

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



**Meeting Minutes
City Council Special Meeting**

City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

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 Gavito, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Thursday, June 22, 2023

1:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 1:00 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, Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

ABSENT: None

ITEMS

1. Briefing on the citywide survey and open-ended SASpeakUp comments regarding the FY 2024 Budget. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Alanna Reed, Director, Communications & Engagement]

City Manager Erik Walsh provided background on the community survey which he described as using a statistically significant methodology with results indicating alignment with City Council priorities and providing useful feedback for preparation of the proposed FY 2024 Budget. Alanna Reed, Director of the Communications & Engagement (C&E) Department, stated that in addition to the survey, the department hosted community forums and collected paper comment cards.

Reed reported that the survey was completed by the national survey firm ETC Institute and she introduced Chris Tatham from ETC, one of the nation's leading authorities in developing and implementing customer satisfaction surveys. Tatham stated that the purpose of the survey was to gather objective input from residents about budget priorities, assess needs for city services and develop recommendations. She added that the survey was administered to a representative sample of at least 100 residents in each council district with a $\pm 3\%$ margin of error. Report attached.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg pointed out that Councilmember Rocha Garcia would certainly appreciate a scientific process and statistically significant survey.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a council district specific breakdown and comments. She added that it proved the highest priorities for residents were consistent with the City Council: homelessness, streets, and animal care. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked whether there were specific questions related to transportation. City Manager Walsh stated that there was not a general transportation category due to the need to reduce the number of questions and this methodology showed a higher priority to address homeless encampments. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the responses related to needs being met.

Councilmember Viagran requested a one-page document from C&E to push out to residents and also wanted a council district specific breakdown and comments. Councilmember Viagran noted that code enforcement was a high priority in Council District 3 but maybe not as high as in other areas.

Councilmember Kaur recommended a distribution of socioeconomic status. Tatham stated that the online report indicated different priority areas by income but the report that was presented was general. Councilmember Kaur asked whether there might be neighborhood breakdowns. Tatham stated that the sample size did not allow breakdown of the neighborhood needs.

Councilmember Castillo supported the strategic efforts of the survey to get good representation and noted that San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Officers seemed to be tasked with taking on homelessness, mental health, etc. She commented on an increase in unhoused families and the need for shelters.

Councilmember Gavito reported that the survey mirrored what she had heard while block walking and also agreed that the SAFFE Officers were being bombarded with requests including a focus on homeless encampments and dangerous dogs. She looked forward to seeing the comments and accessing the dashboard. C&E Assistant Director Laura Mayes, stated that the dashboard could be found on the SA.gov website.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that affordable housing had been a concern for several years and she supported the idea of adding more street lighting as it fed into public safety recommendations related to transportation. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that women and victims of domestic violence had unmet health care needs. She added that the compassion of residents related to panhandling and homeless encampments had shifted to an attitude of being fed

up.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez worried that confirmation bias could impact the results and each councilmember could tend to hear what they were expecting. He pondered how many residents knew that Metro Health included services related to domestic violence and expressed concern that 40% did not feel domestic violence services were needed.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez clarified that there was short- and long-term solutions to homelessness and sweeps of homeless encampments were violent and destructive because they did not solve the problem. He was pleased that garbage and recycling needs were fully being met but added that streets were an area of need that many people might mistake the needs of TxDOT roadways for something that the City could control. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported more street lighting as requested under the survey.

Councilmember Whyte requested the specific question wording. Tatham stated that the exact questions were listed on the dashboard. Councilmember Whyte agreed that we needed to collaborate with other jurisdictions and supported the discussion of the results.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the survey was distributed by mail, phone and online and asked why in- person was not included. Tatham stated that in-person feedback was typically more qualitative and less objective and statistically valid and could introduce bias based upon when and where you go.

Tatham added that the respondents were targeted to meet the statistically representative sampling. Councilmember Pelaez recommended meeting people where they were at such as senior centers. Tatham noted that seniors responded very well to mail surveys while younger folks were more responsive to online surveys.

Councilmember Pelaez recommended separating homeless encampments from homeless outreach in the questions as most people would see those things differently. City Manager Walsh stated that this was an attempt to get more detailed information.

Councilmember Castillo commented that in order to get an adequate response, the questions would have to be simplified but she wanted to make sure that the information was taken into account when developing budget priorities.

Councilmember Kaur expressed concern regarding the medium priority rating for youth services as she had met with single mothers who requested more youth services.

Mayor Nirenberg agreed that capacity in the housing and homeless response system was needed to ultimately affect the encampment issue.

Tatham congratulated the City of San Antonio as one of the best performing cities in the nation.

Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**