



***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, May 1, 2023***

The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED MEETING on May 1, 2023 at City Hall Building, Boards and Commission Room, 301 W. 2nd Street, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Chair Ramirez called the Public Safety Commission Meeting to order at 4:03p.m.

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Nelly Ramirez, Chair	John Kiracofe
Rebecca Bernhardt, Vice Chair	Kristy Orr
Cory Hall-Martin	Timothy Ruttan
Lauren Pena	
David Holmes	
Pierre Nguyen	

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Absent: none

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: Two Citizens signed up to speak on item #5

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Chair Ramirez** called for the approval of the minutes for April 3, 2023 regular meeting. **Commissioner Ramirez** motioned to approve the minutes, and **Commissioner Bernhardt** seconded the motion. Chair Ramirez called for the vote:

Vote:

Yes: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Ruttan, Nguyen, Holmes, Hall-Martin, Kiracofe, and Orr,

No: Zero

Abstain: Zero

Absent: None

Comments from the Chair:

Chair Ramirez- announced the agenda items would be called a little out of order from what is posted due to a need to accommodate the schedules of some presenters. Next the Chair reviewed with the board they did not need to abstain from voting on the minutes if they had not attended the meeting. In regards to voting on the monthly minutes Chair Ramirez informed the board of the need for six votes of approval in order for the minutes to be posted. What we're really voting on is administrative to get the minutes posted and so when people abstain due to absence and we don't get six votes for our monthly minutes, the minutes are not posted to the Public Safety Commission website to be available to the public.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

5. Austin License Plate Reader Program

Chair called for speakers on item #5:

-Gloria Rodriguez- commented on the ALPR policy regarding the use of data captured, auditing on how long data is kept from Austin License Plate Readers, and where ALPRs will be placed were of utmost concern.

-Chris Harris, Director of Policy at Austin Justice Coalition – referenced when the ALPR policy was brought back in September 2022 that there was an issue with bringing back the program to begin with, and we would really like to see how this pilot relates to the previous program. Is this pilot program adhered to the council resolution that was put forward in September 2022, which included things around data retention in particular as that doesn't seem to be in the current draft policy. In addition the Office of Police Oversight recommendations need to be made public and incorporated into the draft policy.

Chair Ramirez called for Office of Police Oversight and Austin Police Department presenters to come forward after the citizens' comments. **Bruce Mills**, mentioned previous Town Hall meetings that had been held for citizen input on the draft policy and that there will be another Town Hall meeting in the near future for citizens to have their input on the ALPR pilot.

Joe Chacon, APD Chief of Police – commented he did not come prepared to speak on the Austin License Plate Reader item on the agenda today. He wanted to address/comment on how the relationship between APD and this commission has broken down towards Austin Police Department staff, the sworn, civilian, and sometimes the vendors that are working with the Austin Police Department. He directed his staff not to attend this meeting today (5/1/2023) as he would be meeting with the PSC Chair to discuss how we move forward. There was a good meeting with the Chair and Interim Assistant City Manager, Mills last week, and I am hoping we can find a productive path moving forward. Per Chief Chacon, I really want to move forward in the future, but at the same time understanding I don't wanna put my employees into an environment where they feel like they're

being attacked. I am not going to allow that to happen any longer and honestly, if it continues to happen in the future, I will remove my staff from the meeting. If my staff had spoken to any one of you in the manner that they have been spoken to, there would be an investigation and potential disciplinary action that would be looked at. So hopefully we will move to a better space in respecting both sides and we (APD) fully intend to be here next month and ready to answer any questions related to ALPS or any other police related item. **Chair Ramirez** responded she was disappointed to hear at the live meeting APD would not be presenting today in regards to ALPR specifically. This item is going before council on May 18, 2023 and Public Safety Commission doesn't meet again until June 2023, so I'd like to call for a Special Meeting for us to have a discussion before May 18, 2023 council meeting. The Chair opened the floor for questions concerning ALPR from the board to be answered during the special called meeting.

Commissioners Pena, Bernhardt, Ruttan and Nguyen had questions and Nehemiah Pitts, Chair, of Community Technology offered questions.

Commissioner Bernhardt expressed to the board that the comments from APD on decorum were referencing her and possibly a couple of former commissioners that are no longer on the board. She shared she is meeting with City Clerk's office to discuss what the City's rules about decorum mean in application as she is not certain she is violating any rules. She elaborated on her thoughts about democracy and growing tired of unarmed people of color being shot by Austin Police Department, and not be held accountable so yes I get a little angry sometimes and raise my voice.

Chair Ramirez wrapped up comments by asking the commissioners that moving forward, please wait to be recognized before speaking, and opened the floor for any last minute questions on Austin License Plate Readers (ALPR) only, prior to moving on to the next item.

Commissioner Ruttan reminded the Chair of the need to vote to table item #4, 911/311 Call Center Update sponsored by Commissioners Kiracofe and Chair Ramirez. Commissioner Ruttan motioned to vote on tabling item #4 and Commissioner Bernhardt seconded. The Chair called for a vote to table the item#4 and the vote was unanimous.

Vote:

Yes: Commissioners Bernhardt, Holmes, Kiracofe, Hall-Martin, Nguyen, Orr, Pena, Ruttan and Ramirez

No: zero

Abstain: zero

Absent: zero

3. A Chief Medical Office Overview/Duties (Sponsors: Commissioners Ramirez and Bernhardt)

Speakers:

- Dr. Mark Escott, Chief Medical Officer for the City of Austin
- William Leggio, Chief of Staff, Medical Director's Office

Chair Ramirez welcomed Dr. Escott and thanked him for attending the meeting to share more information about the Medical Director's Office and how this office duties overlap into some public safety areas.

