



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, December 5, 2016**

**The Public Safety Commission convened a regular meeting on Monday, December 5, 2016 at City Hall, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.**

**Chair Rebecca Webber called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Rebecca Webber, Chair	William Worsham
Daniela Nunez, Vice Chair	Kim Rossmo
Ed Scruggs	Rebecca Gonzales
Preston, Tyree	Brian Haley
Michael Levy	Sam Holt

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

Emmanuel Loo

**Staff in Attendance:**

Troy Gay, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Brian Tanzola, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- The minutes for the meeting on 11/07/2016 were approved. Commissioner Holt motioned for approval of the minutes and Commissioner Nunez second. **The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.**

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS – three speakers signed up to speak**

- **Gus Pena** - spoke on the need for more police officers to combat high crime in Austin, Texas
- **Carlos Leon** – spoke on his personal incident with Austin Police Officers in an Austin music store
- **Mary Krenek** – Homeless issues around University of Texas and other parts of Austin and overall drug issues in Austin and the need for more resources to assist addicted individuals.

**3. Follow up on OCTOBER 2016 AND NOVEMBER 2016 items “DIVERSITY IN AUSTIN PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS” – Commissioner Gonzales’s item**

- Discussion initiated by Commissioner Gonzales on creating a taskforce to study and review the best practices currently used by Public Safety Departments in efforts to recruit and achieve diversity in their work place.

**A vote was taken and Commissioners Scruggs, Nunez, and Levy were elected to make up the working group along with Commissioner Gonzales.**

The vote was unanimous. Commissioner Gonzales will notify Chair Webber when the group is ready to report back to the Public Safety Commission board.

**4. Update on DNA KIT Backlog - Commissioner Nunez’s Item**

- Troy Gay, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department presented

Assistant Chief Gay began the discussion by sharing the latest updates/efforts of Austin Police Department to decrease the DNA backlog.

- Currently APD has two interlocals one with SWIFS (Southwest Institute for Forensics Science) and the other with SIGNATURE SCIENCE.
- 100 cases every two weeks are being sent to SWIFS
- Within the first six months the plan is to have all backlog rape kits sent to SWIFS
- Expecting to have all reports back from SWIFS within twelve months
- 180 cases sent to DPS will be brought back and sent to SWIFS
- Currently an evaluation is being done on all items that were in the lab refrigerator
- Austin Police Department is working with all their stakeholders (District Attorney’s office, Travis County, and community) to keep them informed on all of APD’s efforts to address lab issues moving forward
- Currently efforts are underway to determine what was in the refrigerator so APD now exactly what the next steps need to be taken
- Discussion on the software that was used/associated with monitoring the temperature of the lab refrigerator.
- Request for Austin/Travis County Medical Examiner to attend PSC meeting when the update/presentation on the lab refrigerator is on the agenda.
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**5. Update on NOVEMBER 2016 Agenda Item “Travis County Sexual Assault Case Progression from Report to Disposition” – APD’s efforts to evaluate staffing in Adult Sex Crimes Unit - Commissioner Webber’s item**

Commissioner Webber began discussion on a possible recommendation the board members were discussing to draft a recommendation for more staff for the Austin Police Department Sex Crime Unit. However that recommendation was placed on hold until the next 4-6 weeks when the board will have a better assessment from APD of how many cases the city will need to investigate. Assistant Chief Gay commented that APD has already asked for an additional detective.

- It was decided to bring back this item back in 60 days (March or April 2017)
- Request from the board to access if more Crisis Counselors are needed for the Sex Crimes Unit (currently there are only two in the department)
- How much it will cost to have additional staff?

**6. Update on Council Directive that a “Team of experts should conduct a review of the operation of the Austin Police Department’s own DNA Lab measured against the formation of an independent lab” – Commissioner Levy and Commissioner Nunez’s item**

There was not data ready to present on this item due to outside review not yet started. Commissioner Rossmo as if the board could get the drop off data to show where and why the drop offs are occurring. There is national data but, no one seems to be able to provide the data for Austin and that is what we are looking for so we could understand what the issues are. Assistant Chief Gay commented there are two things currently underway at APD by a working group and that is

- taking a look back of the lab
- taking a look forward

We are preparing a scope of work and hope we can get that completed by the end of the month. The last council meeting of the year will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December and we won’t be able to present by then.

