



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number: 20190826-003c: Public Safety budget reforms to emergency mental health crisis response procedures, including first response and 911 call center response

WHEREAS, City Council funded the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute planning process to identify the right next steps for Austin to improve crisis response, including budgetary recommendations of \$1.75M; and

WHEREAS, the State of Colorado, Portland, Oregon's CAHOOTs Program, Dallas and Houston, Texas have all adopted similar initiatives; and

WHEREAS, implementing their recommendations might have saved the lives of Mauris DeSilva (2019), Morgan Rankins (2017), David Joseph (2016), Micah Jester (2016), and many other Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, Austin added \$30 million to the police budget last year, and proposes to add another \$17 million this year; and

WHEREAS, Clinical health workers should lead first response efforts for those in mental health crises, wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, shifting mental health first response to EMS would free up roughly 15 APD officers to invest in other activities, alleviating the need to invest a proposed \$3.6 million in 30 new officers; and

WHEREAS, the Meadows research finds that the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) stipend constrains officers' availability to respond to calls, and not expanding this stipend would free up an additional \$147K for mental health crisis response procedures, including first response and 911 call center response; and

WHEREAS, only 3.6% of mental health crisis calls currently receive a response from EMCOT, demonstrating the need for additional clinician hires and tele-health service support;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Human Right Commission joins the Austin Public Safety Commission in their recently voted unanimous support for funding mental health first response reforms.

Date of Approval: August 26, 2019

Record of the vote: 8-0; Commissioner Brown motion, Chair Davis second. Voting in favor were Chair Davis, Vice Chair Caballero, Commissioner Breckenridge, Commissioner Garry Brown, Commissioner Jamarr Brown, Commissioner Casas, Commissioner Weigel, and Commissioner White. Commissioner Griffith, Commissioner Museitif, and Commissioner Santana were absent.

Attest: _____

Jonathan Babiak

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Staff Liaison, Human Rights Commission