



***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION***  
**REGULAR CALLED MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, *June 5, 2023***

**The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED MEETING on June 5, 2023 at City Hall Building, Boards and Commission Room, 301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, AUSTIN, TEXAS**

**Chair Ramirez called the Public Safety Commission Meeting to order at 4:01pm.**

**Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:**

Nelly Ramirez, Chair  
Cory Hall-Martin  
Lauren Pena  
David Holmes  
Pierre Nguyen  
Kristy Orr  
Yasmine Smith

**Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:**

Commissioners - John Kiracofe and Yasmin Smith

**Absent:** Commissioner Bernhardt and Commissioner Ruttan

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. **Chair Ramirez** called for the approval of the minutes for May 1, 2023 regular meeting.  
**Commissioner Ramirez** motioned to approve the minutes, and called for the vote

**Vote:**

**Yes:** 7 Commissioners Ramirez, Nguyen, Holmes, Hall-Martin, Kiracofe, Pena and Orr,

**No:** Zero

**Abstain:** Commissioner Yasmine Smith

**Absent:** Commissioners Bernhardt, and Ruttan

**2. STAFF BRIEFINGS:**

Chair Ramirez informed the board the staff briefing was established to receive written response to follow up questions from previous meetings. The written responses are included in the backup materials for each monthly meeting.

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

3. Public Safety Quarterly Report – Austin Travis County EMS (Ramirez, Bernhardt) –  
Speaker:  
Wes Hopkins, Assistant Chief, Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Service

AC Wes Hopkins presented quarterly data on behalf of EMS Chief of Staff, Teresa Gardner. He began the presentation with

- P1 (Priority One) Responses Interval by Council District
- P1 Percentage by District
- Current EMS Department Staffing
- Sworn Separations (3 resigning and 1 retirement)
- Vacancy Rates for Sworn and Civilian
- EMS Turnover Rate (none in the month of 01/2023)
- Opioid Overdoses EMS Data (this data will usually show a spike in use/overdoses in the Spring)
- Opioid Rescue Kits distributed in the fields

Q & A’s from Commissioners Nguyen, Holmes and Ramirez.

-Why are response times different for some council districts? What are some of the reasons?

**Commissioner Holmes**

-Why are the vacancy rate for clinical specialist almost doubled for other vacancies?

**Commissioner Nguyen**

-Are we tracking the overdose issues that receive help with Opioid Overdose?

**Commissioner Nguyen**

-What would we need to do to in response to assisting EMS with getting more assistance to avoid/reduce Opioid Overdose? **Commissioner Ramirez**

- Is there any tracking being done on Opioid overdose so that EMS can follow up with them to see if we could help in some way after EMS helped the individual avoid an overdose?

**Commissioner Nguyen**

## 6. Women's Commission Working Group Appointment

Chair Ramirez called for a vote to move the Women's Commission Working Group Appointment moved up on the agenda due to an earlier time being available on the agenda. Commissioner Nguyen second the motion and a vote was taken. The vote was unanimous to move this item up on the agenda. Chair Ramirez, explained the role of the PSC appointee to the working group to inform the group. The appointee would be working with Women's Commission Working Group to put forth some recommendations on the PERF report. Commissioner Orr expressed interest in serving on the working group and Chair Ramirez welcomed her and commented they would vote on both commissioners being appointed to the working group. Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion.

### **VOTE:**

Yes: unanimous

No: zero

Abstain: zero

Absent: Commissioners Ruttan and Bernhardt

Commissioners Ramirez and Orr are the appointees from Public Safety Commission to join the Austin Women's Commission working group.

## 4. Public Safety Department Budgets (Ramirez, Bernhardt) 4:40pm-5:20pm

-Carlos Ledesma, Assistant Director, Austin Travis County EMS

-Dr. Ronnelle Paulson, Austin Fire Department

-James Mason, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department

Chair Ramirez called for the presentations from EMS, Austin Fire Department and Austin Police Department. Each department presented FY2023 Budget Overview presented totals at a glance and their unmet needs. Details pertaining to each public safety's department needs were explained/itemized for the board. Q's and A's were taken from the board.

-What is the age of the Austin Fire Department engines needing to be replaced? (Nguyen)

-Back up power/generators costs and were they included in the unmet needs? (Ramirez)

-Please explain briefly what the C4 (Collaborative Care Communications Center) is? (Ramirez)

-In regards to high-water vehicles are you putting in a training cost with that budget item? (Nguyen)

-What is your parental leave policy for sworn employees? (Hall-Martin)

-Is victim services still under Austin Police Department? (Holmes)

Chair Ramirez called for the speaker signed up for this item.

-Cynthia Simmons, Director of Women’s Justice at the Texas Center for Justice and Equity  
Ms. Simmons requested the support of the Public Safety Commission for the Community Investment Budget.

Chair Ramirez called for a vote on the three public safety departments proposed budgets for FY2024 individually.

Chair Ramirez motioned to vote on the Austin Fire Departments budget presented for FY2024 and Commissioner Hall-Martin seconded.

**Vote:** Yes-7, No-zero, Absent –Commissioner Ruttan and Bernhardt, Abstain- 1, Commissioner Smith  
Passes

Ramirez motioned for a vote on ACTEMS (Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services) and Commissioner Nguyen second.

**Vote:**  
Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: Commissioner Ruttan, and Bernhardt  
Abstain: Commissioner Smith  
Passes

Ramirez motioned for a vote on Austin Police Department budget presented for FY2024 and Commissioner Nguyen second

**Vote:**  
Yes: 7  
No: zero  
Absent: Commissioner Ruttan and Bernhardt  
Abstain: Commissioner Smith  
Passes

A motion from Chief Ramirez to vote on the Community Investment Budget and second by Commissioner Hall-Martin.

**Vote:**  
Yes: 7  
No: zero  
Absent: Commissioner Bernhardt and Ruttan  
Abstain: Commissioner Smith  
Passes

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION No. 20230605-004

Date: June 5, 2023

Subject: Public Safety Budget Recommendation

Motioned by: Commissioner Nelly Paulina Ramirez

Seconded by: Commissioner Pierre Nguyen

**Recommendation:** The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council take action to support the following budget items.

**Description of Recommendation to Council:**

The Austin Public Safety Commission is tasked with reviewing public safety agency budgets and providing recommendations to the Austin City Council. The Austin Fire Department, Austin Travis County EMS, and Austin Police Department provided backup materials and briefings at the June 2023 Public Safety Commission on their FY23-24 forecasted budgets and unfunded budget priorities. The Public Safety Commission was also provided backup materials and a briefing on the 23-24 Community Investment Budget which urges investments in community health, affordability, sustainability, and safety for the FY23-24 budget.

Therefore, The Public Safety Commission recommends the following items be submitted to Austin City Council for consideration in the FY23-24 Fiscal Budget:

**Austin Fire Department**

Overtime usage stabilization (9 FTEs backfill for incr. leave usage, 8 FTEs & equip for squads)	\$1.8-3.6M
Staffing for two Ladders (32 FTEs & equip)	\$3.2M
Command Techs (9 FTEs to support BCs)	\$1.1M
Dispatchers (8 FTES, 2 per shift)	\$1.0M
Civilian support (5 FTEs)	\$336K
Total Operating	\$7.4M-\$9.2M
One-time funding: AEDs 130 @ \$2,100 ea. plus supplies	\$328K

**Austin Travis County EMS**

Recruiting Division – (11 FTEs, \$1,507,790 on-going, one-time \$40,000) Dedicated Recruiting staff to assist with year-round hiring processes for sworn positions	\$1.6M
Data Analytics - (2 FTEs, \$263,728 on-going, one-time \$10,000) FTEs to allow us to meet minimum program analytic requirements to ensure equity and efficiency in our service delivery.	\$264K
Collaborative Care Communications Center (C4) (10 FTEs \$1,131,865 on-going, one-time \$220,000) Expanding the program to 24-hour operations	\$1.35M
Unfunded Pilot Programs (5 FTEs \$944,000 on-going, one-time \$105,000) LakeMed, Airport Medic, Rainey St., CASTMED	\$1.05M
Total Operating	\$4.26M
Capital Improvement Plan (\$2,509,500 Medical Supplies; \$2,110,000 Vehicles) Fee assessment and In-Network engagements	\$4.66M
Total Debt	\$4.66M

