

**State of Texas  
County of Bexar  
City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes  
City Council B Session**

Council Briefing Room  
City Hall  
100 Military Plaza  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

**2023 – 2025 Council Members**

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6  
Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8  
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024**

**2:00 PM**

**Council Briefing Room**

The City Council convened a B Session meeting in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:05 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

**PRESENT: 11** – Nirenberg, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

**ABSENT:** Viagran

**ITEMS**

1. Briefing on the Office of the City Clerk 2024-2029 Strategic Plan [Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk]

City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre provided a briefing on the Office of the City Clerk 2024-2029 Strategic Plan (Plan) which included three components for each functional area of the Office:

vision, goals, and specific strategies to meet the goals within the five-year planning period.

Racca-Sittre reviewed the steps taken in the Plan to include research and best practices of peer organizations, a statistically valid survey, stakeholder meetings, draft of the Plan and presentation to the City Council. She noted that the Office of the City Clerk (OCC) conducted strategic plan outreach and feedback sessions to gain engagement on the different divisions of OCC and she presented the new OCC mission statement which was developed by the OCC staff.

The Plan had three overarching goals: 1) Increase accessibility, 2) Improve communication, and 3) Provide education to the public and training to city staff and volunteers. Expanding accessibility included OCC taking on the role of the City Tower Information Desk to allow visitors to drop off documents, and request information on City services while the Information Desk will receive claims, citations and other official documents.

The Plan also included upgrades to technology systems that had been built in-house by the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) staff (board applications, lobbyist filings, campaign finance, financial disclosure reporting) and those hosted internally (Vital Records Management System) that would improve the user's experience and provide additional reporting, according to Racca-Sittre. She noted that in the first year, OCC would coordinate with ITSD to upgrade current systems and in the second year, evaluate upgrades and explore other alternatives.

Racca-Sittre commented that accessibility and communications would be improved by implementing an Enterprise Records Management System (ERMS) compliant with State standards, scalable, easy to access but secure and user friendly. She stated that this would be evaluated by staff in the first year of the Plan to determine necessary financial and staffing resources.

Under the plan, the Municipal Records and Archives Division would collaborate with external partners for archival exhibits. Racca-Sittre stressed the need to accelerate the current 60-year plan to preserve and digitize archives to a five-year plan at a cost of \$1.33 million/year in years 1-5. She added that an additional \$17,000 would be needed to procure software that would provide assurance that the digital format would be compatible for the future.

Racca-Sittre noted that in an effort to increase accessibility and provide education, OCC would leverage the 2022 Bond, the Capital Improvement Program and Deferred Maintenance funds already earmarked in the City's budget for the Municipal Archives and Records Center (MARC). Racca-Sittre reported that the improvements to the MARC would include enhanced security, improved customer access to MARC including Vital Records by reconfiguring the parking lot, building entrance and intake area, have a dedicated window for death certificates (for funeral homes), create a storefront museum space of municipal archives and develop spaces for learning and language interpretation.

The plan to improve communication included the increased use of Microsoft TEAMS, training for departmental record liaisons and board liaisons, enhanced Municipal Leadership Institute training for board and commission members and development of more effective ways to communicate with staff and stakeholders through technology and direct forums.

Racca-Sittre concluded her presentation by thanking the OCC team for their diligence in the development and recommendations of the Five-Year Strategic Plan at Monday's staff retreat.

## DISCUSSION

Mayor Nirenberg expressed his support of the proposed Plan and congratulated Racca-Sittre on the initiative to bring OCC to the forefront of technology. He supported the five-year-plan to speed up the digitization of archives and asked for clarification on the current state of digital records. Racca-Sittre explained that records already digitized were searchable by visiting the OCC website.

Mayor Nirenberg supported the development of a storefront for display of the City's archives and stressed the importance of preserving the City's history as well as making it available for the public to view.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if there was an increase in accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Racca-Sittre stated that the website was more accessible and improvements to the MARC parking lots would update traffic pattern and accessible parking locations.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if the Plan included selling birth certificates at the libraries. Racca-Sittre explained that while birth certificates used to be sold at a few libraries, there were issues with the City Clerk's lack of oversight at those facilities which led the State Registrar to deny the sale of vital records at libraries. City Manager Walsh noted the security challenges to selling birth certificates at the libraries. Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported the digitization of the archives and records.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito noted difficulty finding Ordinances, policies and procedures and requested clarification on the feedback on accessibility. Racca-Sittre stated that the community survey provided feedback on community interest in having records online, and in-person feedback was provided at the stakeholder meetings in the areas of boards and commissions, archives, municipal records and others.

Councilmember Kaur noted that she had received positive input on the stakeholder meetings. She asked if there were proposed improvements to the in-house developed programs. Racca-Sittre stated that OCC had already been working with ITSD to make improvements to the boards and commission application and reporting system to obtain data and metrics.

Councilmember Kaur supported technology upgrades to the Campaign Finance Reporting System and other financial reports and requested additional meetings for further discussion. She supported training and education efforts in Year 2 and 3 in order to bring a more diverse and younger population to board and commission positions.

Councilmember Courage asked when funding for the Plan would be considered and approved. City Manager Erik Walsh stated that the Plan would be reviewed during the budget process. Councilmember Courage noted that it was important to develop a realistic budget for the proposed improvements.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia thanked the OCC team for the stakeholder meetings, especially the large-scale boards and commissions event on January 30, 2024. She supported continued efforts with Women groups to expand diversity of board members. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there were proposed improvements to the board application system. Racca-Sittre mentioned that there were very few requests from the board members at the stakeholder meeting to change the application or the system but rather supported additional parking, dependent care and transportation assistance.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that there were challenges to completion of the Campaign Finance Reports as well as the Financial Disclosure Reports and suggested making the systems more user friendly.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked which stakeholders OCC would partner with for Municipal Records and Archives and recommended the Bexar Heritage Society. Racca-Sittre reported that staff had already reached out to the Archdiocese of San Antonio, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), San Antonio African American Community Archives & Museum, Mexican American Civil Rights Institute, Bexar County and other archival institutions to learn more on best practices and partnering opportunities.

Councilmember Whyte noted his support for the proposed Plan and was only concerned with the cost of the Plan which would be further discussed. Councilmember Whyte requested clarification on the engagement of staff and their input. Racca-Sittre explained that the Human Resources Department had hired a consultant to measure employee engagement through a survey that was conducted last year. Councilmember Whyte asked for additional information on the survey and thanked the team for their work noting that OCC did so many different things.

Councilmember Castillo acknowledged the efforts of the staff in engaging with the community through the stakeholder meetings and noted that she had received positive feedback from the stakeholder meetings and education provided to the stakeholders. She stated that she was interested in improved transportation for board members to attend meetings. Overall, Councilmember Castillo supported the Plan.

Councilmember Pelaez acknowledged the improvements already made to OCC and supported the recommendations in the proposed Plan. He noted the challenges with the preservation and archival of documents and the impact preservation had on future generations. He requested regular updates on preservation efforts.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez acknowledged the efforts of OCC staff in the development of the Plan.

2. Briefing on potential update to the rules and procedures for the scheduling and consideration of Council Consideration Requests (CCRs). [Andy Segovia, City Attorney]

Councilmember Whyte thanked the Mayor, City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk for working with him to refine this process. He stated that the CCR process was an

important tool for Councilmembers to bring forward policy proposals that reflected what a Councilmember's community needed or desired. Councilmember Whyte stressed the importance of the CCR process and that of the 3-Signature Memo process which he hoped to discuss further in the future. He stated that the CCR process assisted in efforts to provide transparency to the public.

Councilmember Whyte noted that he and his staff had reviewed the list of CCRs submitted within the last five years and noted that it was important to make sure to address CCRs in a timely manner and that the proposed refinements would ensure that timely debate occurred, therefore, he supported the recommendations presented by staff.

Councilmember Courage supported the recommendations made by staff for the CCR process and felt that the current Council Committee process was positive. He asked for clarification in instances where one of the Councilmembers who signed a CCR would revoke their signature or if submitted by a Councilmember no longer in office. City Attorney Segovia stated that a discussion with the City Council and City Manager would take place to determine how specific instances might be handled as there were details related to timing and other considerations that could be situational.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on what types of policy reasons a committee could use to "clear" a CCR. City Manager Erik Walsh provided an example of a request to install stop light cameras that were listed as a public safety issue, when really, it was a fiscal policy issue. City Manager Walsh added that while not every CCR with a financial impact would need to wait for the budget process, some large-scale requests would need to be discussed in the context of the budget process.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended that the CCR tracker include a way for the public to sign up for email alerts. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested clarification on the timing of a CCR being considered within one year. Segovia stated that this process would eliminate the need to have a time limit put on CCRs because the CCRs would be addressed timely by the Governance Committee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on the requirement to notify the City Manager of an upcoming CCR. City Manager Walsh stated that he welcomed discussions and notifications from Councilmembers in order to discuss consideration or proposed policies that already addressed CCR requests, but he was not going to be the gatekeeper.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the proposed CCR tracker and development of alerts proposed by Councilmember Rocha Garcia. Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked whether the Mayor would still control the Governance Committee agenda or if CCRs would be considered simply in order of submittal. City Attorney Segovia stated that CCRs would be placed on the agenda as set by the proposed Ordinance which established timely consideration as within 60 days at the Governance Committee, and the Mayor, as Chair of the Governance Committee, still controlled the meeting and its agenda, as did all committee chairs.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if Councilmembers would be allowed to speak at meetings where their submitted CCR was considered. City Attorney Segovia stated that Councilmembers would not be allowed to speak to a committee due to concerns that it would create a quorum but that members could submit written statements for consideration. Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that she would like to discuss consideration of Councilmembers being able to speak on their items further.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if only future CCRs would follow this process. Segovia confirmed that the process was only for new CCRs filed after the new process was adopted by City Council.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that he understood the challenge in tracking a CCR and where they were in the process of consideration, however, he questioned whether CCRs were really a reflection of residents needs or requests. He noted that simple administrative changes could often improve the quality of life for residents and he supported working through the City Manager.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed concern on the charge of the Governance Committee consideration of CCR in a timely manner and in that there was not diverse representation in the Governance Committee. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported Councilmembers being able to present their CCR at the Governance Committee or other committee meetings noting the need for representation of all areas of the City and community demographics. He added that he felt it was the duty of the authoring Councilmember to perform due diligence for the CCR policy before putting staff to work.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that he supported the recommendations to make sure that CCRs were considered in a timely manner. He noted that this was not a retroactive policy but wanted to make sure that previously submitted CCRs were addressed soon and in a more timely manner to include three that he had submitted 2-3 years ago. Councilmember Pelaez stated that he had considered refiling CCRs so to put them into the new queue for consideration and asked for an update on backlogged CCRs.

