

City of San Antonio



Minutes Intergovernmental Relations Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8, Chair

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

Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

2:00 PM

City Council Chambers

The Intergovernmental Relations Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Council Chambers at 2:06 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call, noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Manny Pelaez, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from November 5, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes of the November 5, 2024, Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting. Councilmember Kaur seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Alderete Gavito

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing and possible action on the 89th State Legislative Session. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Sally Basurto, Director, Government Affairs]

Sally Basurto, Director of Government Affairs (GA) provided background on the 89th Texas Legislative Session. She reported that the Governor was expected to share his priorities in the State of

the State Address in early February 2025 and a Speaker of the House was expected to be elected later today; committee appointments would follow. Comptroller Glenn Hegar released the biennial revenue estimate on January 13, 2025 and projected \$194.6 billion for general purpose spending this session with a \$23.8 billion surplus. He added that the Rainy Day Fund was expected to reach \$28.5 billion by 2027.

Basurto reported that 2,514 bills had been filed so far and the City of San Antonio was tracking over 400 that could have an impact on municipalities. She noted that GA staff and department liaisons were in the process of reviewing and analyzing bills to understand their impact on the City of San Antonio and to determine strategy and action. Leadership priority issues had not yet been announced, and those bills were yet to be filed, according to Basurto.

Basurto stated that GA staff had provided a briefing to the Bexar County Delegation Members and other transportation stakeholders in the community on the East-West Business Corridor. According to Basurto, several bills could impact the City's ability to preserve the voice of the community including: multiple bills to prohibit municipalities from hiring advocates or joining associations that advocate on their behalf at the Capitol [HB 309/SB 239, HB 571, HB 671 and more]; several other bills addressed land use, including city regulations on accessory dwelling units [HB 878], residential lot density [HB 369], and the cancellation of subdivision plats within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) [HB 282].

Bills that could affect municipal community and economic development efforts, according to Basurto included: prohibiting governmental entities from maintaining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices [HB 167]; addressing regulations and policies governing access to certain private spaces within City facilities, such as bathrooms and locker rooms [HB 239 / SB 240]; and implementing a homeless data sharing network [HB 636].

Basurto listed bills relevant to the City's mission to protect and improve the health of our community including: legislation refiled from last session that would promote responsible pet ownership and address dangerous dogs within our community [HB 1346 / SB 155]; bills to support mental health programs [HB 1656 and others], establish an office of food system security [HB 1203], and enhance protections in family violence cases [HB 498].

Basurto reported that bills related to creating a resilient future for San Antonio, in our rapidly changing society, and infrastructure needs included: preempting any ordinance, resolution, rule, or regulation adopted by cities regarding the use of high-risk artificial intelligence systems [HB 1709]; mandating that cities update their codes to require certain new residential construction to be compatible with the installation of specific solar energy devices [HB 407]; establishing a pedestrian infrastructure grant fund, administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), to provide grants for constructing pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, curbs, and pedestrian lighting [HB 769].

Basurto stated that the following items were pending for Committee consideration: sale of e-cigarettes near schools, vehicle burglaries, municipal procurement processes, and the Fire and Police Retiree Healthcare Fund. She noted that GA was tracking several bills [SB 464, HB 1183, HB 1816] that would allow municipalities to prohibit sales of e-cigarettes near schools, which were consistent with CCR 2024-0024 initiated by Councilmember Courage entitled B. R. E. A. T. H (Building Regulations Enhancing Anti-vaping Trends & Habits). She stated that the City Council-approved program supported legislation that improved the health of our community so that all people could thrive in a healthy and safe

environment.

Basurto stated that Centro San Antonio, the San Antonio Police Officers Association (SAPOA) and other stakeholders requested City support for legislation that increased penalties for car break-ins. She noted that GA was tracking a bill that would address this issue at the State level including HB 548 that would increase the criminal penalty for vehicle burglary cases. Basurto noted that the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas (CLEAT) requested filing of HB 548. She added that the City Council-approved program included violence and crime prevention as a target area in support of public health and safety.

Basurto stated that the Finance Department requested support for legislation that would improve the efficiency of municipal procurement processes. She noted that GA identified several procurement related bills: HB 790 would increase the competitive bidding threshold, HB 386 would increase the change order threshold, and HB 1080 provided an alternative option to newspaper posting. Basurto stated that the City Council approved program supported maintaining a fiscally sound and well-managed organization to allow for continued high quality services to be provided to our residents and local businesses.

