



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION 20200601-002

Date: June 1, 2020

Subject: Recommendation that Council Approve ATCEMS Budget Requests

Motioned by: Meghan Hollis

Seconded by: William (Bill) Kelly

Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the ATCEMS budget should include funding for: (1) an analysis of overtime with the corporate budget, (2) Phase II of the Meadows Foundation, (3) Warehouse and Inventory Control to support asset inventory and controlled medication program, (4) billing personnel and software upgrades, (5) an additional finance team support supervisor, (6) twelve additional FTEs so that Demand 1 and Demand 3 can be converted to 24-hour ambulances, and (7) twenty-four additional FTEs and two ambulances to better staff the area around Dove Springs and the Rundberg corridor.

Description of Recommendation to Council: The Austin Public Safety Commission is tasked with reviewing public safety agency budgets and providing recommendations to the Austin City Council. The ATCEMS provided backup materials and a briefing in the March 2020 Public Safety Commission on budget requests. The Public Safety Commission found that there are five initiatives that Commissioners feel should be funded.

Therefore, The Public Safety Commission recommends that ATCEMS includes the following items in the budget submitted to the Austin City Council:

1. Corporate budget should review and fund overtime based on current pay rates.
2. \$642,200 to fund Phase II of the Meadows Foundation study for 6 new sworn FTEs to staff Paramedic Consult Line.
3. \$150,500 for warehouse and inventory control to support asset inventory and controlled medication program.
4. \$146,000 for billing personnel and software upgrades.
5. \$109,500 for a finance team support supervisor.
6. \$1,199,832 for 12 new sworn FTEs to staff conversion of two demand trucks to 24-hour.
7. \$3,130,976 for 2 ambulances (\$982,884) and 24 new FTEs to staff them (\$2,148,092)

The Public Safety Commission also recommends that the Austin City Council funds these items in the budget.

Rationale: The Public Safety Commission has reviewed the requests from ATCEMS for additions to the budget for the seven items outlined above in the March, May, and May Special Called meetings of the Public Safety Commission.

ATCEMS has kept this community safe during this COVID-19 crisis. And they have done so while putting their own lives at risk.

This pandemic has entirely changed the way ATCEMS operates from adjusting the workflow of each medical call all the way down to requiring each medic to have a second pair of “station” shoes so that shoes worn on calls can be left in the ambulance bay. COVID-19 has changed medics’ duties at their stations. For example: disinfecting the station and ambulance at the beginning and end of each shift is a lot of extra work. COVID-19 also means that our medic must take additional precautions donning and doffing PPE. After COVID-19 calls, medics must decontaminate the ambulance and equipment, and sometimes shower and change uniforms. This makes it more necessary than ever to add trucks and more medics.

ATCEMS medics have taken on tremendous extra duties to keep this community with a low prevalence of COVID-19. The new Paramedic Consult Line provides extended triage to people with COVID-19 symptoms. This extended triage line, to this date, have taken over 4,000 possible COVID-19 calls, including advising individual medics regarding difficult PPE decisions. Additionally, over 1,000 patients have taken the option to not go to the hospital because of advice received through the Line. By keeping stable people out of the hospital, the Paramedic Consult Line prevents Austinites from getting COVID-19 at the ER or from exposing others to it in the ER.

Moreover, ATCEMS Special Operations is the central Texas region’s Infectious Disease Response Unit (EMTF 7 IDRU). ATCEMS personnel have swabbed entire nursing homes all over central Texas and have assisted in swabbing construction site workers. We must fund and continue this extremely valuable work.

Paramedic Consult Line

the Paramedic Consult Line is effective in diverting ambulances from the hospital. These positions do not have funding in next year’s budget. These positions should be permanently funded.

Convert two Demand truck to 24-hour trucks

Demand 1 and Demand 3 handle high call volumes and assist downtown. After the bars open back up, that we will see additional call volume downtown, and more community spread among our folks experiencing homelessness. Drug overdoses have been higher in our unhoused population as changes from COVID-19 have triggered mental health emergencies and decreased the level of services for those experiencing homelessness. In addition, ATCEMS is currently the only 911 agency carrying narcan and we need to make our medics available rapidly to provide for those overdosing. Two more 24-hour trucks will help handle the downtown calls.

+2 ambulances in areas to better serve Hispanic Austinites

Work to find two high-volume stations have extra bays that can house an additional ambulance. We recommend that these ambulances are added adjacent to our larger concentrations of Hispanic Austinites (who are disproportionality impacted by COVID-19 in our community) in Dove Springs and along the Rundberg corridor.

Vote:

For:

Meghan Hollis
Rebecca Webber
William (Bill) Kelly
Rebecca Bernhardt
Chris Harris
Kathleen Hausenfluck
Daniela Nunez
Selena Alvarenga
Rebecca Gonzales

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

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

Janet Jackson
