



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, October 5, 2020**

The Public Safety Commission convened a videoconferencing meeting Monday, October 5, 2020 at City Hall 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Commissioner Gonzales called the Board Meeting to order at 3:11p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Rebecca Gonzales	William (Bill) Kelly
Kathleen Hausenfluck	Rebecca Bernhardt
Nelly Ramirez	
Rebecca Webber	

Board Members Absent: Chris Harris, Daniela Nunez, and Rocky Lane

Staff in Attendance:

Troy Gay, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services
Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

- 1. Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Gonzales asked for comments/edits of the September 9, 2020 Special Called Meeting minutes. Hearing no edits or corrections to the minutes, Commissioner Gonzales deemed the minutes approved.**

Public Communications - Citizens signed up to speak on agenda items only:

There were no citizens signed up to speak.

- 2. Public Safety Quarterly Report for ATCEMS (Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services – sponsors Commissioners Hausenfluck and Gonzales**
Commissioner Gonzales called for this item and introduced Chief of Staff, Brown, to present. **COS Brown** commented his intent was to entertain a Q&A session the board may have concerning the data provided, but not to review all of the data that was provided prior to the meeting. **Commissioner Hausenfluck** asked Chief Brown if he has noticed any trends upwards

or downwards in the quarterly data as it relates to response times or any other variables. **Commissioner Kelly** had a question concerning the new ambulance units and where does the new units place Austin in terms of population growth. Does Austin have enough units now and are responses times better? **COS Brown** answered their questions and committed to Commissioner Gonzales requests of adding any additional categories for/of reporting stats on future quarterly reports.

3. Wildfire Code Update (sponsors: Commissioner Webber and Gonzales) Chief of Staff, Rob Vires was introduced by Chair Gonzales, and he began the presentation with a clarification of the topic listed on the agenda is actually a six month Wildfire Readiness Update. The presentation today is actually a directive from council, Resolution #20160512-016 *“Direct the City Manager to provide a progress report every six months to the Public Safety Commission for the following important components of a comprehensive Wildland Urban Interface risk reduction*

Vires, introduced Andre DeLa Reza, Assistant Chief of Wildfire and Justice Jones, Wildfire Mitigation Officer. AC Dela Reza introduced himself and shared his history of work at AFD prior to the creation of Wildfire Mitigation Division. Dela Reza introduced Carrie Stewart, Division Chief who is currently in California assisting with wildfires and gaining lots of training; and Justice Jones, the only civilian Wildfire Mitigation Officer in Austin Fire Department. Justice Jones recapped Chief Vires comments and added that the previous six months update to the board was not completed due to the impact of COVID.

The update presentation included:

- Efforts to assist Urban Wildfire high risk areas in various ways
- Number of Fire adapted communities
- Protection plans being completed by residents along with Austin Fire’ assistance
- Number of public presentations and home assessments that have been provided to residents living in high risk wildfire areas
- Wildfire training contact hours by City Employees
- Wildfire Urban Interface Code – adopted by Council April 9, 2020
 - Implementation of WUI Code set for January 1, 2021
- Austin-Travis County Wildfire HUB coming soon

Justice Jones concluded his presentation with thanking the Public Safety Commission for all of their support with getting WUI Code approved for implementation.

Chief Dela Reza summary included the importance of educating all affected communities in the importance of Wildland Protection Plans and there are works underway to complete a Spanish translation of the information on protection plans along with a video. **Commissioner Ramirez** asked when the Spanish translation materials/video would be completed, Reza responded video is complete however fine tuning is being done by Austin Fire Department PIO department and to expect it will be completed in 1-2 months.

5. Request for a Public Safety Commissioner to join the Downtown Commission (sponsors: Commissioners Gonzales and Webber) *4:30-4:35pm*

Commissioner Gonzales introduced this item and elaborated on the request from the Downtown Commission to have a Public Safety Commissioner join their Commission as a non-voting member. Currently there are 11 voting members and 6 non-voting members on the Downtown Commission. A plan to request city council approve this commission adding an additional non voting member to their board is currently underway. Which means they would increase their membership to 7 non-voting members with one of those members being a Public Safety Commissions board member. Commissioner Ramirez asked why the Downtown Commission wanted a PSC member added and if it was solely to have input/update on the status of the Austin Police Department Headquarters bldg.. Commissioner Gonzales responded, the reason conveyed to her for this addition is of a more general nature to be updated on Public Safety Commission’s actions and information shared concerning public safety.

Commissioner Ramirez nominated herself and Commissioner Webber seconded the nomination

Chair Gonzales called for a vote:

For: Unanimous

Commissioner Hausenfluck- yes

Commissioner Bernhardt – yes

Commissioner Kelly – yes

Commissioner Webber – yes

Commissioner Ramirez – yes

Commissioner Gonzales – yes

Abstain: 0

Absent: Commissioners Harris, Nunez and Lane

4. Proposed Decommissioning and Reusing Land at APD Headquarters (sponsors: Commissioner Gonzales and Webber) *(4:00pm-4:30pm)*

Speaker:

-Connor Kenny, Past Chair Planning Commission

Commissioner Gonzales introduced this item shared the reason for bring the topic back for a second discussion. Connor Kenny commented he needed to hear a little more specific issues the board is interested in the possibilities of use for the APD headquarters building in the future if APD Headquarters is relocated. During a previous PSC meeting there were some suggestions on use of the building from EMS department and Homeless non-profit and possibly a APD sub station for DTAC(Downtown Austin Command). Commissioner Webber agreed that building should become a substation in the event headquarters is moved out, and asked AC Gay what would be some of the needs of a DTAC substation as it relates to space office and vehicle parking and how many officers would be impacted by such a substation. **AC Gay** commented he did not have any recent information to share, because the topic has not been revisited in the last five years, but he would be speaking with Greg Cannaly and the City of Austin Real Estate department as the needs and use of the building have changed since COVID-19 and teleworking.

Connor Kenny requested more info the specifics of ways Commissioner Lane wanted LBGQT community could possibly benefit/use the space. Other ideas and suggestions of nonprofit organizations and social organizations that could possibly use the headquarters building space were offered by the board members.

- Downtown Austin Community Court
- HOST
- Technical Bridge between East Austin and Downtown Austin (making a connection)
- El Buen Samaritan
- Several Social Service in this one place to help reduce case load and better serve
- Code to College Program
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All of these suggestions were topics for Connor Kenny to think about going forward. This item will be brought back for additional discussion and updates on the December 2020 agenda.

6. Update on Sexual Assault Investigation—Resolution No.20190131-077 (Sponsors: Commissioners Gonzales and Webber) 4:35-4:55pm

Speakers:

- Patricia Bourenane, Executive Assistant to Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager
- Representative from Police Executive Research Executive Forum (PERF)

Rachael Arietti and Sarah Mostyn from Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)_ Patricia Bourenane, Executive Assistant to Assistant City Manager Arellano, kicked off this presentation by introducing herself and the representatives from PERF Consulting firm hired by City of Austin to work on this Comprehensive Sexual Assault Investigation Evaluation as directed in Resolution #20190131-077.

An overview of the Sexual Assault Investigation Evaluation, background, Scope of Work and vendor selection was presented to the board by Ms. Bourenane. Ms. Arietti and Mostyn presented on the timeline they are working with and noted the kick-off meeting to begin the evaluation work was completed. The final report is scheduled to be completed on February 22, 2022.

There was discussion at the end of the presentation with the Public Safety Commission board members and several questions from the board concerning the presented information are below.

Response to Questions from the Public Safety Commission October 13, 2020

1 Was it necessary for the City’s Law Department to review the sexual assault cases prior to releasing case files to the contractor, Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)?

The scope of work for this project requires the contractor to examine sexual assault cases involving adult victims. The City implemented a review of the case files prior to their release to the contractor. The purpose of this review is to ensure the reports did not involve a juvenile victim, and screen out those cases, as they do not fall within the scope of this project. In addition, the Law Department flagged the case files that involved juvenile suspects, because those cases are confidential in their entirety and none of those can be discussed or identified individually in presentations or findings that will be released to the public. It was determined that the Law

Department, whose staff has extensive experience in reviewing these types of case files, and is staff outside of the Austin Police Department, was the appropriate department to perform this review. Many of the case files contain hundreds of pages and in many instances it is not readily evident that the case involves a juvenile victim.

Will the City share the contractor's, Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) preliminary recommendations related to Austin Police Department's (APD) policies and procedures?

As the City is made aware of PERF's relevant findings and preliminary recommendations on APD's policies and procedures, this information will be shared in a memo format with the Public Safety Commission and the Commission for Women. PERF is anticipating beginning the interview process with APD's Sex Crimes personnel in early 2021, which will inform their preliminary recommendations. PERF anticipates they will have preliminary recommendations by mid-2021.

What is PERF going to do to ensure a diverse group of people are represented in the interview process? How many survivors does PERF want to interview?

PERF's interview process will include interviews with current and former APD personnel in the Sex Crimes Unit, local advocacy groups, prosecutors and sexual assault survivors. PERF will work with local advocacy groups, such as the Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team (SARRT) and other organizations to help identify a diverse group of survivors willing to participate. The initial plan is to interview 50 sexual assault survivors; however, it is contingent on how many survivors would like to participate in the process. PERF is going to work with local advocacy groups to generate interest.

Will the PERF be able to contact Jennifer Ecklund and Elizabeth Myers, legal representatives for plaintiffs of sexual assault, to assist with connecting to sexual survivors to interview?

The City's agreement with PERF does not prohibit it from contacting Jennifer Ecklund and Elizabeth Myers to connect with sexual assault survivors for the interview process, and the City has no objection to such contact.

What is the professional backgrounds and sex of the case reviewers, and specifically, if they are former law enforcement?

The case review team is comprised of members of PERF, the Women's Law Project, and Wellesley Centers for Women. PERF is a non-profit membership organization that supports law enforcement agencies to improve the delivery of police services. PERF's employees come from a variety of backgrounds, including law enforcement, criminology, sociology, psychology, and public policy. The Women's Law Project is a public interest legal organization dedicated to advancing the rights and status of women through high-impact litigation, public policy, and community education. Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) is the largest and one of the oldest research centers dedicated to interdisciplinary research with a focus on gender. For 40 years, WCW has conducted research that advances gender equality, social justice, and human well-being. All three groups have extensive experience in sexual assault case review, as well as interviewing

members of police agencies and the community, and making specific recommendations to improve the police response to sexual assault. The case review team is currently comprised of 14 reviewers - 9 women and 5 men

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS 4:55-5:00pm

Update on DNA Lab Report – Commissioner Gonzales

2019 Racial profiling Report, Office of Police Oversight – Commissioner Gonzales

ADJOURNMENT @ 5:00pm Commissioner Kelly motioned to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Hausenfluck seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous

For: Commissioners Bernhardt, Hausenfluck, Kelly, Webber, Ramirez, and Gonzales

Against: 0

Abstain: 0