



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
November 4, 2019**

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

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

Board Members in Attendance:

Ed Scruggs	Selena Alvarenga
Rebecca Webber	Preston Tyree
Kathleen Hausenfluck	Chris Harris
Daniela Nunez	Rebecca Gonzales
Rebecca Bernhardt	Noel Landuyt
Meaghan Hollis	

Board Member Absent:

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 Leon – City of Austin Boards and Commissions public meetings and citizens free speech
 - Julianna Gonzales, SAFE Alliance – monthly report on SAFE Alliance services and distributed a pamphlet titled “Voices” the homelessness problem you don’t see. A poster was also distributed with information on what to do if you have been sexually assaulted.
1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Commissioner Scruggs asked for approval of the October 7, 2019 minutes and hearing no edits from the board deemed the minutes approved

2. City of Austin Homelessness Population - This item was introduced by Commissioner Scruggs and Chief of Police, Brain Manley along with Lori Pampilo Harris were invited to begin the presentation.

Chief Manley provide an update on where we (City of Austin) are in regards to the current ordinance and the cleanup currently being conducted by the State of Texas. All APD officers have received updated training bulletins in response to the camping revised ordinance. APD was called to the ARCH earlier today to address homeless individuals who showed up there and all eight of the individuals left voluntarily when asked by APD.

State of Texas began their clean up at Ben White corridor and at North Lamar & Manchaca. All individuals on these two sites left voluntarily and the areas were cleaned peacefully, no altercations reported.

Chief Manley commented on enforcement under the new camping ordinance.

- Underpass at IH35 frontage road from Brazos to 11th Street was visited and individuals counted
- 156 homeless individuals counted under the overpasses
- 66 homeless individuals were willing to identify themselves
- Ordinance directs that a list be maintained and the city be able to offer non shelter housing
- Those on the list will be reached out to by partner social services to offer assistance they may need while City staff and partners continue working to acquire non-shelter housing for them
- The list is now available for council to review
- Camping on any sidewalk is prohibited and enforceable
- Currently a two-sided pamphlet containing information on what the new camping ordinance means for them and includes information on social services available is being distributed to the homeless by APD officers

Lori Pampilo Harris, City of Austin, Homeless Strategy Consultant introduced herself to the board and shared some of her background prior to coming to the City of Austin.

- Employed 14yrs at International Development on Housing
- Spent 4years in Haiti working on recovery after the earthquake
- Point Person for the City of Orlando after mass murders at a nightclub

Ms. Harris commented her goal is to end homelessness in our city and the only way to do that is to end the affordable housing crisis. Data has shown repeatedly that homelessness increases as affordable housing decreases. Ms. Harris commented the HOST (Homeless Outreach Street Team) is a national best practice model and complimented the partnership between APD and the community to reach out to the homeless and meet some of their everyday needs beyond the need for shelter.

An update on the GUIDED PATH PILOT PROJECT (modeled after the Philadelphia Project) was provided.

- The ARCH is changing the way they operate/offer services
- Results of mapping individuals outside the ARCH over two days:
 - a list compiled by names
 - every individual was offered emergency shelter
 - bed offered for assistance with detox from drug use
 - able to work on policies to get records expunged so people could receive services at the ARCH again and be a part of the pilot program
 - emergency shelters were very cooperative in working with the pilot program to address as many immediate needs as possible in a short amount of time

99 individuals were identified and surveyed

- 13 were already staying at a shelter
- 22 stayed at least one night after engaging in the pilot program
- 6 out of 99 received housing
- 2 received residential treatment (substance abuse)
- 23 still without assistance from the pilot program (some of the 23 preferred to wait for housing, did not want to go into emergency shelter) Ms. Harris commented that the goal of the pilot program is to get all 99 surveyed taken care of no matter how long it takes.

The presentation ended with Q and A's from the board. The questions from board members were:

- Was the safety of Austin streets affected by the ordinance change?
- How has the ordinance change affected officers?
- Is APD working with State of Texas on this issue of cleaning up homeless camps?
- Does DPS have their own data concerning homeless population?
- What does temperature need to reach before other locations are available to shelter homeless from the cold weather?
- Is there tracking of where homeless people are going since the ordinance change, because not everyone is going to a shelter?
- Are the pamphlets APD is distributing printed in multiple languages?
- What is offered in place of the pamphlets to people who have literacy challenges?
- What is the timeline for the Guided Path Project?
- Who is APD contact on homeless issues/questions since the recent retirement of Assistant Chief Newsom?
- Is there collaboration between Department of Public Safety and APD on homeless issues?
- What is the percentage of individuals you need to house to measure the success of the program?
- What is City of Austin doing for more operative low barrier housing?
- What are we talking about when we say enforcement, and what does it entail?

Chief Manley advised the board that there are revised APD training bulletins that have been provided to all APD officers so all are clear on how they should respond when interacting with the homeless population according to new camping ordinance. Per Chief Manley, APD officers are as committed today in their work with the homeless as they were prior to the revised ordinance. APD's current point of contact for homeless issues is **Lt. Robin Henderson** or you may email me (Chief Manley) your questions directly. **Assistant Chief Joe Chacon** is the contact for mental health issues. The other APD officers in attendance here today are **Assistant Chief Rich Guajardo, Lt. Ken Murphy (from APD Communications), Lt. Crozier (APD Executive Staff), and Commander Eric Miese (APD Highway Enforcement)**. In closing Chief Manley shared if APD receives a call of a homeless complaint and the person is in violation, APD will ask the individual to move on and if they do so voluntarily that is great, however if the individual refuses to move on then APD would issue a citation.

