



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY October 2, 2023

The PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION convened in a REGULAR CALLED MEETING on Monday, October 2, 2023 at City Hall Building, Boards and Commissions Rm, 301 W. 2nd Street, AUSTIN, TEXAS

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

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Nelly Ramirez, Chair
Kristy Orr
David Holmes
Pierre Nguyen

Tim Ruttan
Cory Hall-Martin
John Kiracofe

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Lauren Pena (started out with virtual attendance)

Absent: Commissioners Yasmine Smith, Rebecca Bernhardt and Lauren Pena (left meeting early)

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:

- Carlos Leon – Requested Police Report and Official Report number from Austin Police Department today, October 2, 2023
- Tate Carroll – Introduced Meba Software program and how the program could help 911 dispatchers’ workload/response times
- Mark Moonesinabe – signed up to speak on item #5

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Chair Ramirez** called for the approval of the minutes for September 11, 2023, Regular Meeting. **Commissioner Ruttan** motioned to vote to approve the minutes and **Commissioner Nguyen** second. The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

Vote for September 11, 2023, minutes

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

No: Zero

Abstain: Commissioner Kiracofe

Absent: Commissioners Smith and Pena (left the meeting an hour earlier/prior to meeting adjourn)

- 2. Staff Briefings** – AC Mason commented the Response to Resistance report would be provided at the next meeting. Unfortunately, due to the loss of an employee in the Planning department the report was not completed for this month. AC Mason asked Chair Ramirez if she needed any discussion on the response provided concerning 911? The responses were emailed to the commissioners prior to the meeting. Per Chair Ramirez, there was no discussion needed on the response.

3. Public Safety Quarterly Report for Austin Police Department

Speaker – Assistance Chief Mason

AC Mason shared a brief update with the board on the status their previous request for changes to the format of reporting the quarterly APD stats. Unfortunately, there were unexpected changes to personnel in the Research and Planning department that caused a delay in completing the changes requested, however for the next quarterly reporting by Austin Police department the changes will have been made. AC Mason thanked the board for their patience.

The stats on Citywide Crimes against property for fourth quarter 2023 were down 8%

Citywide Crimes against society were up by 5%

Citywide Clearances for Crimes against persons showed 993 cases cleared by arrest out of 994 cases with one suspended case pending victim readiness

Citywide Clearances for crimes against property showed 466 cleared by arrest with one case pending victim readiness for a total cases of 467.

Citywide Clearances for crimes against society showed 496 cleared by arrests out of the total 496 offenses.

Citywide Response times and call volumes for Emergency (PO) and Urgent (P1) calls for Q4 were presented with a citywide target time of 10:44

Response Times were also presented by council district with District 3 having the most calls for all types of calls, and District 10 having the lowest call volumes

Staffing Levels for sworn and civilian were presented along with explanations on vacancies.

The Civilian Emergency Communications staffing was shared and in particular the 911 Call Taker vacancies is down to 32 vacancies which APD is pretty proud of given that at one time the department was at 60 vacancies. Assistant Chief Mason, commented the APD HR department and APD training staff has done an amazing job in recruiting call takers. The increase in pay has helped to be able to recruit better and opportunities to apply for the cadet training at 21yrs of age has also helped with attracting some of the younger new hires.

Chief Henderson and I (AC Mason) were happy to report this progress to the City Manager last week.

The Sworn Authorizations and Separations for FY 2020 – 2023. The sworn separations for 2023, 98 retired, 45 resigned, 1 termination, and 1 death.

There were several questions from the board at the end of APD's 4th quarter presentation.

- What is a blended class such as Class #151?
- Regarding slide #18 on sworn separations, is that fiscal year or annual year number?
- Could the future APD quarterly reports include the number of community events held by APD?

4. Biannual Wildfire Readiness Update and discussion on wildfire mitigation

This presentation was kicked off by Assistant Chief Andre de la Rezza and Justice Jones, Wildfire Mitigation Officer. Three additional City of Austin Departments also presented their contributions/efforts towards Wildfire Mitigation/Management were; Austin Water Department, Austin Energy and Parks and Recreation Department.

Austin Fire Chief Vires introduced Assistant Chief Andre de la Reza and Wildfire Mitigation Officer Justice Jones as the presenters of the semi-annual update to the Public Safety Commission per Resolution No. 20160512-016. The update included:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan(CWPP)Update
 - local CWPP completed and implemented is 23
 - active and Engaged Communities by Council District
 - High Risk Areas data in which identification of potential local CWPP planning areas is still ongoing is 49%
- 2023 Education and Outreach
 - marketing campaign leveraging social and traditional media
 - working to increase the number of people notified of severe alerts
- Update on the number of public presentations and home assessments provided in the past six months.

Justice Jones updated the board on public presentations and home assessments and outreach efforts over the last six months. The closing topic was the number, size, type and location of fuel mitigation activities reported by partners in the past six month.

Next to present was Amanda Ross, Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)

Chair Ramirez commented the additional City of Austin departments were invited today so everyone know it is not just Austin Fire Department who works/contributes to the Wildfire Readiness updates.

