

City of San Antonio



Minutes Public Safety Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6, Chair

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2

Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Monday, November 18, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Briefing Room

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting at the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:02 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*
Marc Whyte, *Member*

Members Absent: Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the October 15, 2024 Public Safety Committee Meeting

Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve the minutes of the October 15, 2024 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Whyte seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Whyte

Absent: Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing on Holiday Safety Tips by the San Antonio Police Department and San Antonio Fire Department. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus,

Chief of Police; Valerie Frausto, Fire Chief]

San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Chief William McManus presented the San Antonio Police Department Education Campaign and strategies to reduce the risk of crime victimization during the holiday season. McManus cautioned against vehicle thefts and break-ins and recommended that residents park in well-lit areas, remove or hide any valuables in their vehicle, lock their vehicle and never leave the key fob inside the vehicle, place any shopping bags/electronic boxes with brand names in the trunk of the vehicle, and avoid leaving purchased items in plain view. McManus reported that last year, 3,210 or 16.4% of all reported vehicle thefts occurred during the holiday season and 3,500 or 16.2% of all reported vehicle break-ins occurred during the holiday season.

McManus provided strategies to prevent Driving While Intoxicated including not drinking and driving, having a sober ride home, and making arrangements to use a ride share application or a taxi. He stated that 740 or 15.6% of all DWI arrests occurred during the holiday season in 2023. McManus suggested that residents should be aware of porch pirates. He stated that if you were expecting a package, notify a family member or a neighbor and do not announce what you received as a gift. He commented that burglars were always keeping an eye out so he recommended cutting up boxes properly, and always recycling and warned residents not to display their Christmas tree or holiday gifts in areas visible from doors or windows and suggested keeping the exterior of the home well-lit. McManus reported that 2,195 or 17% of property theft crimes occurred during the holiday season last year.

McManus provided tips to prevent fraud and scams such as the Fake Package Delivery Text Scam, Social Media Ads with fake stores online or look-alike stores, fake charities, fraudulent seasonal jobs, fake texts, emails or phone calls from a victims' bank or credit card company. He mentioned that Celebratory Gunfire was illegal in Texas and could cause harm to people, damage property, and affect public safety. McManus recommended that residents report gunfire incidents to the non-emergency line. He reported that the average daily shots fired calls for 2023 was 102 and the number of shots fired calls on January 1st was 361 and on July 4th was 304.

McManus showed a Public Awareness Campaign video which would be provided in both English and Spanish and shared by social media blast, through public service announcements, in collaboration with local media, through community engagement and outreach through neighborhood associations, as well as through digital engagement. Additionally, a partnership with local media to provide essential holiday safety tips, and highlight key topics such as: protecting yourself during online shopping, safeguarding credit card information, increasing awareness about fraudulent organizations that often scam individuals during the holiday season.

McManus outlined the plan to launch a Holiday Crime Reduction Taskforce which would include multiple SAPD units focused on proactively reducing criminal activity by identifying and apprehending known criminals who engage in vehicle burglaries, retail thefts, and other property crimes during the holiday shopping season.

San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) Chief Valerie Frausto presented the Fire Department education campaign and strategies to stay alert and safe during the holiday season. Frausto recommended keeping Christmas trees, decorations, and other flammable items three feet away from the cook stove, heaters, or fireplaces, and to turn off space heaters when residents leave the

home. Frausto recommended servicing heaters and warned about leaving stove top cooking unattended and setting a timer for oven cooking. She also recommended testing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors twice a year and replacing them as recommended by the manufacturer.

According to Frausto, SAFD partnered with local media outlets, performed television interviews, used social media blasts and other online messaging in both English and Spanish. She noted that the department handed out flyers regarding smoke detectors to the community. Frausto stated that FireSafeSA featured a downloadable section available year-round for seasonal safety including cooking and decorations and these messages also included videos which Frausto played for the Committee.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if there was a separate task force for property crimes year-round. McManus stated that the Holiday Crimes Task Force was formed each year. Chair Cabello Havrda asked about people watching you put things in the trunk of your car. McManus recommended awareness, locking doors, and do not leave anything visible in your car.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked how people could get their smoke detectors checked. Frausto stated that residents could call 2-1-1 or fill out a form on the SAFD website. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez offered to share information and resources with the Committee.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito thanked police officers and firefighters for their work during the holidays. She thanked Chief McManus for pushing the message related to Celebratory Gunfire noting that she and Councilmember Castillo had submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) 2024-0025.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito highlighted that older homes could be at higher risk for fires as well as vacant buildings due to homeless persons getting in and starting fires and suggested an education campaign for property and business owners. Frausto stated that SAFD was partnering with the Development Services Department to inspect reported vacant properties. Councilmember Alderete Gavito suggested looking at the Office of Historic Preservation's (OHP) list of vacant businesses. Frausto stated that SAFD worked with OHP.

Councilmember Kaur asked if there were metrics related to the effectiveness of the educational campaigns and videos. McManus stated that SAPD compared data one year later to see if the statistics had decreased. Frausto stated that it was more difficult to determine the impact of fire education.

Councilmember Kaur asked if the City Auditor audited SAFD and suggested more proactive and connecting burglaries to each other and suggested that more information be provided to residents when they called the police and suggested improved communication. Villagomez stated that she would look into the procedures.

Chair Cabello Havrda noted that the Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

Consent

3. Briefing and possible action on the replacement of an armored rescue vehicle funded with

2023 Urban Area Security Initiative Grant funds. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]
Councilmember Alderete Gavito moved to Approve. Councilmember Whyte seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Kaur, Alderete Gavito, Whyte
Absent: McKee-Rodriguez

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Consideration of items for future meetings

Adjournment

After the meeting, members of the Public Safety Committee may tour the San Antonio Police Training Academy, located at 12200 SE Loop 410 Access Road. No official action will be taken during this time.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk