

**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, December 18, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Briefing Room

The City Council convened a B Session meeting in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:08 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, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

ABSENT: None

ITEMS

1. Briefing on City-Wide End of Year Events, including Safety Tips and Weather Preparedness reminders. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police; Valerie Frausto, Fire Chief; Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Shanon Miller, Office of Historic Preservation, Director]

City Manager Erik Walsh noted that although many City offices were closed during the winter break, some were still open hosting events and keeping our community safe.

City Manager Walsh introduced Shanon Miller, Director of the Office of Historic Preservation who provided information on holiday events in Travis Park, Riverwalk holiday lights starting during the Holiday River Parade the day after Thanksgiving, Holidays on Houston Street, Homemade Christmas at Alamo, Holiday Night City at Texas Public Radio (TPR), HOT Holidays on Houston Street, Chanukah on the River, 2024 Winter Holiday Camp, TubaMeister Holiday Concert, Valero Alamo Bowl, and the Celebrate SA: New Year's Eve Countdown. In 2025, Miller anticipated the following events: MLK March, Climate Ready Neighborhoods: Community Resilience Fair, and the Housing in San Antonio Event.

Miller introduced Captain Michelle Ramos with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) who showed a video on holiday safety tips and presented the SAPD education campaign and strategies to reduce the risk of crime victimization during the holiday season. Ramos 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, never leave the keyfob 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. Ramos 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.

Ramos provided strategies to prevent Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) including not drinking and driving, having a sober ride home, making arrangements to use a ride share application or a taxi. She stated that 740 or 15.6% of all DWI arrests occurred during the holiday season in 2023. Ramos suggested that residents should be aware of porch pirates. She reported that 2,195 or 17% of property theft crimes occurred during the holiday season last year.

Ramos 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 pretending to be from a victims' bank or credit card company. She mentioned that Celebratory Gunfire was illegal in Texas and could cause harm to people, damage property, and affect public safety. Ramos recommended that residents report gunfire incidents to the non-emergency line and mentioned the educational campaign being developed as a result of Council Consideration Request (CCR 2024-0025) sponsored by Councilmembers Castillo and Alderete Gavito.

Ramos 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 by Neighborhood Associations, as well as through Digital Engagement. She stated that additionally, a partnership with Local Media was developed 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. Ramos outlined the work of the Holiday Crime Reduction Taskforce which included multiple SAPD units focused on proactively reducing criminal activity by identifying and apprehending known criminals who engaged in vehicle burglaries, retail thefts, and other property crimes during the holiday shopping season.

San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) Public Information Officer Joe Arrington presented the

Department's education campaign and strategies for staying alert and safe during the holiday season. Arrington 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 left the home. He recommended servicing heaters and warned about overloading electrical outlets.

According to Arrington, SAFD partnered with local media outlets, performed television interviews, used Social Media blasts and other online messaging in both English and Spanish. He noted that FireSafeSA featured a downloadable section available year-round for seasonal safety including cooking and decorations and these messages also included videos.

Arrington reported that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) prepared a Cold Weather Preparedness Guide and SAPD was preparing door hangers. The response was coordinated between the City, County, VIA, SAWS, CPS Energy, and other regional stakeholders and nonprofit partners. He mentioned that text messages and media advisories would be sent out when the weather met different levels of severity and residents would be provided with tips and resources.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the safety efforts, particularly the Hector the Detector smoke detector video. She appreciated the Holidays on Houston and other downtown events but recommended tracking of attendees at all of the events. Miller stated that Visit San Antonio was tracking attendance highlighted by zip code of origin.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there were holiday DWI checkpoints. Ramos stated that SAPD did not have checkpoints. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if any progress had been made on the areas targeted for vehicle thefts. Ramos noted that the corridors were being patrolled heavily and San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Officers were involved. City Manager Walsh added that DWI checkpoints were not allowed in the State of Texas.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked Chief Frausto if SAFD worked with schools, churches, and small businesses to distribute safety information suggesting that children would educate their parents and grandparents. Frausto stated that October was Fire Prevention Month and the department began distributing information at various community events. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that there was a new resiliency hub on the South Side.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that the lights on the Riverwalk, Ice Skating Rink, and Holidays on Houston were special events for San Antonio. She stated that she and her team were excited for the MLK March. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended a Public Safety Announcement about celebratory gunfire in accordance with CCR 2024-0025. Councilmember Alderete Gavito thanked the community partners, police officers and firefighters for keeping residents safe and offered to help advertise the events and announcements in her council district newsletter.

Councilmember Castillo confirmed that VIA would not be providing free bus rides home from the New Year's Eve celebration and noted that other cities such as Austin were providing this service so she recommended that San Antonio look into this as our city had a high rate of DWI. Councilmember Castillo noted that sometimes men aged 18 to 60 years old were not being accepted into Haven for

Hope as they were full to capacity during cold or other weather events. Lori Houston stated that Corazon Ministries would accept those turned down by Haven for Hope.

Councilmember Castillo recommended replicating Councilmember Pelaez' video about not keeping guns in the car. She asked about the Holiday Task Force warrant roundup. Ramos stated that the primary focus was vehicle break-ins, not warrants. Chief William McManus noted that analysts researched to identify potential car burglars. Councilmember Castillo thanked the SAFFE Officers and supported the outreach effort to provide tips by both SAFD and SAPD. She reminded everyone that celebratory gunfire was illegal and thanked SAPD for their work on CCR 2024- 0025.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that guns were a hot topic issue, but most people agreed that having guns stolen from cars was a terrible thing. He noted that his law firm handled storm-related claims and suggested that there was increased fraudulent activity related to roof repair immediately after a hailstorm and he offered to share information with SAPD on what they were seeing. Councilmember Pelaez expressed concern against fake charities including the fake police support charities preying on people.

Councilmember Courage requested a review of the Resiliency Hubs map noting that there was a gap in the Northwest quadrant of the City. He suggested considering the nearby community center to add a Hub. Councilmember Courage appreciated all the tips and events.

Councilmember Kaur asked if the City handed out coverings for pipes and whether the City provided transportation to the Resiliency Hubs. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that SAWS assisted with winterization of water pipes and the City assisted with rides to the Hubs.

Councilmember Viagran requested more updates on upcoming downtown and community events and noted that the weather could change quickly and affect events such as last year's MLK March. Councilmember Viagran recommended reminders about not leaving guns in cars and recommended calling the non-emergency line when residents saw people beginning to start a trash can fire to keep warm.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked everyone for the updates.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting into Executive Session at 2:55 p.m. to discuss the following:

- A. Economic development negotiations pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087 (economic development).
- B. The purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.072 (real property).
- C. Legal issues related to litigation involving the City pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

- D.** Legal issues relating to emergency preparedness pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- E.** Legal issues related to collective bargaining pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 3:20 p.m. and announced that no official action had been taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre City
Clerk**