



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, *April 3, 2023*

The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED MEETING on April 3, 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 4:03p.m.

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Rebecca Bernhardt, Chair
Nelly Ramirez, Vice Chair
Kathleen Hausenfluck
Lauren Pena
David Holmes
Pierre Nguyen

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Michael Sierra-Arevalo
Cory Hall-Martin

Absent:

John Kiracofe
Timothy Ruttan

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: No Citizens signed up to speak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Chair Bernhardt** called for the approval of the minutes for March 6, 2023 regular meeting. **Commissioner Ramirez** motioned to approve the minutes, and **Commissioner Hausenfluck** seconded the motion. Chair Bernhardt called for the vote:

Vote:

Yes: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo, Hausenfluck, and Holmes

No: Zero

Abstain: Commissioners Cory Hall-Martin, Lauren Pena, Pierre Nguyen

Absent: Commissioners Kiracofe, and Ruttan

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

2. Public Safety Quarterly Reports – Austin Police Department

Dr. Jonathan Kringen presented the quarterly stats for Austin Police Department. Per Dr. Kringen the Planning and Research team are still working to revise the nature of the report. The presentation began with:

- Crimes Against Persons (Violent Crimes)
- Crimes Against Property (minor reduction in the stats)
- Crimes Against Society (tracking crimes committed with weapons)
- Citywide Clearances for Crimes Against Persons – Dr. Kringen commented they are working to report a meaningful metric for clearance rates, as a matter of productivity
- Citywide Clearances for Crimes Against Property (no substantial change in actual clearance rates)
- Citywide Response Times – currently responding to Priority 0 and Priority1 (which means there is an event ongoing or event just ended and suggests an immediate threat) the target response times is 10:44, and in March 2023 the actual response time is 11:41.
- Response Times and Incident Volume broken down by Council Office was presented. Dr. Kringen commented the P0 and P1 calls are the ones we can make a difference.
- Overall Call Volume there was marginal reduction, this is reflected in seasonal trend of activities.
- Budget Overtime versus actual Overtime presented from 9-26-2022 to 3-11-2023. The budgeted amount versus spent amount on overtime was shared.
- Sworn Staffing as of 3-12-2023
 - 1, 812 Authorized Sworn Positions
 - 1, 524 Filled
 - Leaves 298 vacancies at Austin Police Department

Civilian Staffing, filled 565 positions and vacancy is 193 (4 in the number are interns) for a total of 758 positions. Dr. Kringen reminded the board that Cadets, when brought into the academy are not sworn staff until such a time as receiving their license. The Cadets are part of the civilian numbers.

- Communications Staffing (Civilians)
 - 911 Call Takers are @ 48 vacancies out of 104 positions
 - Police Dispatcher is 16 vacancies out of 75

Dr. Kringen commented, in talking about staffing percentages, remember that any of the previous year comparisons because of the base number is so different, you have a substantial number of vacant positions that existed prior.

- Sworn Separations, retirements 89, resignations 15, and termination 1.

This was the final data shared in the Quarterly Stats Report and Dr. Kringen opened the floor for any questions.

Commissioner Ramirez – Are officers being re-assigned to work 911? Chief Henderson responded there is no reassigning of officers to work 911 Call Center, however they can volunteer and some officer have volunteered to work the 911 Communications (in night shift dispatchers). The last count of volunteers was nine Sgts that are volunteering and that’s on overtime at a rate of time and a half.

3. Bi-Annual WILDFIRE READINESS UPDATE (Resolution #20160512-016)

Chief Andre de la Reza and Justice Jones from Austin Fire Department presenting.

Chief de laReza began the presentation stating per the resolution #20160512-016, the Austin Fire Department was to provide a progress report every six month to the Public Safety Commission on the work AFD is doing towards Wildfire Readiness.

The presentation began with discussing some of the main metrics AFD is working on and continue to try and establish Wildfire Protection Plans in all areas of the City of Austin especially in high risk geographic areas without a plan. Currently they have 23 local level community Wildfire Protection Plans. In addition they (Austin Fire) have 24 additional community Wildfire Protection Plans and at the local level Austin Fire Department is working to finalize with communities at risk and that would cover a big proportion of high risk areas in the City of Austin. The percentage of high risk areas covered by a Community Wildfire Protection plan is 51%. This leaves 49% of the areas that are at high risk that aren’t covered by a plan and the 24 plans that I (Justice Jones) mentioned are pending will encompass a lot of that high risk geographic areas that is without a plan. People in these areas are working to educate themselves, their neighbors and are empowered to understand their role in Wildfire Risk Reduction.

Since the adoption of the WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) Code in 2019 there has been 7,200 structures built specifically designed to withstand wildfires. Austin Fire continues to lead the pack as the largest Municipality in the country to have adopted that WUI code, and continue to implement the code and work to expand the code as appropriate.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES by Austin Fire Department:

- Hired Fire Baptist Communities Coordinator
- Attend Town Hall Meetings
- Increased Climate Change Information
- Host Town Hall meetings across Austin and perimeter of Travis County to help get the word out and educate residents of what they can do to address wildfire risk
- Neighbor to Neighbor training

FUEL MITIGATION

- Hardening of homes – most important in case of Wild Fire event in their neighborhood
- Mitigation work is being done by partner agencies and it is not being reported to the hub, so sometimes getting the metrics turned in by them is a difficult thing
- Most important thing is we are working collaboratively toward getting fuel work done
- Some of the partners are; Austin Water Utility, Park and Recreation Department, Large Landowners in Austin.

Per Justice Jones it used to be that we (Austin Fire Department) had the only fuels crew in the game but that is no longer the case. Currently we are reorganizing and restructuring now so that Austin Fire can work with the 70% that wasn't addressed earlier. This means:

- Working with community members, residents, large business that have larger lands so they can be fire aware and have well-treated lands.

Training Hours

- 825 hours received
- 8,769 Training hours conducted in past six months
- Austin/AFD is one of the largest municipalities in Texas that is teaching and training our entire workforce to the nationally recognized responding to Interface training

Bonus Slide included

It is important to talk about mitigation and recovery efforts after winter storm Mara

- Downed trees if not identified and addressed would eventually become brush piles that would be dangerous and contribute to potential wildfire risk.

Per Chief de la Reza, AFD identified (used all of their crews) to patrol their neighborhood to identify, locate and put together each location/dot on a map/s that could be used by other City of Austin departments as well. Close to two thousand points/dots were on the map AFD created that need to be mitigated. This map was shared with the Stat Saw teams, City of Austin Public Works and Austin Energy department. This was a collaborative planned approach that increased efficiency and our town, community helped delay any potential future wildfire concerns.

Chief de la Reza closed with sharing one of the reasons we (AFD) are working so hard on the WUI Code and making our communities more wildfire resilient, is currently in the western states insurance companies are aware of the effort and they are incentivizing with insurance discounts. Lastly like

APD (Austin Police Department) we are working to update the metrics as well. Working to get you the information you need to help you make your decisions.

Questions were received from:

Commissioners Holmes, Bernhardt, Nguyen

4. Traffic Enforcement and Management

Chief of Staff, Henderson introduced Lt. White with Austin Police Department Highway Enforcement Command who presented on traffic enforcement and management. Lt. White began the presentation providing data and cost on crashes APD responded to in 2021.

- APD Time Spent on Crashes (2021)

- APD responded to 24,200 crashes (6% of all APD responses)

- APD response to these scenes included over 51,400 APD units and 56,000 APD staff, and 66,800 hours spent. The staffing costs in 2021 for crash response is estimated at 4.14million.

- Primary Concentration Areas are High-speed roadways such as Interstate-35 (North and South), Ben White Blvd, and US Hwy183

- Prioritization –Programs

There are programs that are grant funded to support help with traffic enforcement/management

- STEP (Selective Traffic Enforcement Program)

- MCSAP (Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program) There is opportunity for officers to work overtime in traffic management due to staffing shortages. The Highway Enforcement Command previously was the centralized component for on-duty proactive traffic enforcement, however staffing shortages required the reallocation of officers back to patrol with- the exception of five members of the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit. Currently individual patrol commands determine which areas to prioritize and resources to allocate.

Lt. White also provided data on number of traffic stops for 2022, 12,889 and reviewed the types of crashes APD responds to in 2022. If the vehicle is drivable and there are no injuries, officers are not sent to the crash scene. The expectations for APD in responding to crashes is to:

- to create a safe area
 - ensure injured parties are attended to by medical personnel
 - identify parties involved and ensure required information is exchanged
 - request tow truck as necessary
 - determine possible violations and take appropriate action
 - complete a TX Dot report when required

The closing of the presentation include information on roadway safety programs such as HERO (Highway Emergency Response Operator). This program reduces the need for officers to respond to incidents. This program can receive direct APD authorization to call for tow trucks on disabled vehicles. Austin is the first city to implement this program. Another program that helps APD with traffic management is AIMHigh (Austin-area Incident Mgmt

for Highways). Stakeholders in this program include APD, TXDOT, HERO and Austin Fire Department. Meetings are held quarterly to address topics focused on roadway safety in Austin area.

There was several questions and much discussion from the board members after the presentation.

Questions:

Electric Scooters data (Pena)

How does the 2022 numbers compare to previous years and how does staffing impact enforcement (Hausenfluck)

Does APD have an auxiliary unit staffed by volunteers similar to New York City? (Nguyen)

Of the 24, 000 crashes reported does that mean they (APD) was required to show up and clear/respond to the incident? (Ramirez)

When DPS (Department of Public Safety) writes tickets, does the money go to City of Austin? (Pena)

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION was revisited by Chair Bernhardt. Per Chair Bernhardt since the meeting was running 10minutes ahead of scheduled she would allow Ruth Moonesinghe and Johann Moonesinghe to speak. They spoke on the shooting of her son Rajan Moonesinghe by Austin Police Department and asked that their questions surrounding the shooting/death of their son be answered by APD.

Chair Bernhardt requested APD respond to the Moonesinghe's request for information on her son's case.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2023-2024

Chair Bernhardt opened the floor for nominations for President of the Public Safety Commission for the 2023-2024 term. Hearing no nominations Commissioner Bernhardt nominated Commission Nelly Ramirez for president, and Commissioner Hausenfluck seconded the motion. The vote was called:

VOTE:

Yes: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Hausenfluck, Holmes, Pena, Nguyen, Sierra-Arevalo, Hall-Martin

No: zero

Abstain: zero

Absent: Commissioners Ruttan and Kiracofe

Commissioner Ramirez was elected as the new President for 2023-2024 Public Safety Commission

Vice President nominations were called for by Chair Bernhardt. Commissioner Ramirez nominated Commissioner Bernhardt for Vice President for the 2023-2024 term, and motioned for the vote. Commissioner Pena seconded the motion.

Vote:

Yes: Commissioners Bernhardt, Hall-Martin, Sierra-Arevalo, Pena, Holmes Nguyen, Ramirez

No: zero

Abstain: zero

Absent: Commissioners Ruttan and Kiracofe

Future Agenda Items:

- Drug Use - Peña, Nguyen
- Entertainment District - Holmes, Ramírez
- HSEM Briefing - Nguyen
- Crime rates in outlying districts - Holmes
- DPS Update -
- 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 @ 5:51pm

The minutes were approved at the May 1, 2023 meeting on a vote of 8-0.