



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
May 2, 2022**

**The Public Safety Commission convened a hybrid in person and videoconferencing meeting Monday, May 2, 2022 at City Hall 301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.**

**Commissioner Rebecca Bernhardt** called the Board Meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Kathleen Hausenfluck  
Nelly Ramirez  
Amanda Lewis  
Rebecca Gonzalez  
Rebecca Webber

Michael Sierra-Arevalo  
John Kiracofe  
Rocky Lane  
Cory Hall-Martin

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Gonzales, Queen Austin and John Kiracofe

**CALL TO ORDER 4:03-4:04pm**

**Public Communication 4:05pm (none)**

**Items for Presentation, Discussion and Possible Action:**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 4, 2022 4:04pm-4:05pm**

Approved with corrections. Update was to add Chief Wade covering as AFD Executive Liaison while Chief of Staff Vires was absent.

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Public Safety Organizations Quarterly Report – Austin Police Department** (sponsors: Commissioner Hausenfluck and Gonzales) 4:05pm-4:40pm

**Speaker(s):**

- Dr. Jonathan Kringen, Research and Planning- Austin Police Department

Chief Mason introduced himself and Dr. Kringen, who presented the quarterly report for APD. Specifically, he presented on crimes against persons (aggravated assaults continue to increase);

crimes against property crimes (opportunity-based crime is increasing); and crimes against society (weapons law violations have significantly increased). He also introduced Jason Matson, the new manager for the Research and Planning and Crime Analysis Units. He reported that citywide, APD is two minutes slower than the target eight minutes and 30 seconds for call response time. Primary overtime expenditures are due to staffing levels, with about 209 operational vacancies. There are 127 vacancies in civilian staffing positions. Commissioner Webber asked about aggravated assaults committed by police officers and cleared aggravated assaults. He further explained the FBI reporting requirements. Commissioner Lewis asked about domestic violence data within aggravated assault numbers. Dr. Kringen responded that they are mostly concerned about the non-family violence levels, which have increased more significantly, but that they can start presenting on it. Vice Chair Ramirez commented that she'd like to shift away from number charts and towards more specific issues.

**b. Introduction of new Chief, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services** (sponsors: Commissioner Gonzales and Ramirez) *4:40pm-4:51pm*

**Speaker(s):**

- Robert Luckritz, Chief - Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services

Chief Luckritz introduced himself to the Commission. He stated that what Austin/Travis County EMS was experiencing with staffing was happening across the country, but that we are really well situated to improve circumstances. Commissioner Lane asked about plans for equity and staffing improvements. He stated that EMS in Austin was already such an incredible position in how it already responds to public health and crises, and he sees them as potentially being able to move into a more preventative organization. Commissioner Webber asked about how the paramedic hotline would continue. Chief Luckritz stated that the hotline was the future of EMS and that he wanted to see it grow.

**c. Labor Negotiations Update and EMS Public Safety Pay Equity Recommendation** (sponsors: Commissioner Webber and Bernhardt) *4:51pm-5:24pm*

**Speaker(s):**

- Lee Crawford, Law Department, City of Austin
- Kenneth Casaday, President, Austin Police Association
- Selena Xie, President, Austin EMS Association
- Chris Harris, Director of Policy, Austin Justice Coalition

Selena Xie presented on current contract negotiations for EMS. EMS medics start at \$19 an hour, and the City's offer (\$0.14 raise) is not sufficient. EMS is 25% vacant. At the current pay rates, they cannot fill a class of EMT basics. The competition for medics is very high. EMS faces great danger, especially around COVID-19, road rage, assaults, and less support and staff than fire and police. Commissioner Ramirez asked where attrition was happening, to which Chief Gardner responded that it was happening on both ends – with many retiring and many leaving very early on in the careers. She will include those details in the report next month. Ms. Xie also pointed out that many EMT basics join EMS while waiting to hear on offers at Fire and APD, and leave once they are accepted. Chair Bernhardt expressed frustration around living wages and the way that system was set up. Commissioner Lane expressed that the City's decision not to come to this meeting was

unacceptable. Chair Bernhardt put forth a recommendation that the City raise their offer to be comparable to other agencies in Austin and other EMS agencies in the state and country. Commissioner Webber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chris Harris presented on the APD negotiations. He stated that the City has made strong proposals, including to pull oversight entities out of the contract and to end the use of a “G file,” or personnel records that are essentially sealed. The City of Austin has paid out \$13 million in response to police force cases from the protests, but not a single officer has faced discipline.

**d. Discussion of Hazard Mitigation Plan in Public Safety Departments** (sponsors: Commissioner Gonzales and Bernhardt) *5:24pm-5:52pm*

**Speaker(s):**

- Rachel Scott and Richard Brimer, Environmental Commissioners
- James Mason, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department
- Jeff Kennedy, Chief, Austin Fire Department
- Teresa Gardner Assistant Chief, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Service

Rachel Scott presented on hazards people face in the City of Austin. The most significant issue, according to FEMA, is tornados. The last EF4 tornado was 25 years ago, but the frequency is expected to increase. She expressed concern that a public school could not apply for a private FEMA grant, and that many residents do not have accessible shelter. She expressed concern as well that the building codes in Austin are not strong enough to withstand strong, tornado force winds.

Chief Mason discussed who would be lead on command posts depending on the crisis.

Chief Kennedy talked about preparedness and being proactive in severe weather, such as earlier warnings, hazard mitigation, crowd control and plans in place for rescue task forces. Chair Bernhardt asked if the City needed to build shelters. He responded that it wasn’t his expertise but that Homeland Security would be a good resource.

**3. Future Agenda Items** *5:52-5:55pm*

Chair Ramirez – scaling traffic enforcement

Hausenfluck – traffic fatalities, pedestrian included

All commissioners need to submit their statement of financial disclosure (today)

Chair Ramirez – budgets

**Adjourn @ 5:56pm**

**Chair Bernhardt called for any edits to the minutes, and hearing no edits she deemed the minutes approved.**