



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 5, 2021**

The Public Safety Commission convened a videoconferencing meeting Monday April 5, 2021 at City Hall 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Rebecca Gonzales called the Board Meeting to order at 3:03p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Rebecca Gonzales	Michael Sierra-Arevalo
Rebecca Webber	Rocky Lane
Kathleen Hausenfluck	Amanda Lewis
Nelly Ramirez	
Rebecca Bernhardt	

Board Members Absent: Queen U. Enyioha

Staff in Attendance:

Troy Gay, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services
Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

Public Communications - Citizens signed up to speak:

Carlos Leon – Capital Metro Male Bus Drivers

- 1. Approval of Minutes** – Chair Gonzales asked for any edits/comments to the minutes for February 1, 2021 presented. Hearing no comments/edits the minutes were deemed approved.

2. OLD BUSINESS

a. **Vote on recommendation in support of Council Resolution No. 20190619-092, gaps and opportunities for improvements of mental health services for public safety first responders** (sponsors: Commissioner Gonzales and Webber) *3:25pm-3:35pm*

Chair Gonzales introduced the item by sharing a little background from the February 1, 2021 meeting. A mental health presentation was made to the Public Safety Commissioners during the February 2021 meeting per the directives in Resolution 20190619-092. During the February 2021 meeting, the commissioners agreed on voting in support of the mental health items recommended for improving the Mental Health Services for all first responders. The February meeting ended before a vote could be taken and it was agreed that the vote would be taken at the March 2021 meeting, however that meeting was cancelled due to the Texas winter storm.

April 5, 2021 meeting the recommendation was put up for a vote, and there was discussion prior to a motion to vote.

- Commissioner Sierra-Arevalo requested clarification on funding for Dr. Glenn
- Commissioner Lane- commented on concerns he was hearing from the public on items/things needed since the winter storm. Things that were more for overall improving quality of life care.
- Commissioner Webber questioned the purpose of the recommendation and who drafted the list of recommendations to improve/close gaps in mental health care for 1st responders
- Commissioner Webber also questioned the policy on use of CBD oils for 1st responders

Jasper Brown, Ronnelle Paulsen, Rob Vires and Troy Gay all weighed in on responding to the questions from the board. Chair Gonzales reminded the board that they were voting on recommendations they agreed upon at February 2021 meeting and additional items to improve 1st responders mental health services could be address/added in for discussions in future meetings.

Chair motioned to vote on the resolution before the board today and a vote was called. Commissioner Ramirez seconded the motion to move forward with a vote today. Vote was 6-1 in favor of the recommendations presented (see below for details).



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION 20210405-002a

Date: April 5, 2021

Subject: Recommendation that City Council Support Improvements to Mental Health Services

Motioned by: Chair Rebecca Gonzales

Seconded by: Commissioner Ramirez

Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council take action to support the findings of the report outlining the gaps and opportunities for improvement of mental health services for Austin's first responders.

Description of Recommendation to Council: City Council passed Resolution No. 20190619-092 directing the City Manager to develop a report outlining the gaps and opportunities for improvement of mental health services for our first responders.

Therefore, The Public Safety Commission recommends that the Austin City Council move forward with the recommended improvements to the mental health services including:

- Establish a City-sponsored fund to retain a psychiatrist for first responders.
- Establish protocol for Mental Health days.
- Specialized training for public safety leadership on handling mental health issues for first responders.
- Develop and administer training on social-justice-informed mental health care.
- Hire 2 Full-Time employees to assist psychologists and Peer Support coordinators.
- Additional funding for Peer Support activities.
- Revisit departmental policies to accept the use of CBD oil for first responders.
- Implement annual behavioral health check-ins for first responders.
- Increased funding allocation for Dr. Tania Glenn & Associates, PA.
- Coordinate a joint statement from City leadership, Associations, and Department management that commits to limitations on sharing mental health treatment information and that seeking therapy will not have negative repercussions on a first responder's career.

Rationale: The Public Safety Commission believes the mental and physical health of our first responders is key to the safety of the citizens of Austin.

Vote:

For: 6 (Commissioners Ramirez, Lane, Sierra-Arevalo, Bernhardt, Hausenfluck, Gonzales)

Against: 1 (Commissioner Webber)

Abstain: 0

Absent: 1 (Commissioner Enyioha)

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

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Public Safety Organizations Quarterly Report – Austin Police Department (sponsors: Commissioner Hausenfluck and Gonzales) *3:35pm-3:55pm*

Speaker:

-Troy Gay, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department

Chair Gonzales opened the floor to AC Gay to begin the quarterly report for APD report on response times, overtime budget vs overtime spent, overtime hours by rank, staffing, and COVID-19 data. There were questions/comments at the end of the presentation mainly on COVID-19 stats. **Commissioner Webber** asked if COVID chart included the number of vaccinated employees and if another metric could be added to include, the number of employees vaccinated by civilian and sworn employees; and if COVID vaccines are mandatory. **Commissioner Hausenfluck** questioned if the overtime breakdown is across the board? AC Gay responded, APD has spent approximately 12million for overtime and the budget amount is 9 million so Austin Police Department has had to be creative in other areas.

b. Public Safety Departments Budget Presentations for 2021-2022 (sponsors: Commissioner Webber and Gonzales) *3:55pm -4:50pm*

Speakers:

Austin Fire Department

-Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

-Dr. Ronnelle Paulsen, Assistant Director, Austin Fire Department

Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services

-Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services

Austin Police Department

-Troy Gay, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department

-Michelle Schmidt, Chief Administrative Officer, Austin Police Department

Chair Gonzales, opened the floor for Chief of Staff, Vires to kick off the budget presentations. Chief Vires asked that Austin Police Department present first to follow the order of Power Point presentation. Chief of Staff, Troy Gay introduced Michelle Schmidt, APD Budget Director presented APD's overview budget that highlighted the top priority items for the department FY21/22. There were questions and discussion from board members:

-**Commissioner Ramirez** requested a breakdown of the numbers presented in the APD budget overview, and an explanation on terminal pay

-**Commissioner Webber and Bernhardt** questioned the helicopter replacement cost of 1.6million, and both expressed they are against the purchase of a new helicopter

-**Commissioner Hausenfluck** expressed she was not super passionate on the overtime and terminal pay increase, however she was voting for the items to prevent the budget from being blown later in the year as the need/cost for this expense would probably occur.

-**Commissioner Webber** requested clarification on the numbers listed for Council Initiatives

-**Commissioner Lane** expressed the need for clear communication to the community that this budget overview is for next year

Michelle Schmidt when responding to the question on terminal pay under APD's listings commented that APD is continuing work with the City of Austin Budget office on what the final number for terminal pay will be. Per Michelle, in trying to be transparent I included this line item as it is an item under review.

Ronnelle Paulsen, Assistant Chief with Austin Fire Department presented the Austin Fire Department's budget of 2.1 million for Fiscal Year 21/22. Commissioners Webber, Lane and Ramirez expressed their full support for all four items listed in the budget overview (see recommendation below).

Speaker signed up for this item was Robert (Bob) Nicks – expressed is support for the purchase of a new ladder for Austin Fire Department. It has been over a quarter of a century since Austin Fire Department has had a new ladder. All other items in the AFD budget we (Fire Fighters Union) have reviewed with management and are in support of this 2021-2021 budget.

Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), presented an overview of EMS 2021-2022 Budget. Commissioner Lane and Webber expressed their full support of the EMS budget presented.

The Public Safety Commission Recommendation below list the vote in support of the 2021-2022 public safety departments budgets minus the purchase of a new helicopter for APD.



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION 20210405-003b

Date: April 5, 2021

Subject: Recommendation: Public Safety Budget

Motioned by: Chair Rebecca Gonzales

Seconded by: Commissioner Nelly Ramirez

Recommendation: The Public Safety Commission recommends that the City Council take action to support the following budget items.

Description of Recommendation to Council: During the April Public Safety Commission meeting, the three Public Safety organizations presented their initial budget requests.

Therefore, The Public Safety Commission recommends that the Austin City Council move forward with the following budget requests:

APD

- Sworn Overtime - \$2.8M
- Terminal Pay Increase - \$3.4M
- 2.5 Civilian FTEs for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; and the Training Academy - \$1.6M
- Total \$7.8M

Fire

- Del Valle Ladder - \$1.6M
- Civilian conversions temp to permanent (4FTEs) - \$303K
- Mental Health Support (2FTEs) - \$187K
- Mental Health training (contracted) - \$50K
- Total \$2.1M

EMS

- Program Leadership Enhancement - \$962K
- Phasing in FTEs to standardize staffing levels at all stations (12FTEs) - \$3.6M
- Community Relations and Injury Prevention Investment - \$232K
- Total \$4.794M

Rationale: The Public Safety Commission believes the budget items listed in the recommendation are either vital to operations of the public safety organizations.

Vote:

For: 7 (Commissioners Lane, Ramirez, Hausenfluck, Bernhardt, Webber, Gonzales and Lewis)

Against: 0

Abstain: 1 (Commissioner Sierra-Arevalo)

Absent: 1 (Commissioner Enyioha)

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

c. Election of Officers for 2021/2022 4:50pm-4:55pm

Chair Gonzales nominated Commissioner Ramirez as Vice Chair for the May 2021-April 2022 term and Commissioner Lane seconded the motion. The floor w opened for any additional nominations for Vice Chair and there were none so the vote was called.

Vote: Unanimous (7-0)

For: Commissioners Gonzales, Webber, Lane, Sierra-Arevalo, Bernhardt, Hausenfluck, and Ramirez

Commissioner Lewis was off the technical dais (experiencing technical difficulties)

Commissioner Webber nominated current Chair Rebecca Gonzales as chair for the 2021-2022 year and Commissioner Lane second the motion.

Vote: unanimous (8-0)

For: Commissioner Lane, Ramirez, Hausenfluck, Webber, Bernhardt, Sierra-Arevalo, Lewis, and Gonzales

4. Future Agenda Items 4:55-5pm

- Updates on the search for Austin Police Chief (Chair Gonzales)
- Meet Carol Johnson, Chief Civil Rights Officer (Chair Gonzales)
- 8 Can Wait Presentation (Commissioner Lane)

- Update on APD training plan before we have a new cadet class (Commissioner Sierra-Arevalo and Ramirez)
- Civilian Traffic Patrol Discussion (Commissioner Ramirez)
- Follow up on snowstorm service provided by City of Austin (Commissioner Lane)

Adjourn @ 4:56pm