

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Public Safety Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6

Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

9:30 AM

City Hall

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Ana Sandoval, *Member*
Clayton Perry *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the March 21, 2022 Public Safety Committee meeting.

Councilmember Sandoval moved to Approve the minutes from the March 21, 2022 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Sandoval, Perry

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Committee policy discussion and possible action on the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (“SLFRF”) Spending Framework adopted by City Council under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for the category of Mental Health. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Claude Jacob, Director, Health]

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Michelle Lugalía Holland spoke on behalf of San Antonio for Growth on the East Side (SAGE) who asked the Committee to identify the East Side as a priority community for mental health, integrated school based prevention and treatment, de-stigmatize treatment, and to address systemic and chronic inequities, and provide SAGE with funding to establish a place-based coordinated approach to mental health on the East Side.

Liz Holland spoke in support of funding for SAGE for mental health services.

Ananda Tomas spoke in support of funding for specialized services for mental health, particularly the Mental Health Crisis Team and other alternatives to addressing Public Safety.

Sofia Sepulveda spoke in support of funding for mental health and recommended formation of a committee to oversee the CHCA.

Angela White, President and CEO of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in San Antonio, spoke in support of funding for mental health services for children provided by CASA.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Cabello Havrda acknowledged a memo that was distributed regarding SASCORE (San Antonio Community Outreach & Resiliency Effort) Metrics.

Councilmembers Viagran, Sandoval, and McKee-Rodriguez did not support Alternative A. Councilmember Viagran was hesitant to support Alternative B. Councilmember Sandoval recommended an Ad-Hoc Committee focused only on the SASCORE. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported Alternative B. Councilmember Perry and Chair Cabello Havrda supported Alternative A. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez explained that Alternative A would allow the Public Safety Committee to nominate up to four new members of an Advisory Committee.

Chair Cabello Havrda opened the Item by stating that \$26 million in ARPA funding had been set aside for the Mental Health Category and the task of the Committee was to define goals and outcomes and ensure that pre-crisis services were improved to address needs prior to the police getting involved. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that the Committee should plan a rescue strategy and make the best use of funds with long term sustainability including community involvement.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez introduced the Item and thanked the community partners who provided input to the discussion on ARPA Funds usage and provided an overview of ARPA Funding with general guidelines for the funding. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that the Committee was tasked to identify the COVID impact, include programs/strategies to benefit the community, and to define desired equitable outcomes with metrics to measure those outcomes during the 4 year funding period. Deputy City Manager Villagomez outlined next steps

and noted that the goal was to have all plans approved by the full City Council by the fall of 2022.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided background on existing mental health demographics and programs currently funded by the City of San Antonio and provided options for improving existing services and a tentative/preliminary timeline for the plan development.

Chair Cabello Havrda suggested that staff explore the creation of a new 3-digit phone number that residents could call for mental health services versus calling 9-1-1, but noted that an extensive community outreach and educational campaign would be necessary. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that she would like to have more children tested for Mental Health needs, particularly Autism with \$1.34 million allocated for the Autism Network over the 4 year period. Chair Cabello Havrda supported the requests from SAGE and CASA and more community discussion to break down the stigma of mental health intervention and treatment.

Jelynn LeBlanc Jamison, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Center for Healthcare Services (CHCS), stated that there were a number of organizations in the SAT Coalition whose goal was to reduce stigma and enhance access to care and treatment for Mental Health.

Jamison stated that the coalition would come jointly to the City and Bexar County to seek funding to help improve outcomes for persons in mental health pre-crisis and crisis situations. Chair Cabello Havrda requested a list of organizations involved in the SAT Coalition and suggested expanding the membership.

Chair Cabello Havrda recommended that the Community Health Workers coordinate services. Jennifer Herriott, Assistant Director of Metro Health, stated that they were forming a coalition to coordinate. Chair Cabello Havrda noted that mental health could impact all ARPA spending categories.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that the funding serve those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and requested impact reports and targeted zip code efforts that would target areas and populations historically underserved or disenfranchised, especially the East Side and the LGBTQIA+ community. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported targeting youth with a school based strategy, Veterans and Seniors. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended leveraging funding from the Senior Category and supported a second pilot program for alternative response teams in another part of town.

Councilmember Viagran requested data and demographics related to the metrics presented by Deputy City Manager Villagomez. Councilmember Viagran supported treating children for their trauma as well as the request for funding for SAGE. Councilmember Viagran recommended that the discussion regarding mental health services stayed completely within the Public Safety Committee and requested data on the number of mental health calls where the individual had a weapon or if the call was related to an overdose; specifically treatment that occurred afterward. Councilmember Viagran suggested more treatment for youth and Veterans and also recommended defining mental

health issues.

Councilmember Sandoval recommended identification of causes of mental health crisis calls and asked if the cause had to be COVID. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that there needed to be a tie to COVID. Councilmember Sandoval requested the funding be used to establish one or two more CORE teams in 78228, 78229, 78208 similar to the one created in zip code 78207 under SACORE. Councilmember Sandoval recommended a model for getting information from teens in schools related to suicides, suggested immediate pre-crisis intervention assistance for youth, Veterans and Seniors.

Councilmember Perry requested San Antonio statistics on the impact of mental health, rather than national numbers. Councilmember Perry stated that all organizations that requested funding must provide outcome based metrics, past performance/experience and future goals with a caution that the funding would be one-time only. Councilmember Perry recommended that the Committee should identify consequences if an organization received funding but did not meet their goals. Councilmember Perry requested information on the requested amounts.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended operational support for organizations with a prioritization of smaller organizations and viewed this as an opportunity for capacity building. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the request by SAGE and requested information on funding from Bexar County for mental health. Mike Lozito, Director of Criminal Justice, Policy and Planning at Bexar County, provided information on the jail population with mental health issues and stated that Bexar County had dedicated ARPA funding for mental health and housing. Lozito noted that Bexar County was determining rules for the new funding and what could be funded. Lozito offered to share the Mental Health Task Force Report with City Council.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended SAGE to be used as a connector for this program.

Councilmember Viagran recommended separate funding for Youth and Seniors. Councilmember Viagran suggested that proposals addressed accessibility and affordability of services and a review of the regional approach and longevity of staff.

Councilmember Sandoval recommended collaboration with Bexar County to leverage opportunities and restoring mental health funding to Fire, Metro Health and Police.

Chair Cabello Havrda recommended funding for mental health services for first responders. Chair Cabello Havrda agreed with a prioritization of Youth, Veterans and Seniors and requested a list of qualified organizations requesting funding and recommended coordination with Bexar County.

3. **Briefing, and possible action, on the San Antonio Fire Department update on activity related to structure fires, brush and grass fires, and the Department's wildland fire capabilities.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Charles N. Hood, Fire Chief]

San Antonio Fire Department Chief Charles Hood provided statistics on the number of responses from 2014 to date which had increased steadily over time. Chief Hood noted that structure fires had increased nationwide as well as in San Antonio. He outlined the definitions of potential causes, provided a map of structure fires in the second quarter of FY2022 and presented data on fire fatalities and brush fires. Chief Hood noted that vacant structures were a large source of structure fires and explained the Hazardous Structure Program.

Chief Hood described prevention and education efforts focused on providing smoke detectors, and educating persons about kitchen safety, smoking material disposal and appliance safety. Chief Hood provided information on equipment resources dedicated to special situations, staffing resource challenges, mutual aid of neighboring communities, and 14 day deployment to other areas of the country. Chief Hood requested assistance from the Committee to distribute door hangers. Chief Hood introduced a new accelerant canine firefighter Bruno who would assist with arson investigations.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Cabello Havrda invited SAFD to educate Council District 6 residents about fire prevention.

Councilmember Viagran commented on the recent fires in Council District 3 and recommended more education for the community and a designation of a week for fire prevention. Chief Hood noted that October was Fire Prevention month.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented on the fire trends in Council District 2 and asked Chief Hood to develop budgeting and policy recommendations for fire prevention. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a discussion with Chief Hood about helping residents who might be experiencing cold weather.

- 4. Briefing, and possible action, on the Complaint & Administrative Review Board (CARB) civilian appointments to fill existing vacancies.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Police Chief]

Chair Cabello Havrda tabled the Item to the next meeting.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Consideration of items for future meetings

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Cabello Havrda adjourned the meeting at 11:29 AM.

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Respectfully Submitted

Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk