

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



**Meeting Minutes
City Council Budget Work 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

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

9:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

The City Council convened a Budget Work Session in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 9:06 AM. 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. Staff presentation FY 2025 Proposed Budget focusing on, but not limited to, the following City Departments or Initiatives: [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Justina Tate, Management & Budget]

- A. San Antonio Police Department
- B. San Antonio Fire Department
- C. Municipal Court

Interim Assistant City Manager John Peterek introduced the Items

A. San Antonio Police Department (SAPD)

SAPD Chief William McManus opened his presentation by breaking down the personnel complement for the FY 2025 Proposed Budget which was: 2,775 SAPD Uniform (an increase of 65 officers), 193 Park Police, 57 Aviation Police, 42 staff at the Arrestee Processing Center, and 950 civilians (a decrease of 1). He provided a comparison of calls received and responses for FY 2023-2024 and the FY 2025 target which was expected to be 8% lower than in previous years.

McManus reported that for January through July of 2024, crime was down by 3% with violent crimes against persons down 2.5%, crimes against society down 3.5%, and property crimes down 3.1% as compared with the same period in 2023. Additionally, McManus reported that the number of arrests had decreased.

Emergency response times averaged 6.22 minutes in FY 2024 and was expected to remain the same in FY 2025, according to McManus. He stated that non-emergency response times were 20.29 minutes in FY 2024 and was estimated to be 18.3 minutes for FY 2025. McManus reported that the FY 2025 Proposed Budget was \$664.5 million which was a 5.1% increase mostly attributed to staffing costs, equipment, and increased contractual costs.

McManus reported on the Violent Crime Reduction Strategy (VCRS) Partnership with UTSA. Year 1 (January 2023 to January 2024) utilizing the Hot Spot Policing strategy resulted in a 36.9% reduction in average violent crime incidents compared to the last year, a 14.8% increase in arrests in treated hot spots compared to the prior year, arrests for visible crime activity (i.e., weapons and drugs) were up in treatment locations likely due to police presence/awareness, violent crime arrests were down in treatment locations which matched the lower violent crime incident counts, and calls for service were down in treatment locations.

Phase 2 of the VCRS Problem-Oriented, Place-Based Policing began in June 2024 with multi-departmental collaborations implemented solutions at one location (1300 Block of Rigsby) and Phase 3 focusing on deterrence would begin in 2025 with a multi-agency collaboration to identify and engage with identified violent offenders at a high-risk of recidivism.

McManus recommended 65 new police officer positions at a cost of \$6.3 million. The target was to hire 360 Officers over three to five years; in FY 2024 100 Police Officers were added. He noted that the overall goal was for Patrol Officers to spend 60% of the time on proactive policing and 40% of the time responding to calls. McManus stated that the Police Training Academy was proposed to maintain five cadet classes per year to graduate up to 255 cadets. He indicated that the FY 2025 Proposed Budget included \$250,000 for grants to be distributed through a Request for Proposal (RFP) that was expected to be released by April 2025. McManus highlighted the San Antonio Rising Stars Community Basketball Program which was funded in FY 2023 and FY 2024, and Suit UP funded in FY 2023 collaborated with youth in the community to equip them with essential life skills, addressing topics such as hate crimes, anti-bullying, gun violence, youth violence, and cyberbullying.

McManus reported that the 2022 Bond Program included \$19.0 million for the South Flores Police Substation which was currently in the community engagement process and under design. He added that the substation was estimated to open in winter 2026 according to McManus.

McManus outlined the Downtown Camera Project to enhance downtown safety which was a

partnership between the City of San Antonio and Centro San Antonio. He noted that The Camera Project provided a real-time monitoring crime tool, integrated public and private camera feeds into a single monitor, enhanced first responders' situational awareness and decision making, provided a proactive response and additional investigation tool, and was anticipated to lower response times. He indicated that Phase I of the Downtown Camera Project was estimated to begin in January 2025.

McManus stated that the FY 2025 Budget proposed increases to the false alarm fee for unpermitted accounts to \$250 per occurrence. McManus reported that there were 68,126 false alarm calls responded to by Police annually at a cost of \$13 million and 10,771 false alarm calls responded to by The San Antonio Fire Department annually at a cost of \$7 million. He added that the new revenue was estimated at \$1.9 million.

The Illegal Dumping Program targeted solid waste at a place that was not an approved solid waste site, according to McManus. He stated that offenses ranged from a Class C misdemeanor to a State Jail Felony based on the weight of items illegally dumped. McManus noted that all officers who observed illegal dumping would take immediate action. He stated that the SAPD San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Officers coordinated with the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) for expedited pickup. McManus noted that additionally, SAPD conducted patrol-byes and partnered with SWMD to conduct covert operations to catch individuals dumping and make arrests.

Chief McManus closed his presentation by summarizing that additional Police Officer positions were critical to achieving the goal of having officers spend 40% of their time on call and 60% on proactive patrol. He noted that SAPD continued to adhere to best practices and leverage technology evidence-based strategies to assist officers in improving public safety and quality of life. Chief McManus reported continued success in recruiting and training cadets.

B. San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD)

Interim SAFD Chief Chris Monestier opened his presentation by breaking down the personnel complement as follows: 1,868 uniformed employees, 130 civilian employees, 54 Fire Stations, 54 engines, 36 full-time ambulances/Emergency Medical Services (EMS), up to 8 peak Medic units, • 3 EMS Units for JBSA Partnership, 22 Ladder Trucks, Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) Team, 2 Technical Rescue Teams and Equipment, 2 Hazardous Materials Teams and equipment, and one Office of Emergency Management.

Monestier reported that SAFD was a Class 1 Insurance Service Office (ISO), and less than 1% of all Fire Departments held that classification. Additionally, SAFD was also Commission for Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accredited and there were 324 accredited agencies across the country and just 13% of the United States population was served by an accredited agency. He noted that only 125 Fire Departments across the nation held both designations.

Monestier stated that there were 204,800 incidents between October 1, 2023, and July 31, 2024, of those, 80% were medical and 20% were non-medical. He noted that a total of 259,092 incidents and FY 2025 goal was 436,529 responses, of which 9,900 were expected to be clinical dispatch of other resources such as taxi. Monestier added that the targeted response time was 8 minutes which averaged 8:42 minutes in FY 2024.

The \$409.3 million FY 2025 Proposed Budget for SAFD was 7.3% higher than the previous year,

according to Monestier and he attributed the increase to the rising cost of medical supplies, tools, equipment, vehicle /apparatus repair as well as the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for firefighter compensation which was currently under negotiation. He noted that the FY 2025 Proposed Budget would add \$1.4 million for 15 uniform positions for 3 squad units to address medical calls and add systemic capacity for response. at the three busiest fire stations (Fire Station 4, Fire Station 19, and to enhance the existing squad at Fire Station 44.

According to Monestier. 2 EMS Classes were expected to graduate in FY 2025 with 63 projected paramedics and 2 Fire Classes were expected to graduate in FY 2025 with 88 projected firefighters. He stated that the Proposed Budget also included an increase to the EMS Transport Fee from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Monestier reported that 73,400 EMS Transports were performed annually at a cost of \$3,786 per Transport. He stated that \$25 million in EMS Transport Revenue was collected annually; 68% was paid by commercial insurance, 29% was paid by Medicare and Medicaid, and 3% was self-pay. Monestier indicated that The \$500 increase would result in \$5.17 million in additional revenue.

Monestier outlined emergency preparedness projects funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) such as a Facility Ggenerator Plan, public safety facilities, emergency equipment, and resiliency centers and sheltering supplies would be completed in FY 2025. He added that Fire Stations 52 and 53, which were currently being operated out of portable buildings, were expected to begin construction of permanent stations in June 2025.

Monestier summarized that SAFD's goals were to maintain Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 1 rating from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), increase unit availability and manage response times within the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Divisions, and continue to enhance emergency preparedness of public safety facilities and collaborate with other City departments in outreach and education efforts.

C. Municipal Court

Municipal Court Clerk Fred Garcia stated that the mission of the San Antonio Municipal Court was to administer justice fairly, impartially, and efficiently. He noted that the Court was committed to providing a transparent and trustworthy forum where individuals could be heard and considered with dignity and respect.

Garcia provided an overview of the department's organizational structure. He stated that the Court had jurisdiction of fine-only, Class C misdemeanors, civil code, and parking offenses. Garcia stated that Municipal Court had limited civil jurisdiction of bond forfeitures, cruelly treated animal hearings and dangerous dog hearings. The Court also provided magistration services for Class B and above offenses and magistration of Class C misdemeanor offenses.

Garcia reported that the \$17.1 million Proposed Budget was a 5.6% increase with no change in personnel; most of the increase was related to new IT systems, and \$188,351 to renovate five courtrooms, according to Garcia. Garcia listed performance metrics proposed for FY 2025 and compared them to FY 2024 results. He noted a shift in online payments of fines which increased the efficiency of the court.

Presiding Municipal Court Judge Carla Obledo reviewed specialty dockets such as: animal, assault/family violence, SA Road Ready, Omni, Code Compliance/Environmental, Juvenile/Truancy

Prevention and Intervention/Teen Court, Community Court, Virtual Court, Attorney Connect/Plea Bargain, Civil Parking, and Administrative Code Hearings.

Obledo reported that this past year, there was an increase in persons completing the Family Violence Court programs which was 58% for FY 2024 versus 39% for FY 2023. Family Violence Court had a specialized docket with jurisdiction over Class C, fine-only assault cases with the primary goals to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and improve outcomes for offenders and victims, according to Obledo.

Obledo listed the top animal docket cases for FY 2024 which were cruelty to animal and serious bodily injury and stated that there were twice as many criminal warrants issued in FY 2024 (864) than in FY 2023 (435). Obledo stated that Code Compliance Court presided over offenses that affected the health and general well-being of the community with a goal of having clean and livable neighborhoods through responsible property maintenance.

The Court used a restorative approach to juvenile services to traffic and non-traffic citations with court-ordered community service, Teen Court collaboration with St. Mary's University School of Law, and truancy services in collaboration with school administrators, according to Obledo.

Obledo closed the presentation by announcing that Municipal Court had earned the Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Award and initiated new programs during Municipal Courts Week such as educational programs for students related to safe driving and dangers of vaping, court in the community, a Senior Summit for high school seniors, and the Silver Texas driver's education for drivers age 55 and up.

DISCUSSION:

Discussion was held on all presentations simultaneously.

Mayor Nirenberg opened the discussion by requesting clarification on SAPD's presentation related to the performance measure titled Communications Grade of Service. McManus stated that the national standard was to answer a call within 15 seconds and the City had consistently stayed within that standard at a 95% rate. Mayor Nirenberg asked why there were fewer calls in FY 2024 over FY 2023 with a larger community population. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that the reason for calls to be lower had not been identified but the growth had been projected; she noted that the number of calls anticipated to be dispatched was flat and perhaps the number of calls was larger due to one incident where many called.

Mayor Nirenberg asked why the Municipal Court case completion rate was down for juveniles. Obledo stated that the juvenile and a parent or guardian were required to appear in-person, and it was difficult to get them to come to court or comply with orders due to transportation. Mayor Nirenberg recommended follow up with schools and development of new strategies to get students to appear, noting that the end of the pandemic should have brought the numbers up. Judge Obledo stated that the new case management system included in the FY 2025 Proposed IT Budget would help the court manage the cases.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito was committed to providing the necessary funding for SAPD and supported the 65 new patrol officers. She recommended more SAPD resources for traffic enforcement and gunshots in neighborhoods. McManus stated that when shots were fired when no officers were

around, SAPD collected shell casings and ran them through the database to identify if the casings were from a gun used previously which could help identify the person in possession of the gun. Councilmember Alderete Gavito praised Councilmember Courage for his gun buyback program.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito noted that mail theft was an issue that was difficult to address. McManus stated that adding lighting and cameras near cluster boxes could assist in preventing mail thefts. She supported increasing the fees for parking violations and speeding in school zones and asked about the phases of the Downtown Camera Program. McManus stated that Phase 1 of downtown cameras included placing cameras on Commerce Street from St. Mary's Street to Alamo Street as a pilot that would be evaluated to see if response times were increased.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended additional options for mental health calls and asked if there could be alternatives to call for mental health such as options on the phone. Villagomez stated that staff was evaluating the 9-8-8 number as an alternative. McManus stated that the CORE Unit was the first to be dispatched on a mental health call but if they were not available, other police units would respond.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked how the increase in EMS transport rates would impact uninsured and low-income residents. Monestier stated that the process began with a gross billing that went to insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid; those without insurance could be classified as charity care or homeless. He added that all billings were ultimately adjusted resulting in a 30% overall collection rate.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the replacement of Fire Station 10 in Council District 7 and asked about the timeline for the project. Monestier stated that the Public Works Real Estate Team was still in the process of looking for property. City Manager Erik Walsh stated that Fire Station 10 and 33 would be moving forward as soon as possible but were both seeking land.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested the number of SAPD grants and amounts since 2015. She asked where the 65 new officers would be assigned across the City as well as the attrition rate for retiring officers. McManus stated that the 65 new officers would be assigned to patrol but there was a 25% wash out rate of cadets, so the department over-recruited to cover those issues as well as account for retirements for a net of 45 cadets completing each class. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended exit interviews of officers that left voluntarily. She asked if the S. Flores Substation would be staffed fully once opened. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that 22 new officers would be added to staff the S. Flores Substation.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported the new downtown cameras and requested the cost of the new downtown cameras and the funding source. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that \$250,000 was in the Information Technology Capital Improvement Budget to install the cameras for phase 1 and the monitoring costs were operating and would be shared by Centro San Antonio; total cost was \$1 million annually for monitoring.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended a comparison of SAPD and SAFD mental health and health apps. She recommended that non-profits and churches notify SAFD Officers in their neighborhoods so they could prepare for large events. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported the covert surveillance and investigation process for the illegal dumping and requested the number of reports filed in the last year.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested information on response times and delays on the South Side as a result of the closure of Texas Vista Hospital. Monestier stated that some peak time hours were added for the Medic Unit in that area to ensure adequate coverage. City Manager Walsh stated that there would be a full-time EMS Unit at Fire Station 21. She requested clarification on response times and expressed concern with some of the metrics.

Councilmember Castillo was pleased to see the number of firearms recovered had increased noting that the number of shots fired had been increasing. She was happy to see that SAPD was focusing on illegal dumping investigation and enforcement. Councilmember Castillo recommended continued support for Cellebrite technology and suggested joining lawsuits against automakers with high rates of auto theft.

Councilmember Castillo expressed concern with the use of Artificial Intelligence Software for the downtown cameras suggesting that this might be an overreach of surveillance. McManus clarified that SAPD would be monitoring the data, and the department would need to develop policies regarding the program and the use of data. Councilmember Castillo asked about the number of calls in the areas where cameras were being installed as there were other areas of town that might have more calls and residents might be asking for this in other parts of the City to deter violent crime. McManus stated that SAPD would analyze the areas of where most calls came from, but the downtown cameras focused more on quality-of-life issues such as loitering/drinking and littering than violent crime.

Councilmember Castillo commented that Council District 5 residents were concerned about fires in vacant lots and structures and asked about the fire alarm donation process. Monestier stated that the plan was to purchase some fire alarms and receive donations of some but to distribute them quickly before the batteries started to degrade.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that residents wanted more police presence, particularly SAFFE officers, and the increase of 65 new patrol officers was needed but she requested clarification on whether the 50 officers in the grant were included in the 65. Villagomez explained that the Budget did not assume SAPD would receive the grant and an adjustment would be made if the grant was received. Councilmember Cabello Havrda commented that more calls were expected to be received and could impact the proactive percentage. McManus stated that there were 1.83 officers per 1,000 residents but there was no number set as a goal; the goal was 60% proactive time and 40% on-call time.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked what the law enforcement mental health and wellness grant would cover. McManus stated that the grant was for \$70,000 to provide all active, retired, civilian, and uniformed personnel with counseling, financial literacy, pain management, and active life training. She asked about illegal dumping on private property and how that was handled. McManus stated that it was probably vacant property that people were dumping on, but dumping on private property was handled by Code Enforcement. Councilmember Cabello Havrda expressed concern that innocent residents that were being victimized by illegal dumping on their property were having to cover the cost of cleanup and possibly face a code citation.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda congratulated SAFD on their accreditation and was hopeful that the CBA negotiations were moving forward. She recommended that cadet classes be adjusted to keep up with attrition. Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that Squad 44 had more calls than other squads and recommended more staffing. Monestier stated that adding more positions for Squad 44 as included in the Proposed Budget would help keep the squad fully staffed.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda thanked Judge Obledo for prioritizing juvenile cases but noted that parents were having a difficult time keeping up with attending alternative schools much less the Court instead, she recommended development of a more supportive ecosystem for juveniles and their families. Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted the diversity of cases handled by Municipal Court.

Councilmember Whyte recommended spending more resources on Public Safety and an increase in the Proposed Budget up to the 66% cap. He stated that public safety was the priority for all residents and recalled there would be 100 new officers, but now there were 65 being proposed. City Manager Walsh stated that 65 new officers were discussed in goal setting, the trial budget, and forecast, along with a goal of 360 new officers over three years. Councilmember Whyte supported adding the 65 new officers but recommended acceleration of getting to the 360 as soon as possible.

Councilmember Whyte asked about the goal of the downtown cameras which was both deterrence and enforcement. McManus stated that Minneapolis, MN had a larger downtown camera program which was successful. Councilmember Whyte suggested expanding the Hot Spot Policing Program since it was helping to decrease violent crime and it was not displacing the crime. City Manager Walsh explained that the Hot Spots were changing every 60 days as a result of fluctuating data. Councilmember Whyte asked what the City Council could do to increase public safety such as vehicles. McManus stated that they could use new vehicles.

Councilmember Whyte asked what SAFD might need such as equipment or new technologies. Monestier stated that the department was planning to conduct a needs assessment and would come back with potential improvements and efficiencies. Councilmember Whyte asked if SAFD collaborated with neighboring cities for fires on the borders. Monestier stated that there were mutual aid agreements in place for flooding, wildfire, and other fires.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez thanked Municipal Court for the work they did to reach young people and suggested an awareness campaign against vaping. He was excited to see that the City was in the final stretch of the Firefighter CBA negotiation. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked about the FY 2025 target for response time. Monestier stated that SAFD was always working to decrease response times and had a target of 6:59 minutes for critical incidents but 8 minutes as an average of all response types. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested clarification on the calculation related to EMS Transport Fees. Villagomez stated that SAFD billed \$73 million and the collection rate was 30% due to negotiations and write-offs.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that there were calls around the City and known hot spots and suggested the use of cameras in those areas versus downtown. He expressed concern that AI tended to misidentify black people more than others when using facial recognition and algorithms and recommended protocols developed to help mitigate this bias and requested more information. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted the natural effect of fewer calls and more officers was to decrease response times, however, targets were not indicating improved response times for FY 2025. McManus stated that the full effect of the officers hired in FY 2024 was not showing up because the first cadet class would not begin working until November 2024.

Councilmember Courage thanked SAPD for supporting the weapons exchange last year and announced that he planned to hold another one in November 2024. Councilmember Courage requested a comparison of SAPD response time with similar size cities across the State and nation. He asked about the restricted funds in SAPD's Proposed Budget. McManus stated that restricted funds included Airport

Revenue to pay Airport Police, ChildSafe funds for crossing guards, and Asset Forfeiture Funds which were restricted in use.

Councilmember Courage requested a comparison of SAFD response time with similar cities across the State and nation. Monestier stated that they had previously looked at this data but not everyone used the same measure. Councilmember Courage asked whether firefighter gear contained PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) which were a group of synthetic chemicals used in many consumer products and industrial processes making products waterproof and were also known as "forever chemicals". Deputy Chief Brian Norris stated that the outer shells did not have PFAS but the moisture barriers inside the suits did include PFAS but the industry was looking at alternatives and firefighters removed, showed, sealed up, and replaced those inside suits after use.

