



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

DATE: April 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Response to Fiscal Year 2022 Casar Budget Rider 1 Regarding Forensics and 9-1-1

Budget Rider 1 directed the City Manager to send a request to the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor to make the budgets for the Forensics Science Office and the Emergency Communications Department independent of the police department and to make corresponding reductions to the department budget to reflect the separations in accordance with Section 109.004(2)(C) of HB1900.

The adopted rules regarding the determination of defunding municipalities, which were published in the Texas Register on March 18, 2022, require municipalities to submit an application to the Public Safety Office ("PSO") of the Office of the Governor to request an exception from being considered a defunding municipality due to a reduction to the appropriation to the municipality's police department prior to the adoption of the municipality's budget. There is not a process for a mid-year request in the rules. Under Rule 1 TAC §§3.9404 (d), the PSO "shall not grant an exception under this section after a municipality has adopted a budget for the fiscal year for which it seeks an exception."

Decouple the Forensic Science Office from the Police Department

The City Manager was further directed to decouple the Forensic Science Office from the Police Department in the proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget in a manner that fully complies with HB1900, if such a decoupling cannot occur before that time. Establishing Forensic Science as a separate entity will be evaluated during the development of the FY23 proposed budget.

Work with A/TC SARRT and Other Stakeholders

The City Manager was directed to work with the Austin/Travis County Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team (SARRT) and other stakeholders on best practice protocols regarding independent operation of the Forensic Science Office during the time period that it remains within the police department.

The Forensic Science Bureau Director continues to collaborate with and provide forensic updates to members of the SARRT during active participation in monthly SARRT meetings. In

order to increase the Forensic Science Division's objective forensic analysis independent from the law enforcement function, the City Manager's Office authorized the Forensic Sciences Director, Dr. Dana Kadavy, to report to the Assistant City Manager over Safety for all forensic operational and administrative matters on July 26, 2021. This action is consistent with SARRT and other Stakeholder best-practice recommendations for independent operation of the City's forensics services.

Please contact me or Elise Renshaw (Elise.Renshaw@austintexas.gov) should you have questions or would like additional information.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Chief Joseph Chacon, Austin Police Chief
Dr. Dana Kadavy, Forensic Sciences Division Executive Director
Ed Van Eenoo, Chief Financial Officer