

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Governance Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Chair

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

10:00 AM

City Hall

The Governance Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Media Briefing Room at 10:08 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Ron Nirenberg, *Mayor, Chair*
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*
Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Member*
John Courage, *Member*

Members Absent: Manny Pelaez, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from Governance Committee on August 16, 2024.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the August 16, 2024 Governance Committee meeting. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Courage

Absent: Pelaez

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Consideration of an applicant to the VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Trustees. [Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk]

City Clerk, Debbie Racca-Sittre reported that the VIA Metropolitan Transit Board of Trustees was comprised of 11 members representing various entities: Five (5) San Antonio City Council representatives, three (3) Bexar County Commissioners Court representatives, and two (2) Suburban Mayors. She noted that each member served a staggered two-year term and the Chair of the Board was elected by the Board Members and served a two-year term. She stated that the

vacant Central Labor Council seat was held in holdover by Bob Comeaux. Racca-Sittre stated that an application was received from Adrian Reyna, for the vacancy who had been recommended by the Central Labor Council and was a member of the Local Teacher's Union.

Reyna provided an opening statement and was interviewed.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to recommend Adrian Reyna for the remainder of the unexpired term of the VIA Board of Trustees through December 31, 2024; and for the board appointment to be considered by City Council at its next available meeting. Councilmember Cabello Havrda seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Courage
Absent: Pelaez

3. Council Consideration Request by Councilmembers Manny Pelaez (District 8) and Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) on the creation of a Public Health & Healthcare Commission. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude Jacob, Health]

City Manager Erik Walsh provided background on CCR 2024-0021 from Councilmembers Pelaez (District 8) and Rocha Garcia (District 4) which recommended the creation of a Public Health & Healthcare Commission to provide review from stakeholders from different sectors to focus on improving the City's health resilience and oversee Metro Health's SA Forward Strategic Plan.

City Manager Walsh recommended referring the CCR to the Community Health Committee to further refine the commission and to ensure overlap with other entities such as the Center for Health Equity in South Texas (CHEST) would be minimized.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked Dr. Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health, what was already being done by Metro Health to develop a comprehensive public health and healthcare strategy. Jacob reported that Metro Health regularly convened with various community networks to accomplish this goal but was supportive of the creation of a new board.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted there were already about eight health-related boards in the City.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented there was a lack of access to healthcare in San Antonio, particularly on the South Side, and suggested that this would be a platform for the continuous organized convening of community healthcare partners to ensure collaboration and meet resiliency goals. She noted the various issues surrounding healthcare in the San Antonio community.

Councilmember Courage agreed that Metro Health could use more partnerships and stakeholder input to provide insight into public health services, however, he expressed concern with creating a new commission, but suggested the creation of a council instead to relieve the City Council of having to appoint new members.

Mayor Nirenberg liked the idea of having a slate of experts rather than a commission that was

appointed by the City Council representing each council district.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Refer to Committee. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Courage

Absent: Pelaez

4. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) and Councilmember Marina Alderete Gavito (District 7) on preventative measures to eliminate water disconnections for apartment residents in good standing. [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Amin Tohmaz, Interim Director, Development Services Department]

Interim Assistant City Manager John Peterek provided background on CCR 2024-0022 from Councilmembers McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) and Alderete Gavito (District 7) on preventative measures to eliminate water disconnections for apartment residents in good standing. He stated that the request was to enroll any affected apartments into the proactive apartment inspection program and coordinate with SAWS. Peterek recommended referral to the Municipal Utilities Committee (MUC).

Mayor Nirenberg invited Councilmember Alderete Gavito who was not on the Committee to speak. She spoke in support of the CCR requiring landlords who collected rent from residents intended to cover the utility bills and did not pay the apartment complex's water bills.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda expressed concern with apartment complexes being automatically enrolled in the Proactive Apartment Inspection Program since it was a broad program and thought that those that had their water disconnected were automatically enrolled. Interim Director of Development Services, Amin Tohmaz, clarified that a complex needed three citations to be enrolled in the Program and water shutoff would result in one citation. Councilmember Cabello Havrda suggested the creation of a Master Meter Program at SAWS.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia was happy that the issue was being reviewed and noted that there had been several disconnections in Council District 4. She supported enrolling apartment complexes that were consistently late in payment of their water bills into the Proactive Apartment Inspection Program and suggested additional legal action against the bad actor landlords. Segovia clarified that SAWS could legally place a lien on the property.

Councilmember Courage suggested that there were tens of thousands of people living in apartment complexes who paid the rent and just assumed the water bill was being paid; he was concerned with sending thousands of notices to tenants about unpaid water bills as a potential expense. Councilmember Courage supported moving apartment complexes that were consistently late on their water bill payments into the Proactive Apartment Inspection Program. He also suggested informing the mortgage companies of the potential for a lien to be placed on a property.

Mayor Nirenberg suggested that SAWS might be able to provide some context to the issue noting that SAWS was conducting their own outreach. Overall, he supported inclusion of

apartment complexes in the Proactive Apartment Inspection Program if they were repeatedly late in payment of their utilities. Segovia stated that adding this criterion to the Program would simply require the City Council to approve the update. Mayor Nirenberg also liked the transparency that placing the information about the complex on the internet would give prospective tenants.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Refer to Committee. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Courage

Absent: Pelaez

5. Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Teri Castillo (District 5) on Appointment Process Improvements.

City Manager Erik Walsh provided background on CCR 2024-0023 from Councilmember Castillo which requested improvements to the board appointment process. He stated that the CCR requested staff research on boards that were mostly appointed by the Mayor and recommended alignment with other governmental best practices. City Manager Walsh requested guidance from the Governance Committee.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted this was an issue for the entire City Council to consider and moved to refer the CCR to B Session. There was no second to her motion.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked why the board appointment process for the three identified boards were changed and asked if it was due to quorum. She noted that a few years ago, a subcommittee was created to sunset boards and on-board appointment processes and thought that all boards needed to be reviewed. She recommended reviewing other appointment processes but was unsure if the solution was to send it to a B session and asked the City Clerk if there was some other provision. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre noted that the City Code called for a sunset review of all boards every two years. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended the creation of a Sunset Review Committee of the City Council to take a comprehensive look at all boards.

Mayor Nirenberg mentioned that the last two sunset committees yielded little results but agreed it was time to resurrect a Sunset Review Committee and recommended adding the subject of a Sunset Review Committee which would be a subcommittee of the Governance Committee to be placed on the next Governance Committee meeting agenda.

Councilmember Courage noted that the City Charter did not grant the Mayor authority to appoint chairs or multiple board members and suggested that this issue and composition of boards in general needed to be discussed by the Sunset Review Committee in addition to whether a board should exist.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asserted that a Sunset Review Committee did not address the CCR. She expressed concern with having another committee developed to talk about committees and felt that taking this to B session would address the intent of the CCR.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that Opportunity Home was State Law, and the Housing Commission was a community-led effort that produced a housing policy framework with a Commission that was being implemented in the way the community recommended. He acknowledged that not everyone got what they wanted from the Charter Review Process, however, the process was transparent. He recommended waiting until the next City Council was seated to revise the Charter Review Commission Ordinance. Mayor Nirenberg committed to reconstituting a Sunset Review Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended that the Sunset Review Committee review the board appointment process.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that he would reconstitute the Sunset Review Committee and have them review the appointment process. Councilmember Courage supported reviewing geographic representation on each commission.

Councilmember Courage moved to set up a Sunset Review Committee with the additional scope to review how boards were established, membership composition, and the board appointment process. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Nirenberg, Rocha Garcia, Courage
No: Cabello Havrda
Absent: Pelaez

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk