

**PUBLIC SAFETY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 19, 2021
9:30 AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, <i>Chair, District 6</i> Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Phyllis Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Ana Sandoval, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
-------------------------	--

Call to order

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda called the meeting to order.

Items for Consideration

1. Approval of minutes from the Public Safety Committee meeting on September 21, 2021

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2021 Public Safety Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Written Testimony

There were no written comments submitted.

Live Testimony

There were no citizens registered to speak.

2. Briefing and possible action by the San Antonio Fire Department response times, logistics, personal protective equipment, and mental health programs available to firefighters. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Charles N. Hood, Fire Chief]

Fire Chief Charles Hood briefed the Committee on the San Antonio Fire Department's (SAFDs) response times, logistics, personal protective equipment and mental health programs available to Firefighters.

Chief Hood reported that data driven decision making was key in today's fire service and the department maintained operational performance measures intended to assess its response availability, optimize its capability to arrive and mitigate an incident and evaluate effectiveness of

on-scene operational performance. He stated that the department tracked and monitored metrics with the goal of achieving positive outcomes for the community, Firefighters and any property involved. He provided the criterion required in order to maintain current accreditation status.

Chief Hood stated that SAFD was an all hazards department which responded to a wide variety of incidents and situations. He noted that to meet the demands of this mission, the department had developed a large logistics network housed in the Fire Department Services and Logistics Facility. He indicated that logistics in Fire Service included the deployment and tracking of supplies, equipment and services to support emergency operations. He added that the SAFD Logistics Facility was constructed in 2013 and provided fleet and equipment maintenance and air services for the department.

Chief Hood reported that Firefighter health and safety were top priorities of SAFD and the department had established a wellness and prevention program to assist Firefighters in managing their health and decrease the potential for debilitating illness in the future. He indicated that SAFD had taken a hard stance to prevent Firefighters from being exposed to carcinogens at fire scenes and work locations. He stated that as part of this “cancer initiative”, the department established an innovative program to ensure that apparatus and protective clothing were properly cleaned and stored, protecting Firefighters throughout their careers.

Chief Hood stated that the physical demands that first response activities place on Firefighters and EMS Personnel were well known, however, it was critical to address the impact that responding to these emergencies had on the mental wellbeing of first responders. He reported that the behavioral risks that first responders faced included anxiety, depression, burnout and post-traumatic stress disorders among others. He indicated that in recognition of these challenges, the department developed several programs to ensure that Firefighters remained resilient, mentally focused and strong. He stated that programs included a combination of technological and traditional methods to provide as many tools as possible to care for personnel. He reviewed the internal and external offerings to Firefighters for their mental health.

Councilmember Sandoval requested information on mental health resources available to the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD).

Councilmember Viagran requested an update next year on Firefighter feedback on wellness and mental health programs.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested the Fire Department Strategic Plan. He requested information on utilization of mental health resources in the department. Chief Hood stated that the information would be provided.

Councilmember Perry requested the presentation of a map of Employment Service Department (ESD) and Bexar County resources available in the area at a future Committee meeting.

3. Briefing and possible action on Street Racing in San Antonio and discussions on a potential ordinance to enhance the ability of the Police Department to effectively address

street racing and individuals that attend these events. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Police Chief William McManus stated that to address street racing incidents, the Police Department conducted outreach with business owners where street racing activity had occurred and as a result, property owners had signed criminal trespass affidavits and had enhanced their security services. He reported that the department created the Ad Hoc Street Racing Task Force which was comprised of the Southwest Texas Fusion Center, Eagle Helicopter Unit, DWI Unit, Street Crimes Unit, Traffic Unit, Patrol Unit and the San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Unit.

Chief McManus reported that from September 2020 to June 2021, SAPD responded to 213 street racing incidents. He noted that in response to those incidents, SAPD issued 276 citations, conducted 116 arrests and towed 81 vehicles.

Chief McManus stated that the 87th Texas Legislature passed two laws designed to increase penalties for street racing and street takeover events: Texas Senate Bill (SB) 1495, effective September 1, 2021 and Texas House Bill (HB) 2315, effective January 1, 2022.

Chief McManus reported that SB 1495 added the definition of “reckless driving exhibition” to the Penal Code and increased the penalties for participants of reckless driving events. He indicated that obstructing a highway or passageway by participation in a reckless driving event was a Class A Misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail with a maximum fine of \$4,000. He noted that the penalty would increase to a State Felony if the driver was previously convicted of the offense; operated a vehicle while intoxicated; or caused someone to suffer bodily injury. He added that the bill created the Class B Misdemeanor offense of interference with a Peace Officer investigation of a highway racing or reckless driving exhibition.

Chief McManus stated that HB 2315 amended the Penal Code to include as “contraband” any property used in the commission of a Felony or Class A Misdemeanor of Racing on a Highway. He noted that vehicles used in street racing offenses were now subject to seizure and civil asset forfeiture.

Chief McManus indicated that SAPD was proposing a street racing spectator Ordinance in which a violation would be Class C Misdemeanor offense against spectators with a fine of up to \$500.

4. Briefing and possible action om the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ),Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS), Community Policing Development (CPD) De-Escalation Training Grant award. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Chief McManus reported that SAPD applied for, and received, a grant from the U.S. DOJ, COPS Office in the amount of \$171,600.00. He stated that the grant would be used to purchase virtual reality simulators to train Cadets and Officers in developing de-escalation skills and to address use of force scenarios. He noted that the grant funds would allow Training Officers to attend nationally certified de-escalation train-the-trainer programs to build the department’s internal capacity to

provide de-escalation training to Cadets and Officers. He indicated that the grant would expand the City's efforts in training Officers in critical de-escalation skills and in use of force incidents. He added that the grant period was from September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2023.

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda requested more information on the indicators the police look for when identifying spectators at the City Council A Session meeting. She requested that the Department of Public Works and the Office of Innovation be involved in discussions on street racing deterrents.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed support for Item 3. He requested details on the virtual reality room when the purchase was considered by City Council.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that she would not support the proposed spectator Ordinance at this time. She requested more data on the effectiveness of such an Ordinance.

Councilmember Viagran expressed support for the proposed spectator Ordinance and moved to forward Item 3 to the City Council for consideration. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

AYE: 3 - Cabello Havrda, Viagran and Perry

NAY: 2 - McKee-Rodriguez, and Sandoval

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to recommend and forward Item 4 to the City Council for consideration. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Items for Future Meetings

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda stated that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on November 16, 2021.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Respectfully Submitted

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk