday, May 23, 2016 at 301 W. Second St. in Austin, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Don Zimmerman, Chair; Greg Casar, Vice Chair; Ora Houston; Leslie Pool

1. Approve the minutes of the Public Safety Committee meeting of March 28, 2016.

The minutes were approved on this the 23rd day of May 2016 on Council Member Houston's motion, Council Member Pool's second on a 3-0 vote with Council Member Casar off the dais.

2. Staff briefing, invited testimony, and policy discussion regarding the 2015 Racial Profiling Report and patrol staffing levels. (Sponsor: Council Member Don Zimmerman, CO 1: Council Member Ora Houston). This item was taken after item 3 to allow for invited testimony to arrive.

William Spelman, Professor of Public Affairs; Assistant Graduate Adviser, PhD in Public Policy, provided an overview on the topic of racial profiling. Professor Spelman also shared a PowerPoint presentation.

3. 4:15 PM Staff briefing, invited testimony, and policy discussion regarding consolidating Emergency Service District (ESD) 4 into the Austin Fire Department. (SPONSOR: Council Member Don Zimmerman, CO 1: Council Member Ora Houston).

The Committee discussed whether or not to move forward with an auto-aid agreement between AFD and ESD4. City of Austin annexations affect county areas and it reduces the tax base that ESDs receive. Public Safety Committee Members would like to hear how things have gone with an update given in memo format. The update should include analysis from ESD4 of how it will affect diversity.

Speakers

- David Bailey, Chief of ESD4 – For
- Andrew Garcia, ESD4 Firefighters Union – For
- Darren Hyson, Austin African-American Firefighters Association – Against
- Peter Torenson, ESD4 Commissioner – For
- Bob Nicks, AFD Union President – Neutral
- Kevin McDonald, Neutral

Motion: The Public Safety Committee moves to direct AFD, including the Austin Firefighters Association, the Austin African American Firefighters Association, ESD4 along with its Commissioners, staff, unions and associations regarding ESD4 consolidation and auto-aid agreement, to report back to the Committee with an update given in memo format within the time period of the FY2016 budget discussions. The update should include an analysis by ESD4 on how this would affect diversity. Motion made by Council Member Pool, seconded by Council Member Casar, motion carried 4/0.

4. 4:30 PM Staff briefing, invited testimony, and policy discussion regarding releasing video from Austin Police Department body worn cameras. (SPONSOR: Council Member Don Zimmerman, CO 1: Council Member Ora Houston).

Discussed release of body camera video and policy. The APD body camera policy has been approved and implemented within the department. Council Member Pool encouraged APD Commander Reyes to have an open dialog with entities regarding the release of procedures. Speakers asked for APD to have transparency with citizens regarding the policy and procedures.

Speakers

- Quianna Canada – For
- Antonio Buehler – Neutral
- Fatima Mann – Against
- Matt Simpson – Neutral
- Debbie Russell – Neutral
- Kathy Mitchell – For

Motion: This Committee recommends that the Austin Police Department and the Office of the Police Monitor continue to review the body camera video release policy with a commitment to transparency, individual rights, and fairness to police officers and the public. The Austin Police Department and the Office of the Police Monitor continue to convene meetings with community stakeholders during the development of any policy changes, and that community stakeholders, Austin Police Department and Office of the Police Monitor present the results of this process to City Council within 120 days. Council Member Casar clarified that this will be a recommendation to be passed along to Council at that same meeting when they will be voting on the policy. Motion made by Council Member Casar, seconded by Council Member Pool, motion moved 3/0 with Council Member Houston off the dais; however she did express support.

5. 4:45 PM Staff briefing, invited testimony, and policy discussion regarding collection of Municipal Court fines. (SPONSOR: Council Member Don Zimmerman, CO 1: Council Member Ora Houston).

Municipal Court Clerk Mary Jane Grubb provided an overview about alternatives to incarceration for certain defendants who are unable to pay. Municipal Court must follow the state mandated collection improvement program. For those unable to pay their fee they can go before a judge. Only judges can assess community service or waive costs, fines and fees. Ms. Grubb's read a statement from presiding Judge Statman. Judges Statman and Coffey were not able to attend, but are following this item. The Court does recognize that there is a fear of individuals who are unable to pay or who have warrants to come in and take care of their cases; however they will not be arrested when coming in to pay their fines.

Speakers

- Rebecca Bernhardt – Against
- Brennan Griffin – Against
- Ranjana Natarajan – Against
- Jessica Johnson – Against
- Michael Cowles – Against

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

6. Speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed three minutes to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

- David Roach — Commented on aggressive panhandling near 221 W. 6th Chase Bank building. A friend who works in the building has to walk to the nearby post office to do her job duties and has been accosted and harassed in this area by panhandlers.

FUTURE ITEMS

7. Discussion of future agenda items.

Committee Members would like to convene the meeting at 3pm on September 26, 2016 and going forward.

NEXT MEETING

- Monday, September 26, 2016

ADJOURN

Chair Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m. without objection.

DRAFT