

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
Budget Goal Setting Session

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, 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

Rosie Castro, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8

John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Thursday, April 13, 2023

9:00 AM

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

The City Council convened the Budget Goal Setting meeting at the Henry B Gonzalez Convention Center beginning at 9:08 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 12 – Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage, Perry, Castro

ABSENT: None

ITEMS

1. City Council Budget Goal Setting Session establishing budget policy direction that will guide the development of service priorities for the FY 2024 Trial Budget and ultimately the FY 2024 Proposed Budget and the FY 2025 Budget Plan to include possible action on matters presented and discussed. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Justina Tate, Director, Management and Budget]

Mayor Nirenberg opened the meeting and discussed the format for this year's Goal Setting meeting and its priorities.

City Manager Erik Walsh provided an overview of the key priorities of the FY 2024 Budget to include: Infrastructure, Public Safety (Fire and Police), Animal Care Services, Good Neighbor Program (DART and SASCORE), Code Compliance, Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), Homeless Outreach/Low barrier housing options, Metro Health, and Small Business. He also provided a recap of the ARPA plan for FY2024 and FY2025.

The budget session resulted in key budget priorities identified by City Council.

SUMMARY OF CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY AREAS

The following key priorities were identified by the Mayor and City Council during the course of the day. These priorities will be used to guide staff in the development of the FY 2024 Budget.

- Streets, Sidewalks, and Vision Zero support to include:
 - Continued City of San Antonio's partnership with VIA.
 - Vision Zero to include cross walks, signalized mid-block crossing, and traffic calming.
 - Addressing sidewalk gaps and repairs.
 - Revisiting street markings/stripping program.
- Public Safety:
 - Police: support for additional patrol officers and continuing the staffing analysis that was in process for investigative units.
 - Fire: support for additional EMS unit.
- Animal Care Services:
 - Support for the Strategic Plan.
- Strategic Housing Plan:
 - Support for the Strategic Housing Implement Plan to include title clearance services and tenants' rights, to ensure the city meets goals outlined.
- Homeless – Outreach and Encampments:
 - Support for homeless to include outreach, opportunities for low barrier shelters, addressing encampments, and prevention programs.
- Code Compliance:
 - Support for Code Compliance, to include support for Proactive Apartment Inspection team and Code Compliance Officers.
- Good Neighbor Program and Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART):
 - Support for adequately staffing the Good Neighbor Program and DART.

In addition, there were five policy focus areas presented and discussed during the session: 1) Update on Property Tax, 2) Solid Waste Services Potential Fee Increase, 3) Animal Care Services – Resources needed to address Strategic Plan, and 4) Employee Compensation.

SUMMARY OF CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON FOCUS AREAS

Overall support of the following policy priorities as summarized by Mayor Nirenberg and City Manager Erik Walsh to be incorporated in the May 10th, 2023 Five Year Forecast Presentation:

- Develop options for property tax relief;
- Include alternatives to the potential Solid Waste rate increase to include an increase to the environmental fee and garbage large cart fee while maintaining current service levels;
- Incorporate implementation of the Animal Care Services Strategic plan; and
- Address civilian wage compression, across the board and minimum wage increases.

Budget Discussion Policy Areas

Each section below represents the discussion and outcome for each of the policy areas presented on April 13th, 2023. These points reflect key ideas and insights from Council Members for either action or study.

Update on Property Tax

Conclusion on Property Tax Update

- Support for the City's plan to continue to monitor State Legislature, further analyze preliminary data provided by the Bexar County Appraisal District to provide recommendations at the Five-Year financial forecast presentation on May 10th, 2023.
- Direction to explore options for property tax relief.
- Request enhanced outreach programs to educate San Antonio Residents that qualified for homestead exemptions.

Solid Waste Services Potential Fee Increase

Conclusion on Solid Waste Services Potential Fee increase

- City Council was supportive of the City Manager's recommendation to explore solutions that will not affect the high service levels currently provided by the Solid Waste Management Department.
- City Council expressed support for a potential fee increase balanced with reviewing creative ways to potentially change services to reduce costs. Potential fee increase should incorporate options to increase the costs of the large garbage cart.