-can the board have an opportunity to look at the results from the expert review prior to it going to council?

- who are members of the working group and may the PSC board contact them?
- the Working Group members are District Attorney’s office , Department of Public Safety, County Commissioner’s Court and a rep from Defense Groups
- Someone from the Victims Advocate Group should be a part of this working group

**7. Update on May 2016 Agenda Item “Homeless Issues Around UT and West Campus” – Commissioner Scruggs item**

Commissioner Scruggs began the discussion with some of the fallout/action items that resulted after the unfortunate death of the UT student this past Summer (2016) . He asked if more funding for the homeless intervention teams was approved and if there was any update from the Host Team that could be shared.

- One host team to service both area (downtown and UT Campus area)
- Host team is working very well with assisting the homeless population in these two areas.
- Regarding all of the efforts of APD, more officers have been placed in the area (Baker) and property crime has decreased
- November 2016 City of Austin property crimes numbers decreased by 15% and YTD showed a 7% decrease
- November 2016 Baker Sector (UT Area) November 2016 property crime decrease of 30% (the lowest in the City of Austin this month) and a 14% YTD decrease in property crime in Baker. Both of these numbers are comparing November 2015 – November 2016
- More Officers are on bikes and walking in the area had a huge impact on decreasing crime
- APD received positive impact from business owners in the UT area
- Visibility of police officers as well as education has helped to lower crime

- Plans are being made to meet with the stakeholders and to provide them an update of the latest efforts of Austin Police Department
- Currently there is only one Host Team
- Questions on K2 arrests and how it has impacted the Downtown and UT area
- Questions and discussion on the future of the Sobriety Center
  - o Board has been setup
  - o Target date to open is Spring 2018
- Austin Energy is helping with additional lighting in the UT area
- Austin Code Department is helping with cleaning out alley ways in the area.

**8. CITY AUDITOR’S REPORT ON AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT COMPLAINTS –**  
Commissioner Webber’s item

A presentation was made by the City Auditor’s staff on the findings of their audit of Austin Police department’s complaints process.

- Flow chart on the APD’s process for handling complaints
- Background information on numbers of complaints filed and 60% were from the public
- Complaint Process not easily accessible for all citizens
- Not all complaints or investigations are recorded
- APD policies and practices make it difficult to ensure consistent handling of complaints (not all potential policy violations identified)
- No peer city comparison (most larger cities don’t have an Office of Police Monitor)
- Recommendations
  - o Increase transparency
  - o Complaint Contact Forms use to be increased
  - o Record all complaints
- Steps Already taken by APD and OPM to address the audit findings
  - o Discipline Matrix was changed by Chief Acevedo before leaving
  - o OPM office created and distributed info cards in six different languages and distributed to Libraries, Community Centers, and Housing Authority

An observation in closing was this (OPM filing a complainant) is a cultural problem and until we fix/address the cultural problem then numerous complaints will not make it to the OPM office. It is very challenging for some members of the community to file a complaint due to a lack of resources and language barriers.

**9. 2017 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION SCHEDULE**

- Vote was taken on the 2017 meeting schedule
  - 8 in favor of meeting on January 3, 2017
  - 2 opposed (Commissioners Rossmo, and Commissioner Holt)
- 2017 Public Safety Meeting schedule passed with a 8-2 vote

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Briefing on process for hiring a Police Chief - Nunez
- Fire Arms at City Hall (within the next month or two - Scruggs
- Crime Lab study (Independent) - Levy
- Bi-weekly review/update from expert examiners of APD Forensic Lab - Rossmo
- UT Homeless Update –Spring (April 2017) invite stakeholders back and present an update - Scruggs
- Opportunity for Public Safety Commission board to weigh in on the outside review of the APD DNA Lab prior to the results going to council - Nunez

Adjourn @ 6pm