Ms. Harris shared a timeline of the Guided Path Project and mentioned that there are three phases to the project and we are currently in Phase II of the project. In two to three weeks, we hope to be in Phase III of the project. Phase III is the sustainment of the outreach and continued work that has been done outside of the ARCH. Her timeline is whatever it takes no matter how long it takes; the final destination is housing.

One speaker signed up to speak on this item:

Carlos Leon, the mis-categorization of the homeless population

3. **2020 Regular Meeting Scheduled for Public Safety Commission** – Commissioner Scruggs called for a vote to approve the 2020 meeting schedule. Commissioner Webber motioned to approve the scheduled and Commissioner Tyree seconded. Vote was unanimous (11-0)
4. **Council Committee Agenda Request** – Fee Waivers not to be extended to for profit events Commissioner Tyree motioned for a vote and Meghan Hollis seconded. Commissioner Scruggs called for the vote and the vote was unanimous (11-0)
5. **Update on 2019 Traffic Fatalities for City of Austin** - Commissioner Scruggs invited Commander Eric Miese, APD and Lewis Leff, with Vision Zero/Austin Transportation Department to begin their presentation that is sponsored by **Commissioner Tyree**. Lewis Leff began the presentation by asking everyone to keep in mind the years of life lost 2,669 (through 10-31-2019)

Lewis Leff and Commander Miese did a joint presentation on

- Overall Traffic Fatalities
- Pedestrian Fatality Focus
- Pedestrian Safety Initiatives
- Broader Vision Zero efforts
- Discussion at the end

The year to date traffic fatalities are 70 and in 2018, it was 60. This number includes pedestrians, homeless, bicyclist and motorcyclist.

Fatal Factors in these fatalities were impairment, impaired drivers, impaired pedestrians and some cases are pending toxicology results. Other factors could be drivers under the influence of drugs/alcohol and or no driver's license or license suspended.

Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities (YTD 2019)

- 15 occurred on a high-speed roadway
- 13 occurred on a local street

Homeless Stats

- 11 occurred on a high-speed roadway
- 6 occurred on a local street

Hot Spot calls for Pedestrian Crossing High Speed Roadway

2019 YTD 2,824

2018 YTD 2,524

Some steps are being taken to try to understand what makes people attempt to cross a high-speed roadway.

- Survey administered and asked why people attempt to cross High Speed Roadways
- Working with TX DOT to get more assistance to deter high-speed crossings
- Received a grant from CAMPO to assist with pedestrian crossings
 - Crosswalk maintenance
 - Communications campaign with other agencies to get the word out/educate the public
 - Upgraded Lighting on West Campus at UT was successful

Broader Vision Zero (ATD & APD)

- Target Enforcement
- Speeding
- Driving while under the influence/ No Refusal Initiative
- Communication Plan – consistently saying the same thing in any location

Commissioner Tyree asked if there had been any discussion on larger vehicles on the roadways and its impact on crashes on pedestrians and bicyclists. A second question was why couldn't we have walkways over or under in some areas of IH35 and 51st and Rundberg area?

There is an 18% increase this year on traffic fatalities and the increase is a major concern/issue for City of Austin staff to continue to address.

Questions from board members were:

- Is COA having any conversations with self-driving cars corporations concerning their rollout and how they plan to handle it? **Commissioner Nunez** would like to hear about this in a future agenda item.
- Any data on scooter fatalities? **Commissioner Tyree**
- Is there a percentage of drivers that drive with an invalid license causing accidents?

(Commissioner Harris requested data on this topic)

- How do you feel about the recent comments that Vision Zero is not working? (Scruggs)
It will take more time and systemic changes before we see significant results. (Lewis Leff)

6. Update on EMS 911 Special Code Calls - Scruggs introduced the item and Assistant Chief Rich Guajardo and Lt. Ken Murphy presented.

On October 1, 2019 new protocols were implemented for EMS and AFD to use when calling for APD to respond to their calls for help when being attacked/assaulted by an individual they are trying to assist.

Two new title codes were implemented and a code #3 implemented for Hot Shot calls when there is an active altercation. This call is the same as if an APD officer needs assistance. The public safety assistance response time is within 1 minute. The data for one month (10/1 to 11/4) is four calls to APD for assistance. Lt. Murphy will pull the data monthly on the number of calls for employee assistance by AFD and EMS. Assistant Chief Guajardo thanked Lt. Murphy for his excellent work and timely response time in getting the new codes up and running.

The commissioners were very appreciative of Lt. Murphy's work on this item.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Ford vehicles testing in Austin and what was the total cost to the COA from the officers getting sick from the exhaust escaping from their vehicles
- Revision of sexual harassment policy and how public safety departments have revised their policies to incorporate the changes
- Update on mental health response -invite Integral Care and UT Human Rights Clinic
- Update on homeless community every other month
- Road Rage
- Officer Wellness Update
- Update on APD staffing plans and diversity (Commissioner Nunez asked that this item include all three public safety departments)

Adjourned at 6:00pm