



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, June 3, 2019**

The Public Safety Commission convened a meeting Monday, June 3, 2019 at City Hall in the Boards & Commission Room, at 4:00pm, 301 West 2nd Street, Austin Texas 78701.

Ed Scruggs, Chair called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Ed Scruggs	Noel Landuyt
Daniela Nunez	Rebecca Gonzales
Selena Alvarenga	Chris Harris
Kathleen Hausenfluck	

Board Member Absent: Preston Tyree and Rebecca Bernhardt

Staff in Attendance:

Troy Gay, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department
Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services

- **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Commissioner Scruggs asked if there were any changes/corrections to the May 6, 2019 minutes and hearing none he asked for motioned to approve. Commissioner Webber motioned to approve the minutes and **Commissioner Rebecca Gonzales** second the motion. Minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS –

- Carlos Leon – Morals and values across the country; Cap Metro bus drivers
- Juliana Gonzales, Senior Director of Sexual Assaults at SAFE Alliance – presented monthly data for April 2019 and commented on number of survivors served at Eloise House in the month of April 2019.
- Citizen (no name) – seeking assistance with an attempted eviction from her apartment
- David Davis – Requested assistance to encourage Travis County to file charges against a physician committing sexual assault against patients.

- James Richardson, UT Student – Item #45 on June 6, 2019 City Council Agenda – Repealing the No Sit/No Lie Ordinance

3. Quarterly stats from public safety department – authorized strength, vacancies, overtime hours, call volume, response times.

Commissioner Scruggs reminded the board this quarterly report from EMS is being presented today due to Chief of Staff, Jasper Brown absence for the May 2019 meeting. COS Brown presented the quarterly numbers on:

Authorized Strength – Filled 509 Vacancy 48 (Communications Division currently only has one vacancy, the gap has been decreased significantly) and expecting overall gap to close/decrease even more within the next 3-6months.

Overtime- EMS currently at 62/% of our overtime budget

Call Volume and Response times - Overall Compliance is at 9% and there is fluctuation on the numbers between districts with Districts 8 and 10 having the highest number of priority calls.

A handout of all the data from EMS was provided to the commissioners. **Commissioner Alvarenga** asked for clarification on the built in overtime (42hours work week); and COS Brown responded.

4. Risk Management in Public Safety – sponsored by Commissioners Webber, Bernhardt, Harris and Landuyt

Commissioner Scruggs welcomed this item on Risk Management and asked Commissioner Webber to introduce the item as one of the co-sponsors. **Commissioner Webber** begin the introduction by reminding the commissioners of their role to look at all aspects of public safety not just the monthly/quarterly data that is provided on response times, vacancies, etc. It is important to also examine within the public safety departments and consider working to revise policy/ies that could provide a savings to the City of Austin budget in the future. In addition to saving financially, we could also save on the human cost, which is equally important. **Commissioner Harris** offered additional comments on why he co-sponsored this item and stated it is important for the City of Austin to have checks and balances in the workplace to ensure the same types of offenses do not continue without consequences.

Hannah (citizen) thanked the commissioners for allowing her to share her story with them. She stated she is a victim of sexual assault and it has taken her over a decade to get here; where she is able to sit in a room and tell her story. She became an advocate when she realized that her case did not matter. Her case was not prosecuted. Per Hannah, sexual assaults cases are not prosecuted in Travis County. Hannah closed her comments with “victims are not the reason rapes are not prosecuted”. **Elizabeth Myers and Jennifer Ecklund with Thomspen & Knight LLP** presented a notebook to the commissioners on data they had compiled/tracked on behalf of their plaintiffs in the Class Action suit against the City of Austin and Travis County. Elizabeth elaborated on the data included in the he notebooks and mentioned there are 8 plaintiffs in this lawsuit , however since the filing of the lawsuit they have received calls from 75-100 women who want to share their story of being raped.

Elizabeth offered kudos to the City of Austin for the recent actions they have taken in particular the resolution introduced by Council Member Alter in January 2019 and passed by the council.