Dr. Escott begin with a little history of his office and how they operate in Texas.

- The office established in 2006 by city manager Toby Futrell
- Operational in 2007, primarily single physician and limited staff
- This office transformed to Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) in FY21 with additional expansion funds in FY22
- Legislated Responsibilities
 - Chapter 773 Health and Safety Code
 - Chapter 157 EMS Rules
 - Chapter 197 Texas Medical Board Rules

Dr. Escott talked about community needs, Delta Calls and High Priority Calls and commented lower priority calls will increase as medical care resources starts to dry up for some parts of the population. Photos of the staff with Medical Director's Office was shared along with the role and services each staff member is responsible for in the Medical Director's office. Dr. Escott moved to the EMS system general design. The design showed from 911 to EMS plus Austin Fire to the ER (emergency rooms) and the cost. The Clinical Staffing Model and the Outcomes –Based Equity Assessment providing data on number of patients (cardiac arrest incidence by race/ethnicity) was discussed along with percentages of CA (cardiac arrest) and percentages of population and the survival by race/ethnicity. In closing Dr. Escott shared the Improving Equity of Bystander CPR, GEO Tab. Dr. Escott offered to answer any questions from the board.

Questions from:

Commissioner Nguyen – how is it determined what type of service is sent out based on a 911 call?

Commissioner Bernhardt – would there be a way to triage calls between the public safety departments, and offered as an example someone needing a prescription refilled?

Commissioner Pena - would it be feasible to have someone offer a CPR class in District 3?

Commissioner Hall-Martin – do you have some assistance for those who cannot pay for medical service?

Chair Ramirez – how do the paramedic practitioners work with the ambulance teams? How are they integrated into EMS and like the day to day service?

Commissioner Ruttan – what do you need from this commission, what can we do to help you operate better while continuing to try to build? Dr. Escott responded what we need is the support of commissions like this one. It is really challenging to fill in vacancies at this time.

2. Public Safety Quarterly Report – Austin Fire Department (sponsors: Commissioners Ramirez and Bernhardt)

Speaker: Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

Chair Ramirez introduced Chief Vires and invited him to begin the Quarterly report.

Chief Vires introduced himself and welcomed the new commissioners. This quarterly report includes two quarters, Q1 and Q2.

The presentation began with

- Station 22 ground breaking (even though it is being rebuilt)
- New Fire Station #52 on Loop 360 and Davenport, soft opening on March 26, 2023
- Fire Station #53 broke ground on February 22, 2023
- Response times for Q1, Q2 for all types of calls
- Request for Service (currently AFD is looking at how to serve the City as a whole)
- Emergency Incident – Code 3
- Emergency Response times comparisons
- Emergency AFD standard of coverage from 2014-2022
- Response time goal is 8 minutes to respond to an emergency
- Auto Aid – Travis County and Williamson County
 - no recent updates
- Overdose Response (continuing as a great benefit to our City)
- Investigations – Arson Fires Clearance rates are high in comparison to national averages
- Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division
 - Wildfire Battalion established
 - ATX Wildfire.com (this website was established and is a great source of information for Austin residents)
- Fire Marshall Department
 - Works close with Development Support Department in completing inspections for new land development and buildings
 - Special Events are safe and up to code based on completed inspections by Austin Fire
- Compliance Engine, includes building inspections
- Community Outreach –
 - Installing smoke alarms free of charge to help citizens be safe
- COVID updates in AFD
- COVID Vaccines Administered by AFD Wellness
- AFD Sworn Separations
- Civilian Vacancies
- Cadet hiring process (there will be 40 new fire fighters add after graduation on May 5, 2023)
- Recruiting AFD is always recruiting

Question from **Commissioner Kiracofe**, what is the status of Station #25 and will it be another Station #22 project?

Commissioner Ruttan asked if there was any real need to continue the COVID piece of information in the future. **Commissioner Nguyen** asked about the response time on average going up by a minute? **Commissioner Orr** asked if the reason for the one minute increase was due to just traffic or was it staffing too that contributed to the one minute increase. **Chief Vires** responded to questions and ended his presentations.

Future Agenda Items:

Chair Ramirez commented that currently the board has approximately six months of future agenda items. She would like for commissioners to work on getting seconds for their item/s and communicate any updates via email. **Commissioner Pena**, ask how does she just ask a question for APD and not necessarily have an item on the agenda. **Chair Ramirez** committed to discussing some options to submit a question/s for APD. **Commissioner Nguyen** expressed he really wants to hear from HSEM (Homeland Security Emergency Management) in the near future. **Chair Ramirez** asked if the Public Safety budgets would be ready for the June 5, 2023 Public Safety Commission meeting.

Running list of Future Agenda Items:

- Drug Use - Peña, Nguyen
- Entertainment District - Holmes, Ramírez
- HSEM Briefing - Nguyen
- Crime rates in outlying districts - Holmes
- Hiring qualifications for APD - Peña
- Community Police Academy - Nguyen
- Duty to Give Aid & Medical Care – Ramírez (have request form)
- Police interactions, protocols with families after officer-involved shootings - Ramirez
- Victim services available to community post officer-involved shootings – Ramírez

Adjourned @ 6:01pm

The minutes were approved at the June 5, 2023 meeting with Chair Ramirez’s motion without objection for approval and the vote was (7 approved, 2 absent and 1 recusal)