Councilmember Courage recommended that Municipal Court conduct a survey to find out why juveniles and others did not show up for court. Garcia stated that the Court sent reminders and post cards, and held a media blitz, but it was a common problem. Obledo recommended more community engagement and noted that they would try to survey but a lot of it was due to fear.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on the communications grade of service metric. McManus stated that the metric was for calls to be answered within 15 seconds and typically, SAPD calls were answered in 10 seconds. Councilmember Kaur requested measures for Park Police and suggested training other departments on noise complaints and parking enforcements so SAPD would not have to spend time on those. McManus reported that there was a pilot program with Code Enforcement on the noise complaints. Councilmember Kaur recommended creating a SAFFE officer position for downtown bike patrol. McManus stated that central patrol had a SAFFE officer, but they were not a part of bike patrol.

Councilmember Kaur supported the increased fines for false alarms and asked if the calls were expected to decrease. Rick Riley, Assistant Director SAPD stated that they were in the process of negotiating a new contract for alarm permitting and the goal was to get the alarms permitted versus fining them.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on fire incidents versus unit responses and why the targets were different. Monestier stated that an incident was one event even if there were multiple calls about the same incident, however, there could be more than one unit respond to an incident, so responses were a higher number. Councilmember Kaur recommended using a heat map of fire hot spots to plan resources and requested a map of impacts of the VIA Green Line Advanced Rapid Transit which might make it difficult to cross certain intersections.

Councilmember Kaur requested the number of students served compared with numbers served by Independent School Districts (ISDs) broken down by offense. Obledo replied that it was a challenge to get data from some ISDs. Councilmember Kaur requested more information on why folks were not taking advantage of Defensive Driving and what happened to cases closed without payment. Obledo stated that community service hours and credit for time served were closed without payment and suggested that it might be easier for people to just pay a traffic fine than take Defensive Driving.

Councilmember Kaur asked if residents could pay their tickets at HEB. Obledo stated that those kiosks were at the end of their life but there was a plan to place kiosks into the libraries, but a new virtual docket allowed internet access.

Councilmember Pelaez requested a timeline for the kiosks. Garcia stated that they were identifying locations within the libraries, and these should be approved soon. Councilmember Pelaez recommended placement of the kiosks in Police substations. Garcia did not support placing kiosks in police substations due to the need to keep a separation between law enforcement and the courts.

Councilmember Pelaez asked whether doorbell cameras were helpful to police. McManus stated that video was potentially helpful but some of the companies were making it more difficult as they were now requiring a warrant. Councilmember Pelaez suggested development of a pilot program to help residents afford doorbell cameras.

Councilmember Pelaez requested that the Office of Innovation evaluate the downtown cameras and investigate how this might be used for the Smart Cities Initiative through the kiosks and also requested a report on the effectiveness of street lighting downtown. City Manager Walsh stated that the Office of Innovation was no longer focused on Smart Cities but would look at the appropriate department to review. Councilmember Pelaez stated that this should be non-personal identifying information that was analyzed. Councilmember Pelaez recommended that San Antonio enter the lawsuit against Hyundai and Kia for the large auto thefts resulting from their vehicle security deficiencies.

Councilmember Pelaez asked about the life cycle of substations and noted that Prue Road was built many years ago. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that a study of police facilities was completed and would be utilized to inform the Bond Program. Councilmember Pelaez requested a breakdown of response times by council district for SAPD and SAFD. He noted that the City's geographic footprint increased and traffic was worse, so it was difficult to maintain low response times but asserted that this was the most important metric for residents.

Councilmember Viagran supported the work of Municipal Court and suggested having the judges visit the council districts and help with education. She commented that truancy was a difficult issue but suggested that a court date was motivating to get work done.

Councilmember Viagran thanked Fire Station 13, 20, 21, 22, 29, 50, and 53 in Council District 3 as well as 9, 16, 25, and 22 also helped. She recommended an advertising campaign with Metro Health to decrease the number of extreme heat medical calls for homeless, those with addiction issues, and residents without adequate air conditioning. Norris stated that the Emergency Operations Center had a joint heat plan with Metro Health and did outreach for people to go somewhere cool and implemented new technology to cool people down more quickly.

Councilmember Viagran expressed concern with raising the EMS fees because there were only 120 hospital beds with limited resources on the South Side and those residents often required a longer transportation by EMS or even a second transportation from the first hospital to another with adequate resources. She asked what happened if they refused the EMS ride and expressed concern that people in extreme need might refuse to go to the hospital because of the cost of the ambulance ride. Monestier stated an "aid only" call was about \$100-150 but SAFD was trained to convince people who were in urgent need of treatment to accept the transport. Councilmember Viagran expressed concern that people had to meet their deductibles for their insurance to pay and for those that were out of network for some insurance, as well as those residents without health insurance. She requested a comparison of the fees for other ambulance companies. Monestier stated that SAFD fees were lower than the Cities of Dallas, Houston, and Corpus Christi.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that 75 new police were added in FY 2023 and response

times had not improved. He suggested supporting Stand Up SA, mental health, drug treatment, and other services which could improve public safety. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended more diversion programs funded by the Asset Forfeiture Funds such as midnight basketball. McManus stated that SAPD issued a request for proposals for agencies to apply and receive a grant. City Manager Walsh stated that the general fund could also be reallocated and City Council Project Funds if it was a small request for a specific diversion program.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that the City did not provide oversight of the District Attorney's (DAs) Office but it was the City's responsibility to manage the work of SAPD and its officers who should be trained properly to help provide the DA with a strong case. Assistant Chief Jesse Salame stated that there was a collaboration with the DA and issues had been worked out.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested information on the types of arrests and percentage of repeat offenders. She recommended moving more quickly on the Violent Crime Reduction Strategy noting that there was a high volume of 9-1-1 and 3-11- calls in certain neighborhoods and she requested results from the Good Neighbor Program. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that an analysis of the calls was underway. Maria Vargas, Chief of Integrated Community Safety stated that the Good Neighbor Program was being evaluated by UTSA and addresses with 12 or more calls for service over a 90-day period were being identified to determine strategies; the number one caller had 843 calls, and these were typically low-priority (Code, Animal Care, and mental health). Vargas stated that they were developing a Good Neighbor index which would be completed in the first quarter of FY 2025 and a plan to triage those addresses by the third quarter.

Councilmember Castillo lauded SAPD on their public service announcements and communications. She asked if there was an option for mental health through 9-1-1 and whether park police could also access SA CORE. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that there was a plan to bring a recommendation in March to add to the phone auto attendant an option to request mental health unit services or use 9-8-8. McManus stated that park police could refer to SA CORE.

Councilmember Castillo was happy there was an increase in graduation rates or completion rates for truancy court. She recommended a partnership with the City of San Antonio Ambassador Program for youth in the truancy program. Councilmember Castillo requested more detailed information on services by ISDs.

Councilmember Whyte supported any strategies to deter or combat crime. He expressed concern that several officers had retired, and the 65 new officers were not keeping up. City Manager Walsh stated that this was a measure that was hard to discern what was being added; there were 5 cadet academy classes, and 255 new officers would complete the program to fill vacancies and the 65 new positions as well. City Manager Walsh explained that this was true for SAPD and SAFD as there was attrition. Councilmember Whyte recalled that last year we needed 360 officers over a 3-to-5-year time period and expressed concern about keeping up with retirements. City Manager Walsh clarified that as long as SAPD continued to run the cadet academy classes, SAPD would be able to keep up as they could anticipate retirements and replacements.

Councilmember Viagran noted that residents wanted to provide information to SAPD through the Next Door App and suggested that this information could be used to help identify Hot Spots for the Violent Crime Reduction Strategy Partnership. She recommended making an exception for children who were born in Mexico and raised in San Antonio all their lives, but were not legal citizens and could not

become police officers due to restrictions in State Law. McManus supported this concept.

Councilmember Viagran spoke in support of the new South Flores Police Substation. She also wanted to see more education related to gunshots in neighborhoods and development of new innovative techniques. She inquired on the progress of reaching a 60% proactive call rate. City Manager Walsh clarified that the first class of cadets were still in training so the goal had not been met.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the South Side Substation could get an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) to be able to get to back alleys and other locations. McManus stated that if the station requested the equipment, they could work on getting one.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**