Amanda Ross, began the presentation by sharing how PARD Land Management program began as a result of a 2019 Wildfire Audit that recommended PARD create and implement land management plans with a priority on "high-risk properties". PARD begin to work on steps they needed to take to work on land management of PARD proprieties. Initially there was a team of two staff working on this task. PARD began work based on the recommendation from the 2019 Audit and has completed a Parks and Recreation Land Management Guide that was approved by Austin City Council on September 21, 2023. PARD manages 10, 347 acres of parkland natural areas. The link to the website (PARD Land Management Program) was shared since the document is over 200 pages, Amanda shared using the link on their website to read/search in the document was much more user friendly. Per Amanda, this land management of the PARD properties is a long process but they will continue to work in areas that need land management.

Chris Vetromile, Wildfire Program Manager, Austin Energy

Per Chris, he has been on the job for two months, and that their program is in the infancy stage, but they are going forward with following Wildfire Mitigation efforts to help prevent wildfires by strengthening our electrical system. Three main areas of Austin Energy’s focus is:

1. Resilient Landscapes
2. Fire Adapted Infrastructure
3. Safe and Effective Wildfire Response

Austin Energy want to harden the grid itself and keep power on for all residents. Austin Fire coordinates directly with Austin Energy’s control center in an effort to isolate potential problem area/s and restore power as quickly as possible when working on Wildfire Response/s.

Sheri Khul, Environmental Resource Officer, Austin Water

shared the role of Wildland Conservation Division at Austin Water.

The role in a fire adapted community is to manage fire use and fire potential to benefit watersheds, habitat, and public safety.

- Fuels Reduction Projects
- Ignition Prevention
- Ecological Restoration
- Prescribed Burning
- Cooperative Projects (Austin Water is a part of Austin/Travis County Wildfire Coalition and works with Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division)
- Long Range Planning

Sheri reported that Austin Water Facility Assessments have been completed and implementation is underway.

Assistant Chief de la Reza –closed the wildfire updates by thanking all of the departments/parties presenting today and reiterated this is truly a community collaboration to prevent wildfires.

Questions from Public Safety Commissioners:

- Austin Energy and vegetation management, there are a lot of areas with dead vegetation along power lines that needs to be removed. Do you have enough staff to do the work?
- Communication to all residents, about cutting tree limbs on lines, is there assigned staffing that does the notification?
- Is there any resources available for private land owners who don’t have the funds for tree trimming?
- Who helps with private land owners, who are Spanish speaking only?

5. Discussion of Austin Police Department protocols and procedures on communication with families after officer-involved shootings

Public Speakers:

- Ms. Gonzales
- Mark Moonesinshe

Chair Ramirez reminded everyone prior to beginning the discussion this is a highly sensitive topic and to be sensitive to each other. I am disappointed to learn minutes before our meeting is getting ready to begin, that the Office of Police Oversight would not be joining us today.

AC Mason was called to present, and shared what the policies around an Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) are and who is notified of the shooting along with who from APD reports to the scene. Information at a scene does change over time. Press conference is done at crime scene and detectives are on the scene to investigate and they request a SOP(Single Point of Contact) for the family. **Kachina Clark**, Director of Victim Services for APD was asked to present on the role of Victim Services at an OIS. Per Kachina Clark, when there is an OIS we have counselors who work with patrol officers on the scene. The APD, Special Investigation Unit will reach out if additional assistance is needed during their investigation. When the BWC (Body Worn Camera) video is released we felt it is very important for the family of the victim to see the video before it is release to the public. Victim Services works with the Communications department to help coordinate a viewing of the video with the family prior to the public release. Victim Services will attend the video viewing with the family if they want them to be there with them.

Chair Ramirez asked if Victim Services coming to the scene of OIS was policy. Kachina responded it is not policy. **Chair Ramirez** asked if there was any type of playbook for the steps of APD responding and notifying the families when there is an OIS. **AC Mason** responded no, it is a fluid situation, and as soon as a detective wraps up a scene they contact the family.

Interim Chief of Police, Robin Henderson responded there isn't a standard sequence of contact as policy as each situation being different so unique.

There were additional questions from the board:

-Victim Services, how much resources are put toward notifying families?

Response: the majority of Victim Services team is dedicated to the community members and the Peer Support program is for the officers.

-Is there a certain amount of time that a family has to be notified by?

Response, no there is not a set amount of time.

-Who requests/calls Victim Services to the scene?

Response: The APD Supervisor on scene requests Victim Services to the scene.

In closing the discussion, Chair Ramirez asked the commissioners if anyone was interested in assisting with drafting a resolution after there has been a presentation/discussion with Office of Police Oversight.

6. Vote on the 2024 Public Safety Commission Calendar

Chair Ramirez asked the board be aware of the updated calendar showing the April 8, 2024 date remove and April 1, 2024 as the correct date listed for the monthly meeting.

Commissioner Kiracofe motioned to approve the 2024 calendar and Commissioner Nguyen second.

Vote: Unanimous

7. Commission for Women and Public Safety Commission Joint Working Group Update

Chair Ramirez commented there was no new action to report to the PSC, but please note that there would be a presentation coming soon to the Public Safety Commission after the update is presented to the Women's Commission.

Future Agenda Items:

Victim Services Overview/Role in general (Cory Hall-Martin)

Explanation of agenda item process to avoid last minute pulling of an agenda item (Ruttan)

Language Access and how does each public safety department use/address it (Nguyen & Holmes)

Adjourned @ 5:58pm

The minutes were approved at the November 6, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Ruttan's motion and Commissioner Nguyen's second on a 6-0.