What do her clients want?

- Systemic change/improvements
- Victims to be believed when they come forward
- Rapist in prison

Solutions- what her clients think solutions should look like:

- Transparency
- Audit of DA's Office
- Learning from other jurisdictions
- Continued oversight of DA's office

Two questions at the end of the presentation: one **from Commissioner Alvarenga**: Where did the raw data come from? **Commissioner Hausenfluck** asked how Travis County compares to other major cities in processing rape cases. **Commissioner Harris** commented he was interested in hearing what the initial contact with police looked like for the victims of rape. This item ended with Commissioner Scruggs stating the group/topic would be invited back to present further in the future.

5. Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI Code) sponsored by Commissioners Landuyt and Webber

Public Safety Commission submitted a budget recommendation to budget that they fully adopt and address the Wildland Urban Interface code. Fire Chief, Joel Baker was present at this meeting and expressed he was attending to show his support for the WUI Code and his team/staff who was there to present today (6-3-2019). "It is important to us and the City of Austin that we be prepared in case of possible wildfires in our urban areas", per Mr. Baker.

Mark Baker, WUI Coordinator, with Austin Fire Department was asking for Public Safety Commission's endorsement of the draft ordinance going before council. Mark presented an overview of:

Current Risks and Impact from Wildfires

GIS Map

WUI Hazards Severity Zones showed 61% of the area is at some level of risks
64% of area on map showed the technical code would apply

Wildland Urban Interface Code would align with the Strategic Direction Plan 2023

How WUI Code would apply primarily for new homes and any existing structures that undergo remodeling

WUI Code and other existing city codes were able to be simplified a lot because of the already existing fire codes.

WUI Code Timeline

- Asking for PSC endorsement of the draft ordinance
- Presenting to the Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals in August 2019
- Upon approval will seek public review and comments

There was discussion on the cost of implementing the WUI Code and the benefits, vegetation management, safe storage of combustible materials, and installation of spark arrestors on fire chimneys on new development structures. In addition to these topics on the structures under WUI Code, there was discussion on what and how California handled the implementation/adoption of its WUI Code and the benefits.

Commissioner Webber motioned to endorse the adoption of a WUI Code based on the model code and I move the council give the necessary cost to implement this in the City budget. Motioned seconded by Commissioner Nunez and passed on a unanimous vote.



**Public Safety Commission
Recommendation no. 20190603-005
Recommending Adoption of a Wildland Urban Interface Code**

Date: June 3, 2019

Subject: Wildland Urban Interface Code and fund implementation

Motioned By: Commissioner Webber

Seconded By: Commissioner Nunez

Description of Recommendation to Council:

1. Whereas, on May 12, 2016, Council ordered development of a Wildland Urban Interface Code (Resolution No. 20160512-016),
2. Whereas, the Austin Fire Department has completed development of a proposed code that is based on the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code published by the International Code Council and is tailored to address the wildfire risk of the City of Austin, and
3. Whereas, the Austin Fire Department estimates it will cost \$1.5 million to implement the code including:
 - \$1.2 million for additional personnel (4 plan reviewers, 4 inspectors, 1 supervisor, and 1 Wildfire Compliance Specialist)
 - \$300,000 one-time costs
 - \$50,000 on-going operational costs
 - \$100,000 outreach and education costs

The Public Safety Commission recommends that City Council adopt a Wildland Urban Interface Code and fund implementation of the code.

Vote

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Commissioners Preston Tyree and Rebecca Bernhardt)

Attest: *[Staff or board member can sign]*

Janet Jackson, Board Liaison,
Austin Police Department

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Hotel Occupancy Tax and Fee Waivers
- COA HR Policy on Employee Sexual Harassment in the Public Safety Departments
- Field Mitigation and Wildland Preserve within the City of Austin (Webber)
- Mental Health First Responders /Pilot program by Meadows Institute (Harris)

Adjournment @ 5:58pm