



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, October 2, 2017**

**The Public Safety Commission convened a meeting Monday, October 2, 2017 at City Hall, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.**

**Chair, Rebecca Webber** called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m..

**Board Members in Attendance:**

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Rebecca Webber, Chair | Ed Scruggs   |
| Sam Holt              | Noel Landuyt |
| Rebecca Gonzales      |              |
| Preston Tyree         |              |
| Carol Lee             |              |

**Staff in Attendance:**

Troy Gay, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Richard Davis, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes for the September 5, 2017 meeting were approved. Commissioner Haley motioned for approval of the minutes and Commissioner Holt second. **The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote (7 approved 0 disapprove).**

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS** –seven citizens signed up to speak

- **Rahm McDaniel** – resident of Mueller Neighborhood and member of Board of Adjustment, City of Austin. Speaking as citizen today on the adoption of International Fire Code and local (City of Austin) code amendments. International Code requiring 25ft of clear unobstructed roadway.
- **Carlos Leon** – spoke on Capital Metro bus drivers and customer service
- **Kathy Sokalic** – Mueller resident and supporting Rahm McDaniel’s comments on International Fire Code requirement (25ft clear)
- **Heydem Black Walker** – an Urban Planner and member of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee invited the Public Safety Commission board members to a 6pm briefing on the Fire Code requirement of 25ft clear at all times. City Council postponed the item to November 2, 2017.

- **Bob Nicks** – Signed up to speak on Item #4
- **Greg Pope** – Signed up to speak on Item #4
- **Anthony Marquardt** – President, of Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Association spoke on need for upgraded helmets and full proof vest for the employees; an overall upgrade of the EMS expired equipment He thanked the board for the recommendation of an upgrade to the EPC (Electronic Patient Care) software. Mr. Marquardt asked the board members to be sure and check for his emails to them concerning the EMS Interlocal Agreement
- **Bob Nicks** – Signed up to speak on item #4
- **Greg Pope** – Signed up to speak on item #4

### **3. Goals of West Campus Lighting Study** (requested by Commissioner Scruggs)

- **Joel Meyer** – Austin Transportation Department Pedestrian Coordinator

Joel began his presentation by referring to the memo sent to Mayor & Council in August 2017. Joel commented that Austin Police Department has done a great job in identifying the hot spots in the West Campus area and Austin Energy has identified a consultant, currently under contract to perform the lighting study. Stanley Consulting will be conducting a street light inventory in all of west campus. The scope of the lighting survey will include an asset inventory and gap analysis to identify where pedestrian lighting is needed, including the optimal type, wattage and height of light placements. Joel reiterated that ATD (Austin Transportation Department) will serve as lead and work with Austin Energy and Austin Police Department to deliver a final report to Council in spring 2018. There will be a meeting with stakeholders of the community to try and gauge how they feel about neighborhood safety and what they would like to see moving forward.

#### **There were questions from Commissioner Scruggs:**

- How would you look at lighting from crime prevention status?
- Define West Campus boundaries?
- How long after Spring 2018 will the recommendations be submitted and will we (Public Safety Commission) be able to see the results?
- Will you look at the environment growth (i.e. overgrown trees, vegetation clearing out) (Commissioner Landuyt)?

### **4. Diversity in the Austin Public Safety Departments**–(requested by Commissioner Gonzales/Working Group)

**Commissioner Webber** asked Commissioner Gonzales to introduce this topic that she brought to the board about 6-8 months ago. **Commissioner Gonzales** commented that the Working Group for this subject (Diversity in the Austin Public Safety Departments) had looked at other counties and and best practices to help them get a comparison for how Austin is performing in the area of diversity; and see where the Diversity Group could then decide where we could have the most

impact. We're not here to say everything is bad or good. We are just trying to report on the state of the City of Austin and continue to make sure this is a topic we are discussing. We would like to provide policy recommendations as we distill practices and policies. We really want to define a short term and long term goal for the working group. Chief Gartner at EMS is working with City of Austin Innovation Office for their input to help with EMS's next recruiting event. I have invited Chief Gartner to attend our next PSC meeting to present/update us on what her office is working on for new and creative ways for recruiting. **Commissioner Gonzales** – invited Bob Nicks, President Austin Firefighters Association and Greg Pope with Austin Fire Department to speak on the diversity efforts in the Fire Department. **Greg Pope** started off by stating AFD wants to be a part of the solution and not the problem. He mentioned the growth in the area of diversity in AFD and how the Pass the Torch program has helped to recruit more minorities and the growth of the program since its beginning (2005). **Bob Nicks** shared an overview/update of data over the last ten years at AFD. Charts showing breakdown of gender and minority enrollment over the last 10 years and commented on how the steps they have taken to improve diversity in the Fire Departments has helped. There was a question from **Commissioner Scruggs** on the Consent Decree and it's impact on increasing diversity impact. Bob Nicks acknowledged there was some delay due to the fact that AFD could not hire for almost 2 years.

#### **5. City of Austin Flooding Preparedness – (Commissioner Webber)**

**Kevin Shunk** – Austin Watershed Protection Department, Engineering Manager

**Harry Evans** – Retired Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department and Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Research in Water Resources, University of Texas Austin

**Juan Ortiz** – Austin Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director

**Commissioner Webber** introduced the three presenters and commented on the reason she invited this particular topic at this time of the year. Due to recent flooding throughout our state and catastrophic flooding in other areas of our country this seemed like a good time to be briefed on flooding preparedness.

Mr. Shunk, thanked the board for inviting him to present and shared his title and job responsibilities for the City of Austin. He is currently the Flood Plan Administrator and Division Manager for Watershed Department. This department addresses flooding problems in both creeks and big creeks local flood drains.

Mr. Shunk gave an overview on

- Food Risk in Austin
- Flood Risk Reduction Strategies
- Flood Prevention Strategies
- Flood Warning in Austin
- Flood Warning Improvements since 2013

Mr Shunk commented on the importance of educating the community how to respond when flooding is occurring and to always “turn around don't drown”. This slogan has been effective in reminding all communities not to attempt to drive through rising waters, and obey the flood warning signs; because it really does save lives.

**Harry Evans** – began his presentation by stating he was working for City of Austin, Fire Department during 2015 Halloween flooding. This flooding was a huge disaster and since that time we are

working together with National Agencies and State level agencies to notify first responders and citizens of changes in weather patterns as soon as they observe any changes in an effort to save more lives.

Mr. Evan presented on:

- Texas Flood Response System
- Texas Flood Response Project
- Proposed Approach
- FEMA National Flood Hazard layer in Texas
- The Goal

Mr. Evans discussed in detail the Texas Response System and Project along with the goals of working together to identify potentially impacted structures for a given flood event in advance if possible or in near-real time.

**Juan Ortiz** – commented on his background (personal, professional and employment history) prior to working for the City of Austin. Mr. Ortiz began by speaking on Hurricane Harvey and how the City of Austin was preparing for safety here and then the attention was turned towards how to help our neighbors in eastern counties. The attention quickly focused on establishing an emergency shelter to welcome and assist our neighbors in surrounding counties. Once the shelters were no longer needed, the attention was focused on the second part and that was putting together lots of documentation for reimbursement from FEMA. Since Hurricane Harvey the focus has been on educating the public on what to do in a time of a disaster and encouraging citizens to having a personal plan in place in case of an emergency. There has been a strong push to encourage citizens to sign up for the Regional Notification System known as WARN Central Texans. Per Mr. Ortiz, recently there was an emergency enrollment campaign and prior to the campaign there was 6,000 enrolled and afterwards we are at 32,000 (500% increase) in the city of Austin. Our community preparedness is vital to surviving weather related emergencies. Mr. Ortiz distributed a detail account of the Halloween Flood after action report on things that worked well and not so well. The report addressed the Response and Operations, Recovery, Communications and Notifications, Resources and EOC (Emergency Operations Center) Public Information, Community Meetings focusing on Plans and Procedures. The Conclusion of the reports stated “Fortunately, many of the lessons learned in the 2013 flood had been implemented prior to the 2015 flood. This allowed the City, County and community partners to respond effectively and efficiently to protect lives and property as conditions could allow”. The partnership between the City and County leads to new and improved strategies for response to unpredicted severe weather and flooding events.

**6. Future Agenda Items - Commissioner Webber** introduced her updated form for tracking agenda items and asked for comments/questions. **Commissioner Tyree** asked if there was a way to ask City Council to hold off on the item from the Austin Fire Department until we (Public Safety Commission) has had a chance to look at the item? **Commissioner Webber** - We can't take any action tonight because it was not listed on our agenda. **Commissioner Tyree**- I would like to get it on our agenda so that way we can ask City Council to give us some time.

Adjourn @ 6:00pm