The final issue reported by Basurto was that the Fire and Police Retiree Healthcare Fund was seeking to file legislation to make changes to Article 624q, the State Statute that governed the Fund and its plan provisions. She reported that the proposed changes, with an estimated (0.3%) decrease in the unfunded liability included: removing the Fire and Police Pension Fund's obligation to deduct post-retirement healthcare contributions for retirees with under 30 years of service and allow the Retiree Healthcare Fund to directly bill; providing retirees under 30 years of service the option to pay in a lump sum their post-retirement contribution required to participate in the Fund's plan; allowing the Fund's Board the ability to change the plan to permit remarried surviving spouses the ability to remain on the plan; and allowing the first retiree of a married couple that were both active uniform members of the City, the ability to defer post-retirement contributions and participation in the plan so long as they do not divorce.

Basurto stated that the Fund requested City support on the Item and staff recommended adding the following support statement to the City's program: 'Support the San Antonio Fire and Police Retiree Healthcare Fund initiatives, to include: allowing retirees flexibility in payment of required contributions; allowing surviving spouses to retain coverage if they remarried; and allowing a retiree to defer coverage and contributions to the plan if they were married to another member of the plan that had not yet retired.'

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Pelaez commented that HB 167 on DEI would kill the City's Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Program in addition to the DEIA Office.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested that Basurto share the work of the delegation and any specific bills they filed related to our agenda. Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle offered to provide a memo with links to those bills.

Councilmember Kaur asked if there was a strategic change in the animal safety bill HB 1346 that was

different this time to ensure a different outcome. Basurto stated that the bill was filed by Representatives Campos and Menendez, and the refiled bill had broad support and was respectful of the requests from the Governor.

Councilmember Kaur asked what would happen to e-cigarette businesses already within a certain radius of a school and whether any of them would be allowed to remain but not sell certain products or serve certain customers. Basurto indicated that the impact was not yet known as the bills would need to be debated during the session. Coyle stated that the legislation did not apply to a retailer that generated less than 50% of its revenues from e-cigarettes. Councilmember Kaur clarified that the alcohol variance was within 300 feet of a school. Coyle stated that CCR 2024-0024 was pending review by the Governance Committee tomorrow and staff was recommending referral of the CCR to the Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

Councilmember Kaur supported the new legislation related to vehicle burglaries and the retirement fund bill. She clarified that State Law would give the City Council the ability to be more flexible, but they did not have to approve it. Councilmember Kaur asked what needed to be posted in the newspaper. Angelica Mata noted that low bids were required to be advertised in a newspaper per the Statute and the recommendation was to move to online posting instead.

Councilmember Viagran was interested to see how the bills progressed through the Legislature and whether any bill could pass without the school vouchers or the border becoming an issue. She thanked the business community for coming together on economic development priorities. Councilmember Viagran noted that everything could change with a new Speaker of the House and requested regular updates. She offered to testify at the State Capitol, as needed.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that loose and dangerous dog bills could build upon the momentum of CCR 2024-0014: Comprehensive Safety Measures for Loose and Dangerous Dogs. Basurto indicated that the new strategy was to file multiple bills instead of just one in hopes that something would get approved. Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked if the City had taken a position on school vouchers. Basurto replied that the City had not taken a position. Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked whether any bills had been filed to impact funding for out-of-state travel for abortion.

Councilmember Kaur asked if property tax relief was on the list. Basurto stated that staff was tracking several bills related to property taxes. Councilmember Kaur requested more information on the homeless data sharing bill suggesting that there could be synergy between what the Department of Human Services just launched. She asked if the City supported protection of small businesses. Basurto stated that the general language to protect community interest covered small businesses. Councilmember Kaur requested information about the bill tracker.

Chair Pelaez commented that the City was playing defense this time and wanted to ensure that we protected the City's ability to govern itself. He noted that the session had not really started yet and there were already 400 bills being tracked so there was much work to be done. Chair Pelaez expected this legislature to revive HB 2027, which would paralyze the City, and all types of legislation to restrict DEIA and LGBTQ rights.

Coyle announced that Representative Dustin Burrows from Lubbock was elected as Speaker of the

House just a few moments ago.

Chair Pelaez noted that the Item was a briefing and no action was required.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Approved

Councilmember Manny Pelaez, Chairman

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk