



***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, March 6, 2023***

The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED MEETING on March 6, 2023 at City Hall Building, Boards and Commission Room, 301 W. 2nd Street, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Chair Bernhardt called the Public Safety Commission Meeting to order at 4:05p.m.

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Rebecca Bernhardt, Chair

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Nelly Ramirez, Vice Chair
Kathleen Hausenfluck
John Kiracofe
Michael Sierra-Arevalo
Timothy Ruttan
David Holmes

Absent:

Cory Hall-Martin

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: No Citizens signed up to speak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the November 7, 2022 Public Safety Commission Regular Meeting

Vote:

Yes- Commissioner Bernhardt, Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo

Abstain – Commissioners Kiracofe, Ruttan, Holmes (new commissioners), Hausenfluck
(due to absence at the November 2023 meeting)

No – zero

Absent – Commissioner Hall-Martin

Approve the December 5, 2022 Public Safety Commission Regular Meeting

The minutes were approved with edits from Commissioner Kiracofe

Page #2-edit “grogam to program” “meeds to needs”, and change “work to worked”, and “deades to decades”

Page #3-change “meeting to meet”

Vote:

Yes – Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Hausenfluck, Kiracofe, and Sierra-Arevalo

Abstain: Commissioners Ruttan and Holmes

No- Zero

Absent- Commissioner Cory-Hall Martin

Approve the January 9, 2023 Public Safety Commission Regular Meeting

Vote:

Yes- Commissioners Ramirez, Bernhardt, Hausenfluck, Sierra-Arevalo, Kiracofe

Abstain: Commissioners Holmes and Ruttan (new commissioners)

No – zero

Absent- Commissioner Hall- Martin

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

2. Public Safety Quarterly Reports – Austin Fire Department and ATCEMS (Emergency Medical Services)

The Public Safety Commission Chair called for two quarterly reports the month of March 2023 due to the cancellation of the February 2023 monthly meeting. Chief Vires presented first and thanked the Commissioners for the cancellation of the February 2023 meeting due to the severe weather conditions that had all the attention and efforts of the three public safety department working to keep Austin citizens safe. Chief Vires commented he would present AFD’s quarterly stats fairly quickly in the essence of time and of course he would answer any questions from the commissioners at the end of his presentation. Chief presented:

-Requests for Services Q4 Comparison FY 2021 and FY 2022

-Emergency Incident Q4 Comparison by Council Districts

-Emergency Response Times Comparison by Council District for FY21-Q4 – FY22-Q4

-the goal of Austin Fire Department is 8minutes arrival times

-AFD Standard of Coverage 2014 vs 2022

-Auto Aid – Travis County & Williamson County (Auto Aid is still a work in progress as technology part is still a factor to work out).

-Overdose Response

- December 2021 all Austin Fire Department personnel received hands on training for Naloxone administration and each unit received a stock of the medication

- Austin Fire department administered or assisted 144 times with Naloxone

- Arson Fires FY22 Investigation and Percent of Arson Fires Cleared
- Wildfire Division (still establishing wildfire training across the city)
- Office of the Fire Marshal and its role in Special Events planning and preparations

Chief Vires wrapped up his presentation with the Compliance Engine and how it is operates concerning commercial properties across the City of Austin. The Community Outreach efforts/works at AFD for all and the Free Smoke Alarm Program for homeowners, and the Red Angels Program that supports the most vulnerable citizens. An update on AFD's COVID-19 cases, vaccination efforts, AFD Sworn separations and cadet hiring process and recruiting concluded the Austin Fire report. Chief Vires responded to questions from Commissioner Ramirez, Hausenfluck, Bernhardt, and Ruttan.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FY23 Q1 presented by Chief of Staff Teresa Gardner
 The presentation began with the Incidents, Patient Contacts, and Transports Jan 2021-Dec 2022.

- Priority 1 Compliance by District
- Priority 1 Response Interval by District
- Priority Percentage by District
- Current EMS Department Staffing
- Sworn Separations and Sworn Tenure at Separation
- Vacancy Rates Sworn & Civilian
- EMS Turnover Rate
- Opioid Overdoses – EMS Data
- Opioid Rescue Kits

Chief Gardner responded to questions from the commissioners regarding the size of EMS classes and what will the vacancies be after the next class? Does the recent salary increase to EMS employees show any positive impact on retention?

3. Discussion of winter/extreme weather event preparedness

Speakers:

- Robert Nicks, President, Austin Firefighters Association
- Selena Xie, President, Austin Emergency Medical Services Association
- Kevin Parker, Division Chief, Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services
- Brandon Wade, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department
- Jason Stansizewski, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department

Commissioner Ramirez called for Bob Nicks and Selena Xie to speak first regarding their observations of various conditions they observed during the recent extreme weather event and asked

that they share any ideas/comments they have on how the Public Safety Commission could possibly help going forward in preparing for extreme weather conditions.

Bob Nicks commented, the first and most urgent request is to get more generators that is needed for Austin Fire stations. There are some generators from Uri storm last year, and some of the generators are old and need maintenance. There were 27 stations losing power during the storm. The City needs to purchase more generators. Some fire stations don't have a generator at all and those fire stations are a priority to get updated and to add a generator. Some firefighters worked through the storm without any heat at the stations due to low performing generators or no generators at all.

Selena Xie commented many EMS stations in the Travis County are in place for upgrades to be better prepared for severe weather storms. More hazard vehicles are needed for use in helping APD and AFD respond to calls for help during a storm. Selena also commented on the need for the shelters to be more easily assessable for citizens. The information /notifications of the shelter operation hours need to be more user friendly and heavily advertised /posted. Also, the City should open the shelters in cases of extreme heat conditions as well as extreme cold weather.

Bob Nicks expressed concerns that there really is not a shelter for families. The shelters are a little sterile and the fact that they have to pack up and leave the shelter each day and return when it opens again is very unsettling for a family. The hours of operations for shelters during extreme weather need to be re-visited to consider how the operating hours could be more flexible to accommodate families and avoid frequent moves back into the weather.

Division Chief, Kevin Parker, presented EMS Preparedness which included:

- Generators for stations
 - Fixed, Towable, and Han-carry sizes
 - Included in future/re-built stations
- Extra Sleeping Arrangement
- Vehicle hardening
 - Tire Chains
 - _De-icier
- Vehicle Fuel Changes

Personnel Preparedness

- Removable shoe-sole studs for walking on ice
- Partner with Austin EMS Employee Association for home needs

Chief Parker also discussed the enhanced service delivery and capability of EMS delivery during extreme weather conditions. Points on the severe weather impacts needs due to increased call volume and unique needs; impacts sheltering un-housed, durable medical equipment supply, calls durations during ice and floods, of course arrival times of ambulance in inclement weather. EMS uses their internal team, Medical Unit Leaders, Medical Incident Strike Team Leader, Ambulance Bus, Drones

w/thermal cameras and special operations (boats for 5 swift water, 2 still water). The specialty teams are vital to safe service during winter storms.

Austin Fire Department, Assistant Chief, Brandon Wade presented on Winter Weather Days for Austin Fire's preparation:

- Tire Cables issued to all response vehicles and operational support vehicles (
- Use true diesel during winter months (Fleet Operations is on board with this)
- Readiness of portable generators to support stations with power outages.
- Fire Branch at the Emergency Operation Center
- Up staffing of the brush trucks and code 3 support vehicles to assist with response due to large number of incidents implemented

He also presented on AFD's preparedness during possible floods and wildfires.

Austin Police Department, Assistant Chief Jason Stansizewski presented on APD's extreme weather preparedness. He began with the Activation Process:

- Austin Public Health responsible for initiating Cold Weather Shelter activation
- Criteria for CWS
 - Below 31 Degrees
 - Below 35 Degree with Precipitation
 - Source: national Weather Service (Camp Mabry)
- Cold Weather Shelter has new contracts with outside services such as Austin Urban League, Austin Public Health is responsible for the current contracts and possible new contracts with outside agencies to better serve all of Austin.
- Staffing for APD Cold Weather Shelters
- APD Emergency Management Unit fields request from Homeland Security Emergency Management
- Requests for additional staffing during extreme weather conditions goes to APD Watch Commander to request staffing from patrol.

There was a question to all public safety departments on how/where does the money come from if extra money is required for additional staff /up staffing during extreme weather days service/work. The response from the three departments was there is funding in their budgets under staffing/vacancies that is used, however they to continue to strive for 100% staffing at all times.

Future Agenda Items

- Discuss/draft recommendation regarding enough generators for public safety departments (Ruttan)
- Update from Chief Medical Officer (Bernhardt)
- Update on 911 Call Center (original request from Kiracofe)
- View Report on disable community's interaction with Austin Police department and what kind of actions come as a result of report (Ramirez)
- Election of PSC Officers for the 2023-2024 year (mandatory election in April each year per City Clerk's office)
- Safety of Uber and Lyft drivers (Bernhardt)
- Update on WUI Code and Wildfires (Ramirez)

Adjourned @ 6:00pm