

April 26, 2019

Public Safety Commission
Commission for Women
301 W. Second St.
Austin, Texas 78701

Via email to joe.silva@austintexas.gov

Joe Silva
City Manager's Office
301 W. Second St.
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: procurement process for the Comprehensive Evaluation of Sexual Assault Investigations

Dear Joe:

We are writing in our capacity as the spokespersons for the Commission for Women and the Public Safety Commission regarding the procurement process for the "Comprehensive Evaluation of Sexual Assault Investigations". Thank you for continuing to facilitate the Commissions' participation in this process.

We write in response to your April 8, 2019 correspondence regarding the role of the Public Safety Commission and Commission for Women in the procurement process. You proposed that the Public Safety Commission and Commission for Women would each designate a single commissioner to participate in development of the contract with the finalist.

We respectfully propose that the Public Safety Commission and Commission for Women will each designate two commissioners and a third alternate commissioner to participate in selection of the finalist and development of the contract with the finalist. Our proposal is in keeping with the intent of the January 31, 2019 Council resolution requiring the comprehensive evaluation.

Part of the purpose for this evaluation—and for our participation in the procurement process—is to rebuild community trust and to improve transparency. While the City's anti-lobbying and procurement rules do not allow for full transparency and full public input into the procurement process here, our participation serves as a kind of proxy for the public-at-large.

By way of example, the resolution calls for maintenance of public trust and engagement with the public and stakeholders:

WHEREAS, one of the core responsibilities of the municipal government and the local police department in dealing with sexual assault is to maintain public trust by ensuring that survivors receive justice and to help their healing process by being careful not to retraumatize them, all while ensuring due process; NOW

...

The selected entity will have a **demonstrated commitment to engage with the public**, governmental stakeholders, and non-governmental stakeholders in the process of evaluating a governmental agency's response to public health and public safety issues.

The resolution also calls for transparency regarding the results of evaluation:

The written report shall be **posted in a prominent place** on the City's website.

...

The **report shall be delivered and presented by the third-party entity conducting the evaluation to the Public Safety Commission and the Commission for Women** at the next scheduled meeting or at a special-called meeting of those commissions. **Any other commission may receive a formal presentation** by the Office of the City Manager as mutually scheduled.

Finally, the resolution directs that the recommendations arising out of the comprehensive evaluation should include ways to improve collaboration with the community and transparency:

- The establishment of a **collaborative community process** with inclusion of the City of Austin Commission for Women and Public Safety Commissions (and other City of Austin commissions as recommended), and local subject matter experts and entities that work directly with sexual assault survivors to provide periodic and ongoing policy recommendations for policy makers and the City Manager that could be used to guide efforts to improve system responses for survivors of sexual assault;

...

- Recommendations to **improve transparency** and the ongoing sharing of data and findings to the Council and the public; and

We believe that our proposal—which will allow for participation by the Public Safety Commission and Commission for Women in the entire procurement process—reflects Council's goals for this comprehensive evaluation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Webber, Public Safety Commission

Rebecca Bernhardt, Public Safety Commission

Rebecca Gonzales, Public Safety Commission

Amanda Lewis, Commission for Women

Dyana Limon-Mercado, Commission for Women