



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, May 4, 2020**

The Public Safety Commission convened a videoconferencing meeting Monday, May 4, 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
Rebecca Webber

Board Members Absent: None

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

Citizens signed up to speak on agenda items only:

- **Sue Gabriel** – with Communities of Color United- spoke on item #3 in opposition to funding for Austin Police Department in the FY20-21 budget.

- 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - Commissioner Hollis asked for any discussion/edits of the March 2, 2020 minutes; hearing no comments, Commissioner Alvarenga motioned approval of the minutes and Commissioner Kelly second the motion. Vote was taken by roll call and the minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

2. Election of Chair and Co-Chair to serve on Public Safety Commission from May 2020 through April 2021.

Commissioner Hollis opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Kelly nominated Commissioner Hollis for second term as Chair, and Commissioner Harris seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the vote was unanimous for Commissioner Hollis as chair for second term. The floor opened for nominations for Vice-chair and Commissioner Harris nominated Rebecca Webber and Commissioner Nunez second the motion. Roll call vote, and the vote was unanimous for Rebecca Webber as Vice-chair for May 2020 to April 2021.

3. Budget Proposal Review and Discussion for City of Austin Public Safety Agencies

The Chair opened the floor for discussion and there were questions. Commissioner Hausenfluck where are we on officers current and authorized and AC Gay responded with currently 150 vacancies and 1959 authorized with an expectancy to be fully staffed in Spring 2021. Commissioner Harris asked for month-to-month breakdown of retirees and how that affect the numbers. AC Gay committed to emailing attrition rates to the PSC, Chair. Michelle Schmidt elaborated on the personnel listed in the FY20-21 budget and the records mgmt. system and the need to replace a 2001 helicopter. Commissioner Hausenfluck had questions for Austin Fire Department's overtime issues in 2020 and Dr. Paulson answered her questions. There were questions to EMS on dispatch, fee waiver for indigent folks, what is COVID-19 impact on public safety departments mainly overtime.

Commissioner Hollis asked for any recommendation on the three items (Public Safety Departments) and there were none. **Commissioner Kelly** questioned if the recommendation should be individually or collectively. **Commissioner Hausenfluck** commented she was not in support of the numbers in any of the three public safety budgets. **Commissioner Nunez** commented she felt the board needed more information and needed to hear from the communities heavily impact by public service department before making a recommendation to council. Different amendments were discussed by Kelly, Alvarenga and Hausenfluck.

Motion on the floor to approve APD Budget Item (9.6 million) from Chair Hollis and seconded by Commissioner Kelly

Vote (roll call)

Webber – abstain
Hollis- abstain
Kelly – Yes
Harris -No
Hausenfluck – No
Nunez – No
Alvarenga – No
Gonzales – No

Motioned failed

Motion by Hollis to hold a second meeting on the budget and seconded by Webber

Vote (roll call)

Hollis - yes

Webber – yes

Harris - yes

Hausenfluck – yes

Nunez – yes

Alvarenga – yes

Gonzales – yes

Kelly – yes

Motioned passed

A letter from Jazmin Patel expressing her position on APD and future funding entered into the meeting records by Chair Hollis.

4. COVID-19 Response and Preparedness Discussion

Commissioner Hollis open the floor for discussion/questions and Commissioner Kelly asked if there were any issues with COVID-19 the board needed to know about at this time.

Assistant Chief Chacon, with Austin Police Department there was no pressing issues at this time; early on in the pandemic, there were issues with securing PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) but that was resolved there is no pressing issues at this time for APD. Chief of Staff, Rob Vires commented currently there are no pressing issues at Austin Fire Department. Chief of Staff, Jasper Brown commented the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) has no pressing issues concerning COVID-19 at this time. COS Brown reiterated to the board that EMS has a COVID-19 Consultation line they are very proud of where someone who is or has been in contact with people who have the virus can call in and describe their experience, ask questions, and EMS is better able to assist them on the next necessary steps for them that does not always include sending an ambulance or a trip to the hospital. Other agencies are looking at us in the practice and asking questions. We are the only agency offering a service like (consultation line) at this time. More discussion on the three COA Public Safety Departments involvement with EOC (Emergency Operations Center) was initiated by Commissioner Hollis. Assistant City Manager Arellano commented that the City of Austin is working closely with the three major hospital systems in the area to understand contact tracking, number of beds available, etc. The data from these three major hospital systems helps the City of Austin determine what is best for COA guided by the data that comes in. **Commissioner Alvarenga** questioned if the COVID-19 affects current budget request for FY20-21. All three-safety departments responded, no impact to their budget this year.

5. Review and Discussion of Tatum Investigation –Commissioner Hollis opened the floor for discussion and **Commissioner Webber** recused herself from this discussion and turned off her camera. **Commissioner Harris** commented the Tatum Report reflects severe issues within the Austin Police Department and there needs to be a real change on how the community is policed. **Commissioner Hollis** asked what steps are being taken to address/bring about change. Per, ACM Arellano the City of Austin is committed that action will be taken to ensure our workforce is changed based on findings in the report. Chief Manley stated that prior to the release of the report steps were already being taken inside and outside of APD to address some of the issues listed in the report. Some of those steps included:

- APD working with the City of Austin Equity Office creating changes
- Reviewing the current process of promotion and transfer and making changes
- Policy on Equal Employment and Opportunity

Since the release of the Tatum report, APD has been:

- Working with an Independent Consultant
- Re-establishing the Chief Advisory Committee
- Plan on administering a survey to the entire workforce
- Hire a Chief Diversity Officer with APD to help address issues from the report
- Reexamined how all APD records are maintained and upgrade
- Currently nine APD policies are under review

Chief Manley and Commissioner Hollis agreed that culture is the largest challenge to address when trying to bring about change. Commissioner Bernhardt asked that Public Safety Commission be notified of the names of the Advisory Group when it is completed.

Future Agenda Items:

- Update on Sexual Harassment Policies in Public Safety Departments (Webber)
- APD Cadet Classes progress
- COVID-19 Updates
- Quarterly Reports
- APD 902, 903 Policy changes/update (Harris)
- Additional Data requested from SAFE (Hollis)
- Domestic Violence on the Rise (Nunez)

Adjourn @ 4:47pm Webber motioned to adjourn, Harris seconded and vote was unanimous