City Manager Walsh committed to providing an update on any backlogged CCRs including how they were addressed or handled administratively. City Manager Walsh stated that he would meet with Mayor Nirenberg to discuss the next steps in “clearing the deck” of older CCRs. City Attorney Segovia assured the City Council that outstanding CCRs would be considered in a timely manner and prior to newly submitted CCRs if the Ordinance was passed.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she felt that the current Ordinance would work if items were addressed in a timely manner as written. She asked about the potential consequences if CCRs were not agendized within the set 60 days under the new Ordinance. City Attorney Segovia clarified that these rules would be set by the City Council to govern itself and that a review and discussion would occur depending on the circumstances for each item but added that he would welcome additional conversation on clarification.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she did not support the authority of committee chairs to not further consider items as that meant a CCR would not be debated by the full City Council. She also did not support removal of a submitted item which State or Federal law already addressed and felt that consideration by the full City Council and debate of the CCR could be beneficial.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda expressed concern of the current process for full set of checks and balances in the review process of CCR submittal and review. She supported the recommended process but asked how members of the Governance Committee were selected and items were reviewed. Mayor Nirenberg stated that members of the Governance Committee were usually the most tenured members of the City Council and that the review system was set by the order in which the CCRs were submitted or based on discussions with Councilmembers on when they wanted their CCR addressed by the Governance Committee noting that sometimes a sponsoring Councilmember would request a delay.

Mayor Nirenberg commented that if there was difficulty in keeping on schedule, further discussions by the City Council would be needed to modify. City Attorney Segovia mentioned that there were also instances when CCRs were sent to Council Committees to address issues and he requested additional research and information from staff before bringing it to the full City Council for consideration.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she supported the new policy but would welcome further discussion if the process was found to be difficult to stay in queue and jeopardized transparency.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia stressed the importance of keeping the CCR process timely and a priority for consideration. She stated that she supported following Robert's Rule of Order for item consideration but to also consider equity when addressing. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that there had been a policy of rolling off CCRs that were older than one year or submitted by former Councilmembers; with those not moving through the process.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for additional consideration of allowing Councilmembers to speak at meetings on submitted CCRs. Mayor Nirenberg stated that consideration of the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA) requirement was the catalyst for updating the procedure. City Attorney Segovia recommended that TOMA issues could be discussed further in an Executive Session.

Councilmember Kaur supported the CCR tracker tool and the 60-day requirement for CCRs to be brought before the Governance Committee. She noted the importance of addressing the needs or requests of residents and tracking items that were not submitted through a CCR.

Councilmember Kaur stated that it was important for Councilmembers to be responsible to research items before submitting a CCR to ensure that all avenues were considered before submitting. She supported the recommendations brought forth by staff.

Councilmember Whyte noted that he favored allowing Councilmembers to speak at the committee level in support of their CCR. He agreed with Councilmember Kaur that it was important that Councilmembers research and be diligent in the submittal of CCRs.

Councilmember Whyte spoke to the clarification that the Mayor, not the City Clerk, would place the Item on the Governance Committee Agenda within 60 days and then the Governance Committee would determine next steps for consideration. He thanked his staff for the analysis conducted on the CCRs submitted over the past five years and reiterated his support of the proposed Ordinance.

Councilmember Courage recommended allowing Councilmembers to speak on their CCRs at the committee level. He expressed concern that a CCR once forwarded to a Council Committee could be delayed initially and that consideration of the item by the committee could experience further delay due to the number of issues to review.

Councilmember Courage mentioned that there had been instances where a Councilmember authoring a CCR had requested a delay and he supported their right to request a delay.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez agreed with the option for authors of a CCR to request delays due to circumstances or consideration of additional information, however, it was important to determine where the CCR was in the process.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted his concern for CCRs being addressed through the budgetary process and recommended that any CCR that was approved by a Council Committee should receive priority in the next budget.

City Manager Walsh stated that this process would require staff to change the process of review and analysis. He stated that it was important for staff to communicate and be transparent on the consideration of a CCR and stressed the importance for his office to get as much notice as possible regarding specific CCR submittals to further consider items and prioritize services.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked when Executive Session would be held noting that there were some items requiring discussion before the new CCR Ordinance was brought before the full City Council for consideration.

Mayor Nirenberg closed the discussion by concluding that there were essentially three items governing the CCR process including: 1) State Law, 2) Robert's Rule of Order, and 3) The need for transparency and accountability.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Executive Session was not held.



## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

**Approved**

**Ron Nirenberg**  
**Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre**  
**City Clerk**

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