



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 3, 2017**

The Public Safety Commission convened a meeting on Monday, April 3, 2017 at City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street in Austin, Texas..

**Chair, Rebecca Webber called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.
Vanessa Perez was welcomed to the board and asked to introduce herself.**

Board Members in Attendance:

Rebecca Webber, Chair	Ed Scruggs
Daniela Nunez, Vice Chair	Kim Rossmo
Michael Levy	Rebecca Gonzales
Noel Landuyt	Vanessa Perez
Sam Holt	Brian Haley
Preston Tyree	

Staff in Attendance:

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- The minutes for the special called meeting on March 7, 2017 were approved. Commissioner Gonzales motioned for approval of the minutes and Commissioner Holt second. **The minutes were approved with 10 votes and Commissioner Tyree abstained due to his absence at the March 7, 2017 meeting.**

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS – three citizens signed up to speak

- **Carlos Leon** – spoke concerning his complaint against Cap Metro Board, Austin Police Department, and Cap Metro Security for violating his rights by banning him for six months from Cap Metro Headquarters
- **Joell McNew** - Vice President of the SAFEHORN organization spoke on several topics relating to University of Texas students safety. She shared an update on steps taken since May 2016 by SAFEHORNS organization, Austin Police Department and U.T. police to address/ improve campus safety for all students. McNew distributed a printed brochure from SAFEHORN and was invited back to a future Public Safety Commission meeting for continued discussion on campus safety at U.T.

- **Gus Pena** – spoke on serious crime issues in the City of Austin and stressed the need for more police officers. His emphasis was on increased crime in South Austin.

3. Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Parliamentarian - Commissioner Webber opened the floor for nominations of 2018 officers and began by requesting nominations for the 2018 officers.

- **Rebecca Webber** was nominated to serve as 2018 Chair by Commissioner Nunez and Commissioner Scruggs seconded the nomination

Vote: Unanimous (all 11 board members present)

- **Daniela Nunez** was nominated to serve as 2018 Vice Chair by Commissioner Gonzales and seconded by Commissioner Webber

Vote: Unanimous (all 11 board members present)

- **Brian Haley** was nominated to serve as 2018 Parliamentarian by Commissioner Webber and Commissioner Nunez seconded.

Vote: Unanimous (all 11 board members present)

4. Update on Homelessness Outreach Team (HOST) – Commissioner Scruggs and Nunez item. Commissioner Webber asked Commissioner Scruggs to begin introducing this item and explaining the reason/need to have it on the agenda. **Commissioner Scruggs** commented – this was a good time to ducktail on the comments made earlier by Ms McNew (a UT parent) on the continued need for improvement concerning campus safety and improvements that have been made so far. We wanted to be updated periodically on current outreach efforts, and to see if City of Austin and the County are working on the same things. **Commissioner Nunez** commented – in District 4 we recently had a great community forum on the homeless issue, and my community residents are looking for constructive/productive ways to assist and deal with the homeless population. The District 4 Homelessness Initiative Group led by some residents of District 4 want to help with finding ways to assist the homeless with finding stability and security; realizing APD has some challenges with assisting the homeless, and that the homeless problem can’t just be arrested away.

Commander Newsom began with a presentation explaining the makeup (a multi-agency team) of the HOST (Homelessness Outreach Street Team) and explained this innovative project that began in 2016. Within a short amount of time the team has engaged with 703 individuals on the streets in an active manner where they could get services. The HOST team is made up of:

- 2 Austin Police Officers
- 1-2 EMS Community Health Paramedics
- 3 Integral Care behavioral health specialists
- 1 Downtown Austin Community Court case-manager

With these collaborative efforts we have been able to keep some people from going to jail and helped them get housing. This program is still in a sort of pilot stage.

What makes this program effective is the right intervention, right resource, at the right time.

They look for people who are willing and ready to receive resources. They do this with the help of officers who have worked and some are still working the streets and have built up trust with the homeless. Commander shared the story of the HOST meeting Bernard:

- Integral Care & Austin Police Department talk to a man who needs a MAP card'
- During conversation team notices gauze on his foot and asks about it
- Community Health Paramedics come and start MAP (Medical Access Program) and they look at the leg
- Bernard doesn't go to ER because he didn't want a bill
- Medics call a street medic provider
- Community Health Street Team arrives and helps get MAP card approved
- Medical Evaluation enables non-emergency transport to the ER saving a resource
- CHIP transports him to ER

At the hospital, blood clots are found in Bernard's leg and determined that he had congestive heart failure. The Doctor said being admitted to the hospital saved his life; he may have been dead within 72 hours had he not encountered HOST and was offered help. This is one success story due to assistance from the HOST Team.

Commander Newsom explained that HOST is a proactive team making contact with the homeless population in a fashion that they have not seen before; where the services are brought to them. Our goal is to make a big impact/difference right now with one homeless person at a time.

There were questions from the board members at the end of the presentation.

How many staff people show up to help a homeless person?

Do you need a police officer present at each contact made with the homeless?

How many of the homeless have an open case file at any one time?

Summary of response from Commander Newsom:

There are 2-3 staff people from (APD, EMS, Integral Care) that could show up at one time. Police officers are not always needed, but most of the time APD does show up. HOST is a proactive mechanism to get the homeless where they need to be. The main focus of HOST is to find those homeless people that we can have an effect on. We helped 95 homeless people to be placed in housing since June 2016. There are 397 homeless in downtown Austin and it would be more without these efforts of HOST.

Continuing Questions:

What is the end goal for HOST? What does that look like? (Gonzales)

What would you consider success in 2017? (Gonzales)

What has been the change in the homeless population in the last 5 years? (Rossmo)

What proportion of the homeless population comes from Austin? If it turns out that a significant number of the homeless population is coming from elsewhere then we should be having a conversation with state and federal government for funding. (Rossmo)

Seven to eight years ago the percentage of criminal threat from homeless people was fairly small, do you know what the numbers are today? (Levy)

In the Red River area between 7th and 8th streets there is a lot of trash, dirt, from the homeless. What is being done to clean it up? (Holt)

How is the HOST team selected? Is it always the same group or rotating staff? (Nunez)

Do you have a drop in center for those who may have a change of heart on getting help? (Perez)

Could you talk a little bit more about the people you are serving? (Nunez)

Can you describe how you divide up the amount of time you spend (HOST) between downtown and west campus? (Scruggs)

Is there a different type of population in downtown verses west campus homeless population? (Scruggs)

Could you define ready? How someone is ready to receive help (Scruggs)

Homeless Issues goes beyond downtown and West Campus. Do you have any plans to address homeless population in different parts of Austin? (Scruggs)

What can you use in the way of additional resources? (Scruggs)

Is there any talk of getting social workers involved with the HOST team?

Summary of responses: The broad goal of HOST when first started was to lead people to housing. Every day we attempt to making a positive differences that would hopefully lead to getting him or her off the streets. There were no benchmarks when we started, but hopefully we will evaluate our project in a year objectively to see what was accomplished by HOST. The City's Innovation Department /Office was over this group and they are the ones who provide the service (funding). We don't have a number value on the HOST investment; however I do think the ECHO might have an answer since this is the type of data they maintain. Of course funding for more people is the greatest resource our team could benefit from and we realize it's the toughest resource to get. Whether or not the HOST will have social workers on this project in the future depends on the COA Innovation Office.

5. Update on DNA Lab – Commissioners Nunez, Levy, Scruggs, and Webber

Assistant Chief Gay begin the discussion with comments on the SARRT(Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team) letter and DNA backlog totals.

APD Backlog Total – 2, 535

APD Sexual Assaults Kits = 1,686

There is a spilt between the sexual assault kits of Danny and non-Danny kits

- Danny Sexual Kits = 1,233

- Non Danny Sexual Kits – 453

Danny Sexual Kits are the oldest and qualify for processing with federal grant money received.

AC Gay commented in regards to backlog numbers we (Austin Police Department) did commit to providing council a monthly report on updated numbers and that report should be coming out within the next 7-10 days. We would be glad to provide the report to the Public Safety Commission board as well. The concerns from the SARRT team regarding progress of sexual assault kits were addressed by Assistant City Manager, Rey Arellano, Chief Brian Manley and I meeting with the SARRT and SAFE team on March 9, 2017. We believe we (Austin Police Department) satisfied their questions and are moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Rossmo, Levy , Webber and Nunez along with Scruggs had comments, questions and suggestions on update/s presented by AC Gay:

-It appears from listening to the media that the Department of Public Safety has taken over some of the APD DNA Lab (**Rossmo**)

AC Gay response: yes there was an interlocal agreement signed on March 23, 2017 to have them take over our current facility and they will take over all management and control of the lab located on APD facilities.

- What is this costing on a monthly basis? (Rossmo)

The cost is 750,000 a year. The savings is in APD not hiring one supervisor and seven employees as was previously planned. There was much discussion and questions asked on this topic and suggestions were requested for future follow ups to try and satisfy the concerns from some board members that they were not getting direct answers to their questions.

Questions:

- Are employees from our crime lab still on payroll?
- Are we still going to have two years before we see fingerprints being analyzed?
- Are we still going to experience some of the delays before DNA analysis?
- **Answer:** DPS was/is a short term solution to get analysts up and trained. In April 2017
- They will start to conduct serology and the goal is for the lab to be fully operational by early Fall 2017. We will still have some of the delays before the DNA analysis, but with the hiring of Dr. Van Daal, who will provide the look forward and the look backward report it will help identify what needs to change for overall improvements.
- Who is the manager of DPS's APD section? Jodie Kaler
- How does the backlog numbers provided today compare with the numbers you gave us in September 2016?
- What about the non-Danny grant cases? Signature Science and Bode CellMark Forensics have been contracted to work on those cases. The backlog number for non-Danny cases has gone up, but now that contracts have been signed those numbers should go down.

We did share with SARRT that if everyone met their goals, by 2018 April we would be 100% caught up on both (Danny and non-Danny) cases.

- Forty five cases from DPS samples results have been sent to detectives. Do you know if any charges have been made as a result of the DNA testing?

During the course of the DNA update there was much discussion and Dr. Rossmo expressed his questions on how Jodie Kaler became the Section Manager, when she wasn't selected for the director position that she applied for with Austin Police Department.

Commissioner Rossmo and Levy expressed their frustration with not getting straight answers, and at some point they need to know what happened concerning the APD lab. AC Gay commented that once the consultant is hired (within a couple of weeks her contract should be finalized), the answers to questions they're looking for would come from the consultant's report.

Several board members felt it was a waste of taxpayer's money to hire someone to describe what went wrong with the lab. AC Gay reminded the board members that the hiring of the consultant was a recommendation from the Texas Forensic Commission and Austin City Council.

The letter to Texas Forensic Science Commission from ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board was discussed and AC Gay was able to inform the board about the makeup of the accreditation board to provide a somewhat better understanding of their audit findings and recommendations. AC Gay commented that the Texas Forensic Science Commission sent a letter to ASC/LAB asking for a response. The Texas Forensic Commission was not satisfied with the response from ASC/Lab report. One important note to mention per AC Gay was that ASCLD/LAB's assessors are majority volunteers from various backgrounds so any given audit performed by them could bring a variety of responses. Some of the recommendations made in the report were not accepted by APD Lab's personnel because of different beliefs/opinions on the best science to use for testing. The Texas Forensic Science Commission is performing an audit as well on the APD Lab and the findings will

be reported. There is a nationwide issue regarding accreditation standards and with the Texas Forensic Commission working on the standards for audits this is good for the future.

Commissioner Tyree commented he felt like the APD was doing what the board had asked them to do as a result of the PSC board's recommendation. It was suggested the meeting move on with the agreement/understanding the consultant that City of Austin hires come talk to the Public Safety Commission in two months.

6. Follow-up on Sex Crimes presentation from March 2017 – Commissioners Levy, Rossmo, and Scruggs item

Commissioner Webber moved this item to the top of the May 2017 agenda, because of not having enough time for the follow up at today's meeting, and thanked AC Chacon for his patience.

7. Future Agenda Items

- Dr. Rossmo's questions regarding the homeless issue
- EMS 60 vacancies and employee morale (Levy)
- HOST Update in Summer of 2017 (Scruggs)
- Investigator hired by City of Austin to investigate DNA Lab (June 2017)
- Unanswered Questions regarding the DNA Lab (Rossmo) (June 2017)
- Budget Presentation - (Webber) (May 2017)
- Sexual Assaults Staffing Issues (Nunez) (May or June 2017)
- Wildfire Development Issues and CodeNEXT Mtg (Nunez) (May 2017)
- SAFE HORNS Organization (Scruggs) (June 2017)
- Violent Crime Increase in Austin – include the numbers for last five years (Scruggs)
- Status on Community Policing Recommendations (Nunez)
- Update on Diversity in the Workplace (Gonzales) (June 2017)

Adjourn @ 6pm