



**Public Safety Commission  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, October 5, 2015**

The Public Safety Commission convened in a regular meeting on Monday, October 5, 2015 at City Hall, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Kim Rossmo called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dr. Kim Rossmo, Chair	Daniela Nunez
Rebecca Gonzales	Ed Scruggs
John Hernandez	William Worsham
Brian Haley	
Sam Holt	
Michael Levy	

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

Rebecca Webber

**Staff in Attendance:**

Brian Manley, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department  
Brian Tanzola, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department  
James Shamard, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Janet Jackson, Constituent Liaison, Austin Police Department

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- The minutes for the regular meeting on 10/05/2015 were approved on Commissioner Worsham's motion, Commissioner Hernandez's second and a vote of 9-0  
Rebecca Webber, Vice Chair was not in attendance

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- Alan Roddy, Citizen and former member of Lake Austin Task Force spoke on 50ft No Wake Zone and stated LCRA does not require buoys for Wake Zones. Mr. Roddy requested that the members of the Lake Austin Task Forces be placed on a future Public Safety Commission agenda to address information that was in the resolution they submitted to Council.

**3. LABOR LEADERS' INTRODUCTIONS**

- **Kenneth Casaday, President of Austin Police Association** Mr. Casaday introduced himself to the board and mentioned the main topics of his discussion were Special Events, Health Care Costs for Austin Police Officers, and Sixth Street. His comments on Special Events; currently private entities are coming to Austin and making millions, but are not paying their fair share of the cost to the City of Austin. Special Events are receiving too many fee waivers from the City Council. In reference to SXSW one of the largest Special Events in Austin is consuming way too many Austin Police officers

during Spring Break. Per, Mr. Casaday officers would like time off to spend with their families but are unable to take off due to overtime requests/demands from staff. Detectives from other areas are coming to work SXSU events.

**Health Care** - Officers received a 1% raise, but that was eaten up by the increase in health care cost.

**6<sup>th</sup> Street Entertainment District** - is out of control. APD does not have enough personnel to work the district. Recently a shooting was committed with five police cars nearby. Majority of people on 6<sup>th</sup> Street have no fear/respect for the police. Mr. Casaday shared other violent events that occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and police officers on duty hands were tied largely due to being outnumbered by the party goers. Mr. Casaday praised the efforts of the mounted patrol officers on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and described their presence as invaluable in helping with crowd control. Questions from board members:

Commissioner Holt asked about the possibility of recruiting retirees from Austin Police department to assist with 6<sup>th</sup> street and Special Events. Chief Manley responded there are five main events each year and the initial cost to bring on retirees is not an option due to financial costs. Each of the retirees would require the same equipment and training as a fulltime officer and currently it would be very costly. Commissioner Levy asked about underage serving and “where is TABC in all of this” and Casaday couldn’t answer on the state’s position other than to say it is a state issue and they would have to address/respond. Casaday mentioned the need for 80% main staffing and the fact there is a challenge to hire during the current climate across the US towards police officers. Commissioner Scruggs asked a question concerning “Open Carry” and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Commissioner Nunez inquired about programs of support for Austin Police Officers. Commissioner Rossmo advised Casaday to collect data, data, data on the various costs of Special Events to the City of Austin which helps Public Safety Commission in making recommendations to the Council concerning fee waivers for Special Events.

- **Bob Nicks, President of Austin Fire Fighters Association** – six years as president of Austin Fire Fighters Association. He is a 30 year veteran of Austin Fire Department and earned Rank of Battalion Chief. There were several topics of discussion by Mr. Nicks:
  - Hazards Response Times throughout the City of Austin
  - Shady Hollow new Fire Station in southeast Austin improved response time(10-15minutes)
  - Travis County –most justified for a fire station but no plans for one
  - Response times
  - Annexation – went from annexing whole blocks to small strips, results annexation without representation
  - Wildland Fires – still allowing Austin Water Department to fight fires
  - Firewise – is not a good idea to stop at the idea if you take care of the land it will prevent fires.
  
- **Tony Marquet, President of Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services Association-** has served as President since 2012. There were three topics for discussion, Interlocal Agreement, New Medical Director and Strategic Planning.
  - **Interlocal Agreement** – there were several comments on issues/challenges with the agreement. There was a need for a matrix page to be established (show performance report)and uploaded for public review. This matrix need has been met. Discussion on Emergency Service Districts and one of the districts (Pflugerville) considering a proposal to run their own Emergency Medical Services. The impact of an independent Emergency Service District on the Interlocal Agreement is something the new Medical Director would need to weigh in on.
  - **Medical Director** – There will be a national search for a new medical director. Chair Rossmo asked if the ATCEMA would be involved in the search for new director. Tony responded that the union would like to be involved. There are several items they feel the new director would need to be prepared to address; a) Credentials and current process in

place and how to improve the process or create new process. b)Emergency Service Districts, like Pflugerville considering/proposing to run their own Emergency Medical Service. Determining if Pflugerville would need to provide data driven information to measure performance, ensuring they would have resources to meet and work with current Emergency Medical Services systems already in place. Question from Commissioner Nunez to Mr. Marquardt, what would be an ideal candidate for a Medical Director? Mr. Marquardt response; someone who has experience as an emergency physician and someone who has engaged in systems and designs of projects such as community health programs, government related health issues and programs for city and county. Commissioner Levy asked, if you have a seriously ill family member and which combination would best serve the call for treatment, two paramedics or one paramedic and one EMT? Mr. Marquardt 's response was it's more important for a combination of equity that credentials. Commissioner Levy referenced a previous conversation with Mr. Marquardt where it was mentioned he would like to see Emergency Medical Services return to a dual paramedic system. Mr. Marquet mentioned he would like to see the current EMS system transition to a model similar to Australia's where nurses are a part of the team and continuing education provides for paramedics and EMTs to become nurses should they wish to take that route.

- o Strategic Planning – Mr. Marquardt commented the planning should include continuing review of staffing (EMT vs Paramedics) impact on the current system, collaborative efforts from city management, labor unions and all vested parties to agree on measurements moving forward, mainly retention. He would like to see more discussion with Public Safety Commission Board and the union where status reports and data are shared with the board in hopes the communication will bring about a recommendation from the board to the Council.

#### 4. CHIEF'S INTRODUCTIONS

- **Ernesto Rodriquez, Chief of Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services** – comes to City of Austin with 35 years of experience working in the public and private areas of Emergency Medical services. He is currently near completing a Master's Degree. Some of his goals are to manage fatigue among the workforce, review the 30 year retirement plan, retention of employees and exploring possible ways Austin Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services can work together to save/combine resources.
  - o Workforce Fatigue- Mr. Rodriquez commented that after approximately 16 yrs of employment in Emergency Medical services some employees suffer or are prone to depression, divorce and sometimes suicide. One step that has been taken to provide resources to the workforce is the hiring of a psychologist.
  - o Retention of employees- requires both sides working together. Mr. Rodriquez mentioned a top priority is to get to a 42 hour work week
  - o 30 years Retirement Plan – EMS employees work 48 hrs work week as opposed to 40 hrs week for other departments employees. By the time 30 yrs come they have worked considerably more hours than others. In addition to that difference is due to the requirements of an EMT or Paramedic most are not going to be physically able to perform the job for 30 yrs.
- In closing Mr. Rodriguez mentioned 61% increase (higher than five years ago) in transportation for EMS. Commissioner Rossmo asked for the reason for the increase. Commissioner Nunez asked about the impact of transporting patients to and from the nursing homes. One explanation offered for the increase in transportation is due to Universal Health Care Challenge to serve everyone as the population continues to depend upon the government for health care; and directions from the former City of Austin/Travis County Emergency Services Medical Director. Some of the calls for service

could have been handled by a clinic as opposed to going to the Emergency Room. Commissioner Worsham commented on the 30yr retirement and the possibility of Austin Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services combing units. There was also discussion on hiring more staff and the recent approval of two new positions for EMS by Council. A future agenda item was added from this discussion.

- **Rhoda Mae Kerr, Chief of Austin Fire Department** – 33yrs in Fire Service and the last six and half years have been with Austin Fire Department. One of the main priorities is everyone goes home at the end of the day, and to give the best service we can to the city of Austin. Currently we are looking to the private sector to use resources/lease space for future Fire Stations. In June 2016 a new fire station will open in Shady Hollow and in 2017 expected to open new station in Onion Creek. However, there is still a need for four new fire stations by 2018. Question from Commissioner Worsham, is Austin Fire Department behind the matrix on hiring due to the Department of Justice decision? Yes, JOD has to approve Austin Fire Department hiring process, and Chief Kerr offered to bring in her Assistant Director in the future to explain the hiring delays. There was discussion on 911 call takers receiving a call until 911 arrives on the scene. A couple of items for future Public Safety Commission Agenda came from Chief Kerr’s presentation.

## **5. DEPARTMENT BRIEFING**

### **- Assistant Chief Brian Tanzola, Austin Fire Department**

- An Austin Fire Department organization chart was provided for all the board members. Assistant Chief Tanzola presented on Prevention, Preparedness and Effective Emergency Response. He spoke on Austin Fire Department’s staff which consist of 1,147 sworn positions and 97 civilian positions. Currently there is a 98% of all responses by Austin Fire Department within eight minutes or less. Austin Fire Department has 100% of the fire fighters trained to the National Basic standard of Wildland Fire Fighting. Information was shared on other duties of Fire Department
- Inspection Station – boots on the ground department that is responsible for inspecting mobile vending trucks, fireworks works, and inspecting special events. Austin Fire Department also handles temporary permits and public assemblies.
- Austin Fire Department participates in public outreach and education by going to schools giving safety presentations, community relations (Back-to-School parades) and recurring fairs. AFD goals are zero fire deaths, increase number of smoke alarms in homes and educate renters on responsibility of landlords to provide smoke alarms.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Review Body Worn Cameras (request from Public Safety Committee)
- EMS provide date on 61% increase in transportation over last five years
- Potential amalgamation of Austin Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services

**There was a request for information from Commissioner Levy to Public Safety Departments; increments of calls+8+10+16+18**

## **7. ADJOURN**

**Chair Rossmo adjourned the meeting at 6:00p.m. without objection. (No motion, second or vote is required to adjourn the meeting unless there is an objection to adjourning.)**