Animal Care Services – Resources needed to address Strategic Plan

Conclusion on Animal Care Services – Resources needed to address Strategic Plan

- City Council expressed support for the implementation of the Animal Care Services Strategic Plan to include enforcement, spay and neuter programs, pet owner education, and marketing for the promotion of foster programs.

Employee Compensation

Conclusion on Employee Compensation

- City Council expressed support for staff recommendation of addressing compression in a scaled approach during the FY 2024 Budget development. Additionally, City Council supported an across the board increase for civilian employees and expressed interest in increasing the City's entry wage.

Outcome of Other Priorities Discussed by Council Members

The following items were identified as priorities by two or more members but there was no clear consensus by City Council:

- Small Business
 - Support for Small Businesses to include the development of district specific programs based on the needs and increase the funding for the zero interest loan program.
- Parks and Access to Green Spaces
 - Support for park and green spaces to include more parks throughout the City and activating vacant lots as parks.
- Public Health, Health Equity and Access to Care
 - Overall support for Public Health.
 - Support development of a plan to aid residents affected by the closure of the southside hospital.
- Bexar County Partnerships
 - Support to work with Bexar County leadership to partner on capital projects.
- Fire Department Needs Assessment
 - Support for a needs assessment for the San Antonio Fire Department that would include staffing, equipment and building improvements. The City Manager responded that this will be included as part of the Fire Department's re-accreditation process that will be completed next year.
- Increase the capital infrastructure allocation & Neighborhood Access Mobility Program (NAMP):
 - Support to increase City Council infrastructure budget from \$1 million to \$2 million per district and increase NAMP.
- Library Card
 - Support to expand enhanced San Antonio Public Library Card program to all libraries.
- Street Lighting Index
 - Continued financial support for the street lighting index.
- City Council printing budget increase
 - Support to increase City Council Districts printing budget to enable more public outreach for residents that rely on mail as a form of communication.
- Support for Arts and funding for the Philharmonic
- Older Adult Services
 - Support to begin development of a Senior Center in District 6.
 - Support for increased funding for the transportation of older adults to Senior Centers.
- Mental Health
 - Continued support for mental health for residents, first responders, and employees.
- Domestic Violence
 - Support domestic violence prevention programs.

The following items were identified as priorities by individual council members:

- Increase the number of Full-Time Equivalents for City Council Staff.
- Set aside funding for Diabetes Continue of Care.
- Support for World Heritage and increased security at the Missions.
- Expansion of the Virginia Guild Senior Center Parking lot.

- Corridor study for Ray Ellison Drive.
- Increase access to childcare support.
- Development of a Vandalism/Theft fund for Small Businesses.
- Create a Crime Prevention Office.
- Support for Mexican American Civil Rights Institute.
- Cricket League support to include money in FY 2024 budget for lights and bleachers.
- Increase funding for Uniform mental health care and police suicide prevention.
- Increase Municipal Court support.
- Explore partnership opportunities to help preserve the Institute of Texas Culture.
- Set aside funding for the development of a City Cemetery Master plan, to include funding to maintain abandoned cemeteries around the city.
- Support for infrastructure improvements at the Northern Hills Junction Entrance.
- Develop a master plan for Southwest Military Corridor.
- Increase funding to City Council Project Fund.
- Add funds to the San Antonio Housing Trust Fund.
- Request additional funds for the Solar Walk at Pearsall Park.
- Continue focus on the Bicycle Master plan and implementation.
- Provide funding for programs that support the Foster Youth.
- Prioritize addressing the digital divide, leveraging federal funding.
- Support to expand presence in Asia particularly India, similar to the CASA program in Mexico.
- Support funding to address illegal dumping in alleys.

Mayor Nirenberg and City Manager Walsh thanked City staff for their presentations and noted the importance of the Budget process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session was held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 4:02 PM.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**