



**Public Safety Committee
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
August 24, 2015**

The Public Safety Committee convened in a regular meeting on Monday, August 24, 2015 at 301 W. Second St. in Austin, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Zimmerman called the Board Meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Don Zimmerman, Chair; Greg Casar, Vice-Chair; Ora Houston; Leslie Pool

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on June 22, 2015 by a unanimous vote.

2. CITY STAFF BRIEFING REGARDING NAMING A NEW PERMANENT MUNICIPAL COURT CLERK.

Sonya Alexander-Harry shared Recruitment Review, Interview Logistics and an updated Timeline for the hiring process for filling the Municipal Court Clerk position. Two interview panels will conduct in-person interviews with the top four candidates on Friday, August 28, 2015. A top candidate will be identified and pre-employment checks will be conducted. The Council will appoint the top candidate at a to-be-determined date in September. They will use a numerical scoring that way they can fall to the second candidate if the first candidate does not accept the position.

3. 4:20 PM: STAFF BRIEFING, INVITED TESTIMONY, AND POLICY DISCUSSION REGARDING MUNICIPAL JUDGE HIRING PRACTICES.

Judge Sherry Statman provided a briefing regarding the Municipal Judge hiring practices and the recruitment process.

- Judge Statman shared that there is a need for additional judges and outlined the needs and reasons why. She pointed out that she currently has a very diverse team.
- During the hiring process the Public Safety Committee may accept the evaluation panel recommendations or conduct additional interviews.
- Judge Statman shared an invitation to Committee Members to tour the Court anytime. They have building needs due to the age and current quality of their building that will need to be addressed in the upcoming future.
- Committee Members inquired and discussed the workload for the municipal judges, diversity in the hiring process and types of cases on the docket.

4. 4:40 PM: STAFF BRIEFING, INVITED TESTIMONY, AND POLICY DISCUSSION REGARDING POLICE DEPARTMENT FISCAL YEAR 2015-16 BUDGET

Chief of Staff Bryan Manley provided an overview of the budget for the Austin Police Department.

Committee Members asked questions related to grants, number of officers assigned to federal task force and about pension funding. Chief Manly indicated that they apply for grants, but not for military-style grants. He will follow up with Committee Members on the question about how many APD officers are assigned to the Federal Task Force. Chair Zimmerman asked about pension funding and why that isn't covered in the budget. Chief Manley indicated that it is budgeted in other areas.

Speakers:

1. Jason Quintero, Texas Public Policy Foundation
2. Bill Horsham, Citizen

Chief Manley addressed the comments by Mr. Quintero and Mr. Horsham. Committee Members asked about vacancy savings and Human Resources Department Director, Mark Washington, responded that it is used to offset other costs that have been incurred.

5. 5:10 PM: CITY STAFF BRIEFING, INVITED TESTIMONY, AND POLICY DISCUSSION REGARDING EMS FISCAL YEAR 2015-16 BUDGET.

Chief of Operations, Jasper Brown provided an overview of the budget for the Emergency Medical Services Department. He acknowledged questions about lack of diversity in EMS and gave information on how the department has addressed increasing diversity. He explained the process of new cadets coming into the Academy to Committee Member Houston. When applicants come to EMS they already have one of these medical certifications: EMT, Intermediate or Paramedic. Applicants have a higher level of education in emergency medicine before they come into the department. Diversity has increased in the department. Recruitment is done at local community colleges and EMS has expanded recruitment to South Texas. We also are involved in an AISD program, Health Occupation of Student Association (HOSA).

Speakers:

1. Tony Marquardt, Austin – Travis County EMS Employee Association

Chief Brown addressed the comment about the Office of the Medical Director and pointed out that they are a separate department. Assistant City Manager Rey Arellano addressed Chair Zimmerman's comments on sharing resources.

6. 5:40 PM: STAFF BRIEFING, INVITED TESTIMONY, AND POLICY DISCUSSION REGARDING FIRE DEPARTMENT FISCAL YEAR 2015-16 BUDGET.

Chief of Staff Tom Dodds provided an overview of the budget for the Austin Fire Department.

Speakers:

1. Mike Levy, Citizen
2. Bob Nicks, Local 975

7. 6:10 PM: STAFF BRIEFING, INVITED TESTIMONY, AND POLICY DISCUSSION REGARDING CODE COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT FISCAL YEAR 2015-16 BUDGET.

Director Carl Smart provided an overview of the budget for the Code Compliance Department. He addressed questions regarding noise levels being enforced and new reforms that are being asked to enforce.

Director Smart said they are looking at these items and will be sharing information with Council in the near future. He mentioned that there are some codes which are very difficult to enforce; specifically short term rentals and as pointed out by Committee Member Houston unregulated homes are in need of enforcement. Director Smart is working on an Ordinance to help with regulating these homes so that they are safe for the occupants.

Speakers:

Dale Flatt, Citizen

Chair Zimmerman commented that most problems with short term rentals are quality of life issues due to inappropriate behavior by the renters. Director Smart explained that Code Enforcement Officers receive a lot of training to become an officer and they are some of the best trained officers in the state. In response to caseloads, certain cases may take a lot longer to handle than others.

8. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

SPEAKERS SIGNED UP PRIOR TO THIS ITEM BEING CALLED WILL EACH BE ALLOWED THREE MINUTES TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS REGARDING ITEMS POSTED OR NOT POSTED ON THIS AGENDA.

Speakers:

1. David Roach, President Elect for Greater Austin Crime Commission
2. John Woodley, Citizen

ADJOURN

Chair Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m., without objection.

The minutes were approved on this the 28th day of September 2015 on a unanimous vote.