



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, June 7, 2021**

**The Public Safety Commission convened a videoconferencing meeting Monday June 7, 2021 at City Hall 301 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.**

**Chair Rebecca Gonzales** called the Board Meeting to order at 3:01p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Rebecca Gonzales	Michael Sierra-Arevalo
Rocky Lane	Kathleen Hausenfluck
Nelly Ramirez	John Kiracofe
Queen Enyioha	

**Board Members Absent:** Rebecca Webber, Rebecca Bernhardt, Amanda Lewis

**Staff in Attendance:**

Robin Henderson, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

**Commissioner Gonzales** welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared that the Prop B agenda item was rescheduled to July 2021 meeting, due to the Special Called Council Meeting and Diana Grey (Chief Presenter) no longer available to present.

Commissioner Gonzales also took a moment to wish everyone Happy Pride Month and acknowledge Black Pride Week. Commissioner Queen Austin was invited to take a moment to introduce herself since this was the first meeting that she was able to join

**Public Communications** - Citizens signed up to speak:

-Carlos Leon – Criminal Cap Metro and Law and Order

**2b. Update on Hiring of New Austin Police Chief** (Sponsors: Commissioners Gonzales and Webber)

**Commissioner Gonzales** welcomed Assistant City Manager Arellano and thanked him for stepping away from the Special Called City Council meeting to present an update on the hiring of a new Austin Police Chief to the Public Safety Commission. ACM Arellano shared with the board the timeline of working with a consultant in hiring a new police chief and meeting with stakeholders and the number of community sessions held so the consultant could hear the concerns and desires of

what citizens would like for the new chief to look like. Per ACM Arellano, there are currently 36 applications in hand and they are expecting more applications. In June 2021, the consultant will start to screen/identify applications to bring to City Management.

**Commissioner Gonzales** opened the floor for questions and **Commissioner Ramirez** commented she hopes the consult would be looking for what the constituents of Austin have stated in their feedback as to the type of police chief they want for the City of Austin. **Commissioner Gonzales** asked if the lines of communication were still open for citizens to continue to provide input/thoughts on hiring a new chief. **Commissioner Lane** asked if there was any update on the search for the new Chief of Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Service. ACM Arellano answered, there is no update at this time and there is a four-month timeline to get the EMS Chief position filled. In the meantime, he expressed his confidence in Chief of Staff, Jasper Brown as the Interim Chief.

Assistant City Manager Arellano followed up after the meeting with the email below in response to the question on community input via remote resources. Read below:

*During the June Public Safety Commission meeting, I promised to follow up on a question regarding community input via remote resources (3-1-1, [SpeakUp Austin](#), [Community@AustinTexas.gov](mailto:Community@AustinTexas.gov)). These resources remain open for community to provide input through the month of June; I would ask Commissioners to let their constituents know there is still time to voice their input if they haven't already done so.*

*Input has ranged from one extreme to the other. Some in the community believe that the reimagining effort is the wrong path for the City and some believe it doesn't go far enough. A sizable number believe it will be the biggest challenge for the next Chief to artfully balance the expectations from the community and APD to be successful. At the end of May, over 200 individuals have submitted feedback via [SpeakUp Austin](#) and 3-1-1. There have been over 2,500 visits to the [SpeakUp Austin](#) page.*

*As I mentioned at the Commission meeting, the consultant has hosted over 30 meetings with stakeholders, including five in May that were open to all community members. The consultant received valuable input that the City Manager and I will be considering to determine who our next Police Chief will be. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.*

*Best regards,  
Rey*

*Rey Arellano  
Austin Assistant City Manager  
Safety  
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1. **Approval of Minutes** – Chair Gonzales asked for any edits/comments to the minutes for May 3, 2021, presented. Hearing no comments/edits the minutes were deemed approved.

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

### a. **Public Safety Organizations Quarterly Report – Austin Fire Department** (Sponsors: Commissioner Hausenfluck and Gonzales)

-Rob Vires, Chief of Staff, Austin Fire Department

Chief Vires presented the quarterly stats for FY21 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Austin Fire

- **Call Volume increased by approximately 24% and increases were seen across all battalions.** Increase in call volume was due to- winter storm in February 2021 with so many citizens called for broken water pipes assistance and electrical outages across the city.
- **Top three dispatch problem types during winter storm were**
  - Broken Water Pipes – 1,026
  - Alarm – Fire Alarms – 657
  - Request for Assistance-EMS - 634
- Emergency Response times also increased because of the February 2021 winter storm.**
  - Reasons, high incident volume, unit availability, icy roads, downed electrical systems and broken water pipes
- Prevention Efforts for Winter Storm**
  - AFD Fire Protection System Impairment Inspector identified those high life hazard properties
  - Maintenance Inspection Team was temporarily reassigned to update the status of fire protection systems through individual property visits.
  - Worked closely with EOC to distribute fire safety tips and fire watch guidelines to property managers and apartment association groups during times of fire protection system impairments and delayed incident responses.
- COVID-19 Efforts**
  - Daily BinaxNow testing discontinued for vaccinated firefighters
  - Mask wearing in fire stations is being reviewed.
  - Public Safety Wellness Center is no longer holding vaccination clinics, except for incoming Fire Cadets
  - AFD works with Office of Medical Director and Public Safety Wellness to maintain safe Return-to-Work procedures to minimize risk of potential exposures.
- Cadet Hiring Process**
  - Class #131 begins June 7, 2021 with 31 cadets
  - 67 percent of the current candidate pool is diverse

Chief Vires commented he was very proud of the work and effort of Austin Fire Department's recruiting department, as this is the most diverse candidate pool ever in AFD.

Chair Gonzales asked for questions or discussions at the end of the presentation; hearing no questions/discussion the next item on the agenda was called.

### **3. Future Agenda Items**

Prior to taking up Future Agenda Items, Commissioner Gonzales asked for a poll of the commissioners that were planning to attend the July 5<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting to ensure a quorum. However, it was confirmed that the July 5<sup>th</sup> date was the actual City of Austin July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday and the July 6<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, is the actual date of the monthly Public Safety Commission meeting. Commissioner Gonzales stated the poll would be handled off line.

Public Safety Commissioners discussed the different topics they would like to have for future briefings and possible action items.

- Proposition B Implementation (Gonzales)
- 8 Can't Wait and Re-Imagining Public Safety Update (Gonzales)
- APD Cadet Training Academy Update (Ramirez)
- WUI (Wildfire Urban Interface) Code Update (Gonzales)
- Safe space for LGBTQ community (Lane)
- Update on Legislative session and particularly on Open Carry (Ramirez)
- Legislative session and budget impact (Hausenfluck)

Commissioner Hausenfluck motioned to adjourn meeting and Commissioner Lane seconded  
Vote was unanimous

Meeting adjourned @ 3:48pm