**Austin Police Department**

Advertising Campaign for Sworn Recruiting	\$350K
Retention Bonus for Emergency Communication Division	\$501K
Advertising Campaign for Emergency Communication Div.	\$200K
4 Civilian FTEs for Open Records and Compliance with SB111	\$407K
Early Intervention System	\$750K
Total	\$2.2M

**Community Investment Budget**

EMS Wage Increase	\$14.7M
Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Victim services	\$1.2M
Office of Violence Prevention	\$500K
Inclement Weather Response	\$4.5M
Crisis Response	\$4M
Austin/Travis Co EMS Community Health Paramedics [\$1M]	\$1M
Resiliency Hubs [\$4.5M]	\$4.5M
Harm Reduction Services and Infrastructure [\$1M]	\$1M
Total for Public Safety programs	\$31.4M
Funding for programs across additional areas to support families and individuals across the city with inflation, housing & shelter, workforce development, stabilization, parks & libraries, inflation, food access, legal services, healthcare and more.	\$70.3M
Total	\$101.7M

**Rationale:** The Public Safety Commission believes the budget items listed in the recommendation are vital to operations of the public safety organizations and to a healthier and safer Austin.

**Vote:**

For: 7 (Commissioners Holmes, Kiracofe, Hall-Martin, Nguyen, Orr, Pena, Ramirez)

Against: 0

Abstain: 1 (Commissioner Smith)

Absent: 2 (Commissioners Bernhardt, Ruttan)

Attest: Janet Jackson, Public Safety Commission Liaison

**5. APD/DPS Partnership Update (Ruttan, Holmes) 5:20pm-5:45pm**

**-Austin Police Department**

**-City Manager's Office**

**Chair Ramirez**, called for the speakers signed up to speak on this item:

-Bill Wallace, citizen, spoke against the APD/DPS Partnership and cited there was no transparency by COA to notify citizens about the partnership. The Black and Brown communities fell like they are being targeted by DPS mainly being in their communities, and a lot of the unhoused community, and those suffering with mental illness are suffering from DPS presence as well.

Chris Harris, Director of Policy at Austin Justice Coalition spoke against the DPS Partnership due to citizens not being able to weigh in on the decision prior to the partnership being established. This type of partnership have been tried in other cities and it did not work, DPS troopers are making approximately 300 stops a day mainly in the Black and Brown communities.

Assistant Chief Mason began the presentation with an overview of what he would be covering

- Review of partnership goals & objectives
- Initial deployment strategy : Crashes
- Initial deployment strategy: Emergency CFS (Calls for Service) – Gun
- Future reporting
- Questions and answers

The goals and objectives of the partnership is to

- Reduce serious traffic injuries and fatalities
- Reduce instances of violent crime particularly involving firearms
- Reduce response times to 911 calls for assistance

Maps were shared with the commissioners as visual aides to show injury crashes, fatal crashes and Gun PO Calls for Service by Council Districts.

Questions:

- What is the time frame on the heat maps? There is not a key on any of the slides to explain the timeframe. (Ramirez)
- The yellow dot maps, please explain how DPS is attributed to the drop in crime? (Holmes)
- This partnership sounds like a Band-Aid to a problem, if this partnership ended what would your suggestion be to sustain the reduction of violent crime. (Nguyen\_

There were several questions and extensive discussion. This item is being brought back for continued discussion at the July 10, 2023 meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Partnership Update (Orr and Smith)
- APD and Community Policing (Nguyen)
- APD overtime pay and how it works

Adjourn @ 5:59pm

The minutes were approved at the July 10, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Ramirez's motion, Commissioner Hall-Martin seconded on a 6-0 vote.