



***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022***

The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED meeting on 6th, JUNE, 2022 at 301 W. 2ND STREET in Austin, Texas.

Chair Bernhardt called the Public Safety Commission Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Rebecca Bernhardt, Chair

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Nelly Ramirez, Vice Chair
Rebecca Gonzales
John Kiracofe
Michael Sierra-Arevalo
Rebecca Webber

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Carlos Leon – complaint about a Cap Metro bus driver.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING on May 2, 2022.
The minutes from the meeting of (5/6/2022) were approved on Chief Bernhardt's calls for edits to the minutes after hearing no edits the minutes were deemed approved as read.

2. OLD BUSINESS

a. Austin Police Department Quarterly Report – creation of a working group on the make up of the Austin Police Department Quarterly Report metrics (sponsors: Commissioner Bernhardt and Ramirez) 4:11pm-4:12pm

Chair Bernhardt confirmed the working group will include Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez and Webber, along with APD staff.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Public Safety Organizations Quarterly Report – Austin-Travis County EMS (sponsors: Commissioner Hausenfluck and Gonzales) 4:12pm-4:27pm

Speaker(s):

- Teresa Gardner Assistant Chief, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services

Asst. Chief Gardner presented on total incidents, patient contacts, patient transports, and compliance by district. She also presented on staffing levels, which is seeing high levels of separations (mostly resignations) among field medics. Chief Gardner shared information about the Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) Program and the Buprenorphine Bridge Program (BBP), which sit with the Community Health Paramedic (CHP) Team. She also presented on the Collaborative Care Communications Center (C4) program. They have seen improvements in the rates of using telehealth and diverting from hospitals transports.

Chair Bernhardt asked about fentanyl test strips, Chief Gardner was not familiar with them.

b. Fiscal year 2022-2023 Budget, Public Safety Agencies, City of Austin (sponsors: Commissioner Ramirez and Bernhardt) 4:28pm-5:27pm

Speaker(s):

- Michelle Schmidt, Assistant Director, Austin Police Department

- Dr. Ronnelle Paulson, Assistant Director, Austin Fire Department

- Carlos Ledesma, Interim Assistant Director, Austin

- Travis County Emergency Medical Services

- Kathy Mitchell, Policy Coordinator at Just Liberty, Community Investment Budget

Michelle Schmidt presented on the APD budget. The FY22 budget is \$443.1 million, and includes 1809 sworn and 558 civilian positions. The FY23 forecasted budget is \$451.7 million, with 1,812 sworn and 499 civilian positions. Unfunded priorities includes a new helicopter, 11 civilian FTEs, civilianizing 6 sworn FTEs for the Real Time Crime Center, 4 detectives for the Sex Crimes Unit, and 6 civilians FTEs for compliance with Service Bill 111. Ms. Schmidt elaborated on the sex assault lawsuit – the City agreed for increased training, follow up audit, and two FTEs to fulfill the needs of that settlement. **Vice Chair Ramirez** asked about the Real Time Crime Center. Ms. Schmidt clarified it has been mostly staffed by sworn officers, and by civilianizing these positions, those officers can return to patrol. **Chair Bernhardt** asked how much the 911 center cost to run, which is over \$17 million per year.

Assistant Director Paulson presented on the AFD budget, which is \$219 million with 1,257 sworn and 143 civilian positions. There are 80 cadets in the academy. The forecast budget is \$228.7 million, just with cost drivers, which are primarily sworn personnel costs. There are also increased contract, equipment, and parental leave. Unfunded priorities are focusing on the Fire Marshall's Office, which largely consists of maintenance inspections and permitting.

Assistant Director Carlos Ledesma presented on the budget for EMS, which is \$105.8 million, with 664 sworn and 81.5 civilian positions. The forecast budget for FY 23 is \$111 million, driven by personnel and supply costs. The unfunded priorities are staffing, data analytics, technology, staff engagement and revenue enhancement. EMS is currently at 20% vacancy. **Commissioner Gonzales** asked about the whole blood program, which is a treatment initiated in the field for traumatic (severe blood loss) events. Currently it is only on two units, but would like to expand it. It is an expensive endeavor, but results in significant life savings. **Vice Chair Ramirez** asked when contract negotiation changes impact the budgets. This depends on when the contracts are ratified by council. It's hoped that it will happen before the fiscal year begins but could happen after, resulting in a budget amendment.

Kathy Mitchell presented on the Community Investment Budget, which was a collaboration of 30 groups. They propose that new money be focused on urgent public safety needs including staffing shortages and low wages at EMS, social services for eviction prevention, and gun violence prevention. Commissioner Gonzales asked if we could go through the unfunded positions to vote on supporting them or not.

Ms. Schmidt provided clarification of items required by the lawsuit and what was unfunded and how items end up on the unfunded list.

Commissioners went through all the Austin Police Department's unfunded lists item by item to vote aye or nay.

The majority vote for the Austin Police Department's helicopter replacement was nay.

Vote:

No: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo, Gonzales and Webber

Yes: Commissioner Kiracofe

Absent: Lane, Hall-Martin, Hausenfluck

Abstain: Zero

The majority vote for the Austin Police Department's 11 FTEs was aye.

Vote:

For: Commissioners Ramirez, Gonzales, Bernhardt, Kiracofe, Webber, and Sierra-Arevalo

Against: Zero

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hall-Martin, Hausenfluck

Abstain: Zero

The majority vote for Austin Police Department's civilianizing 6 sworn positions at the Real Time Crime Center was aye.

Vote: Unanimous

For: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Gonzales, Kiracofe, Webber and Sierra-Arevalo

Against: Zero

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hall-Martin, Hausenfluck

Abstain: Zero

The majority vote for adding detectives to the Austin Police Department's Sex Crimes Unit was aye.

Vote: Unanimous

For: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Gonzales, Kiracofe, Webber and Sierra-Arevalo

Against: Zero

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hall-Martin and Hausenfluck

Abstain: Zero

The majority vote for Austin Police Department's 6 civilian FTEs to comply with House Bill 111 was no/failed.

Vote:

For: Commissioners Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo, Gonzales, and Kiracofe

Against: Commissioners Bernhardt and Webber

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hausenfluck, and Hall-Martin

Abstain: Zero

Commissioners voted yes on Austin Fire Department unfunded priorities.

Vote: Unanimous

For: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo, Gonzales, Kiracofe, and Webber

Against: zero

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hall-Martin and Hausenfluck

Abstain: zero

Commissioners voted yes on EMS's unfunded priorities.

Vote: Unanimous

For: Commissioners Bernhardt, Ramirez, Sierra-Arevalo, Gonzales, Kiracofe and Webber

Against: zero

Absent: Commissioners Lane, Hall-Martin, and Hausenfluck

Abstains: zero

Vice Chair Ramirez put forth a motion, seconded by **Commissioner Webber** to recommend that City Council adopt the Community Investment Budget. The vote passed unanimous.

c. Staffing Study, Public Safety Agencies (sponsors: Commissioner Lewis and Ramirez) 5:28pm-6:00pm

Speaker(s):

- Joseph Chacon, Chief, Austin Police Department
- Dr. Jonathan Kringen, Data and Business Technology Manager, Austin Police Department
- Dr. Ronnelle Paulsen, Assistant Director, Austin Fire Department
- Teresa Gardner, Assistant Chief, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services

Chief Chacon presented on the staffing study. APD needs to reduce attrition and increase training capacity. Dr. Kringen presented on staffing numbers, which was based on forecasted crime and population. They have requested a total of 137 additional civilian positions just to keep up with workload. Over the next five years APD has requested 265 additional sworn positions over the next five years.

Chair Bernhardt asked what percentage of arrests are drug crimes vs. everything else. Austin Police department did not have that number at this time. APD will follow up with an analysis on officer hours spent on drug crimes.

Vice Chair Ramirez requested we begin to track the EMS drug programs and how diverting funds to community reinvestments can tip the scales.

Director Paulsen reported on staffing at Austin Fire Department. There are currently 108 vacancies, driven by new positions and separations, which are at about three per month. Attrition is high amongst firefighters with less than 10 years of service. There is an increased need for stations farther from the City center. City Council passed a resolution designating the need for five new stations in six years, which would all include EMS stations. There is an extreme need to expand the training facilities, and to overlap training with Austin Police Department and Emergency Medical Services.

Assistant Chief Gardner presented on staffing at EMS, which has 146 vacancies. The Recruitment Department only consists of two civilian staff, who have other administrative responsibilities as well. EMS wants to increase staffing in this department, eliminate the one-year experience requirement, and eliminate some automatic application disqualifications, and they have extended the hiring cycle. EMS would like to introduce a community EMT program to partner with community agencies to provide EMT programs.

d. How it works? What are all of the publicly available Austin Police Department data sets? Where can the public find each of them and how can they be used? (sponsors: Commissioner Ramirez and Bernhardt)

This item was not called during this session due to time constraints.

4. Future Agenda Items 6:01pm

Chair requested any items be emailed.

Adjourn @ 6:03pm

The minutes were approved at the August 1, 2022 meeting on Commissioner Hall-Martin's motion, Commissioner Ramirez second on a 7-0 vote.