



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 2, 2020**

The Public Safety Commission convened a meeting Monday, March 2, 2020 at City Hall 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Commissioner Meghan Hollis called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Meghan Hollis
Daniela Nunez
Rebeca Bernhardt
Rebecca Gonzales
Selena Alvarenga
Chris Harris

William (Bill) Kelly
Kathleen Hausenfluck

Board Members Absent:

Rebecca Webber
Preston Tyree

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

Citizen Communications

- **Carlos León, Citizen** – Commission for Women, Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities, and Margaret Moore, District Attorney
- **Julianna Gonzales** w/ Safe Alliance - Monthly status from Safe Alliance to Public Safety Commission for the months of January and February 2020

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - Commissioner Hollis asked for any discussion/edits of the February 4, 2020 minutes; hearing no comments, Commissioner Bernhardt motioned approval of the minutes and Commissioner Gonzales second the motion. **The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.**

2. Quarterly Stats from Public Safety Departments authorized strength, vacancies, overtime hours, call volume, response times of Austin Police Department, Austin Fire Department and Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services

Commissioner Hollis introduced this item and COS (Chief of Staff) Troy Gay begin presenting APD's quarterly stats for October 2019-December 2019. COS Brown and COS Vires followed with presenting their quarterly stats for EMS and AFD. All three agencies presented their department's current vacancies, responses times, budget nd future cadet classes and recent graduations. There was one person signed up to speak on this item.

Carlos Leon – spoke to APD, AFE, and EMS inquiring about their plans to address SXSW 2020 and the threat of COVID-19 being spread during such a large international event held in Austin, Texas.

Several commissioners had comments/questions at the end of the presentation:

Commissioner Alvarenga requested an itemized breakdown for the number of crimes (335) reported by APD. She is interested in quantity of the type of crimes committed. COS Gay committed to providing the requested breakdown of the types of crime in future stats.

Commissioner Nunez question APD stats of reported uptick of violent crimes in the Edwards sector and APD's plan/s to address the increase. COS Gay responded, the majority of the crimes reported involve gun violence and currently there is a taskforce in place looking at possible was to reduce gun violence.

Commissioner Harris questioned the recent APD graduation of 67 officers and how it is reflected in the number of vacancies reported during this quarter by APD. In addition to the vacancies numbers; he requested data on violent summertime crime versus non-summertime.

Commissioner Hollis requested that trend lines be added to future stats reports from APD. She agreed to the new quarterly reporting months being: May, August, November and February.

- 3. Presentation on Critical Incident Video Release Policy** - Commissioner Hollis asked Commissioner Harris to introduce this item since he has had some involvement/input as a stakeholder on the policy. **Commissioner Harris** commented he was happy to see the movement on this policy. This policy is a part of the investment City of Austin made in Body Worn Cameras to achieve more transparency. **Farah Muscadin**, Director of the Office of Police Oversight commented that this policy has been worked on for a while as it was started during the time of contract negotiations. When they started to work on a policy to address critical release of video she started to research other cities similar to Austin. She discovered LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department)passed a Critical Incident Video release policy in April 2018. They provide a synopsis of what has transpired within 60 days after a police officer involved shooting. Further research showed L.A. Police Department had a YouTube series to show their officer involved shooting videos. One of LAPD videos (man with a knife in a shopping mall was shot) was shown to the PSC.

Per Farah Muscadin the purpose of the video was twofold:

- Transparency
- Educational purposes (the community can see what goes into addressing different situations involving weapons, and act to commit a crime.

The Office of Police Oversight will be consulted when videos are created by APD and ATXN. Currently a pilot video is being produced by ATXN.

Assistant Chief Troy Gay thank everyone that participated in this group to come up with a policy on Critical Incident Release. A major support/breakthrough came from the Travis County District Attorney's office in working on the policy release in 60days APD anticipates to have the video completed for council on time which is the end of the month (March 2020)

Assistant Chief Gay and Farah Muscadin addressed questions and comments from board members. The board inquired about putting raw video footage out there for the public within context, and asked who determines delaying the release of the video. **Commissioner Harris** took issue with LAPD video where the officer mentioned the victim's criminal history and AC Gay agreed those comments should not be made whether it is concerning the victim or criminal. **Commissioner Alvarenga** asked about the release of a video when there is a case pending how the release will be handled? The response from AC Gay was the implementation of the process does involve the DA's office and we have some guidelines in the policy where the Chief has to say why the video will not be released within 60days. Commissioners inquired about getting the raw footage video without all the other added production of the video as shown in the LAPD video? **Commissioner Kelly** also inquired about releasing the raw video. Farah responded this policy is not meant to replace the PIR (Public Information Request).

Commissioner Hollis asked how could they (the PSC board) provide comments on a policy that they have not seen prior to APD reporting to council.

AC Gay committed to getting the policy to the Public Safety Commissioners within the next couple of weeks. The board was reminded that the Critical Incident Release of Video is an APD policy.

4. **Briefing on COPAC Project (Critical Observation Patrol and Community)**

Commissioner Hollis introduced the item and Lt. Miljenovich begin by introducing Sgt. Taber White who briefed the board on the project and benefits of implementing the program.

The first step in observation patrol begins with an officer receiving a call and upon arriving at the physical location, as with any call he logs the call. Next he is routed to a short survey provided by COPA(Critical Observation Patrol and Community) to answer questions that will help to identify the type of call, address and what action did he/she take while at the scene. These responses are now tied to a case number that logs the data and in the long run the information helps APD to determine certain types of crime and where the crime is occurring most often, which creates what is known as hotspots. Hotspots are helpful in that officers learn/identify what resources are appropriate areas based on the types of crime committed most often.

This program was tested with patrol officers in the ADAMS & EDWARDS sectors and appears to be a benefit for the community and APD.

There were several questions/comments from the board Commissioners Kelly, Harris, Nunez and Hollis; concerning the benefits of COPAC, will the program be mandatory for all of APD to use, will the information collected be shared with other City of Austin departments and will the accuracy of information from the surveys be measured?

Troy Gay expressed his gratitude to the officers involved with COPAC and mentioned that even though these officers have been promoted to other areas within Austin Police Department, Sgt. Taber and Lt. White have remained committed to getting the COPAC Project completed.

5. Briefing on Initial Budget Priorities from All Agencies

Commissioner Hollis invited Robert (Bob) Nicks, President of Austin Firefighter Association to speak first on the budget item. Mr. Nicks expressed his concern over the current budget (FY2020) problem that Austin Fire Department is currently experiencing. According to Mr. Nicks, he is of the opinion that AFD underestimated the amount of money they would need for the 2020 year and did not ask for enough funding at the last budget hearings. The AFD should have asked for 11.11 million and instead asked for 6.7 million resulting in them under estimating by 39% for the FY2020. Mr. Nicks is concerned that currently the AFD is seeking to balance the budget by eliminating very important positions within the department via redeployment. AFD should request budget adjust for FY2020 from council to the amount of 4.4million; instead of placing the blame on the high numbers of firefighters on leave or currently requesting to take leave.

Michelle Schmidt, Financial Manager, Austin Police Department presented APD's budget plan for FY 2021:

APD FY2020 budget was 434.5 million

APD FY2021 budget forecast 463.3 million an 28.9 increase

The major cost driver for the increase is personnel

Michelle presented to the board the initiative and other budget items under review by APD for a total of seven items being impacted for the FY 2021.

A handout of the budget presentation was distributed to all board members.

Ronelle Paulsen, Financial Manager for Austin Firefighter Department

AFD FY2020 budget was 200 million

AFD FY2021 budget is 217million

The main reason for the increase is the new Fire Stations that are being built and the adoption of the WUI Code will require additional staff. There were other items under review as well.

Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, EMS presented the budget information for FY2020 was at 93.1 million for FY2021 was 96.7 million. The increase is requested is needed for Phase II meadow Foundation, Personnel for Billing Software and Warehouse and Inventory Control. All of the detailed information was also given to the board in a handout prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Hausenfluck requested Bob Nicks share any additional information he receives concerning AFD FY2020 budget as he attempts to identify where the problem/s stem from in not asking for enough funding in 2020 for AFD. Bob mentioned that he may have to file a Public Information Request to get information that he feels AFD could share with him.

6. Austin Emergency Medical Services (EMS) workload allocation and equipment distribution- Request for Council Action vote

Commissioner Hollis introduced this item and Jasper Brown commented that he does not feel like a vote to request for council action on this item is still warranted since the two groups were complying with the ask of the resolution. According to Jasper Brown, EMS and the Employees Association have been working together since the last PSC meeting to address/resolve their issue/s as stated in the resolution. **Commissioner Gonzales** asked if the board could hear from Selena Xie, President of the EMS Employees Association if they are in agreement with no need for council action request from Public Safety Commission at this time. Selena commented, the EMS department had worked great with the employees association in resolving the issues and was okay with holding off on council action for now. **No motion was made on this item.**

7. Briefing Update from the Public Safety Commission ATCEMS/AFD Dispatch Equity Study Scope-of-Work Working Group

- Bob Nicks had signed up to speak on this item
Mr. Nicks commented he was concerned with the way this group was operating and was glad the Public Safety Commission had been invited to participate in the group. Mr. Nicks stated that the work of this study/group would slow down the new fire stations timeline. Commissioner Hausenfluck asked that Mr. Nick continue to share with the group and she had some comments from Commissioner Webber to share. The final comment from Mr. Nicks was he is not clear on their definition of Equity for this study group.

8. Future Agenda Items:

- Update on fee waiver schedule
- Corona Virus

Adjourned at 6:04pm