

City of San Antonio



Minutes Public Safety Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6, Chair
Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Manny Pelaez, District 8

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

9:30 AM

City Hall Complex

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 9:33 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Mario Bravo, *Member*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Manny Pelaez, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the May 16, 2023 Public Safety Committee Meeting

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve the minutes of the May 16, 2023 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Pelaez

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing on the San Antonio Fire Department Accreditation Process and Strategic Plan [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Charles Hood, Fire Chief]

Fire Chief Charles Hood provided an overview of the Commission on Fire Accreditation Process

and Strategic Plan. He noted that the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) had two accreditations which included Class 1 ISO and was Commission on Fire Accreditation (CFAI) accredited. He stated that it required a strategic plan to obtain and maintain accreditation.

Chief Hood stated that the Strategic Plan would cover years 2023 through 2028 and included the input from external stakeholders and identified community expectations. He noted that over 40 internal stakeholders were also included in the development of the Plan. Chief Hood stated that the evaluation included review of the SAFD mission statement and values which did not change and reiterated the dedication of SAFD.

Chief Hood reviewed the goals and objectives for SAFD which included enhancing internal communications, optimization of training, state of the art technologies and facilities and enhance the health and well-being of personnel.

Chief Hood stated that the accreditation process included a community risk assessment for all areas SAFD serviced. He noted that the risk assessments included planning zone analysis in an in depth manner and was constantly updated to ensure safety and quick response. Chief Hood reviewed the Standards of Cover of the risk assessment for all types of emergency response resources for each situation.

Chief Hood provided an overview of the Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual and what SAFD was doing in meeting the over 250 criteria for each category of service.

DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda asked when SAFD was first accredited which Chief Hood noted was 2018 and this was the first re-accreditation in the process. Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the internal and external stakeholders in the review process. Chief Hood stated that internal stakeholders included Firefighters, other departments and leadership within the City organization.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked what was included in the Planing Zone Analysis. Chief Hood stated that a thorough description was conducted for each zone to include commercial areas, hazardous zones and reviewed heat map areas. He added that the analysis also assisted in the Budget process to identify equipment and facility needs for service to the community. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that it was crucial to review the need for services in the community as San Antonio continued to grow and to address crisis situations to include weather, drug or active emergency situations.

Councilmember Viagran stated that drug crisis especially such as the Fentanyl Epidemic was crucial to continue and to analyze if Federal funding was available. Chief Hood stated that at this time there was no Federal funding available and that it was important to address as a City and look for future grant opportunities as they became available. Councilmember Viagran asked that staff continue to look for grant opportunities and express to all levels of government the need for funding to address the Fentanyl crisis.

Councilmember Viagran asked what was needed to make sure that SAFD was fully prepared to

address future expansion. Chief Hood stated that staff and City leadership continuously reviewed service and facility needs during the Budget process and that personnel welfare was always being evaluated. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez noted that under the current Bond Program that an additional five fire stations were being funded and that the Budget process always reviewed emergency services needs.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that he had learned more on advanced technology with fire helmets and asked if the SAFD had looked into deploying them with staff. Chief Hood stated that SAFD continuously looked at advanced technology and researched to see what was relevant to deploy for SAFD. Councilmember Pelaez noted that universities were now offering degrees in fire prevention and asked if that was something that SAFD was looking for in personnel. Chief Hood acknowledged the degree programs but stated that no matter if an individual had the degree they would still need to meet academy standards.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if there was a higher possibility for “forest fire” situations in San Antonio due to cedar vegetation and high temperatures. Chief Hood stated that SAFD continuously prepared for all fire situations to include forest type fires in the area. Councilmember Pelaez asked if electric vehicle infrastructure in residences had provided concerns for emergency service responses. Chief Hood stated that electric vehicle technology along with other construction standards/trends were continuously evaluated for emergency response and associated practices.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that he looked forward to reviewing the Planning Zone Analysis document and asked that the report include quantitative data. Chief Hood stated that the report would include demographics and quantitative data. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the report would include fire facility standards and capabilities. Chief Hood stated that the report would not include that data but SAFD would provide data to each council district as requested. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked that the report include mental health levels for Firefighters and other health and safety issues. Chief Hood stated that the evaluation process would include review of those criteria and would be included in the report.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the internal stakeholders included in the analysis. Chief Hood reviewed the personnel included and the reasoning for the number included. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez congratulated SAFD on their accreditations but asked what he thought the current state of Firefighter satisfaction and concerns was. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that leadership continuously reviewed personnel satisfaction and noted that the 2022 Bond Program included the replacement of five fire stations over the next five years. She added that an assessment of all fire stations would be performed.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Briefing on Domestic Violence Prevention Efforts [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

Erica Heller Stevenson, Public Health Administrator for Domestic Violence Prevention, provided an overview of the City’s comprehensive response to domestic violence. She noted that response services included the departments of Metro Health, San Antonio Fire and Police Departments,

Neighborhood and Housing Services Department and the Department of Human Services.

Heller Stevenson reviewed the San Antonio Police Department services to include the Crisis Response Team, Special Victims Team and the Family Assistance Crisis Team (FACT) Volunteer Program. She stated that each program had mandatory training components and she reviewed the statistics for family violence since 2019. She added that 9-1-1 calls for service had increased in 2022 but had a small decline in the current year and she reviewed the SAPD reports filed.

Heller Stevenson reviewed the direct services provided by the Metro Health Department which included immediate crisis support and long-term case management support. She stated that services included emergency shelter, mental therapy services and job placement. She noted that Metro Health additional strategies included interagency collaborations with the Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) services to provide analysis, training and services to victims.

Heller Stevenson reviewed services provided by the Department of Human Services to include partnerships with delegate agencies to provide programs focused on domestic violence. She added that services were provided with the Head Start/Early Head Start Programs to provide services to children impacted by domestic violence displacements. She noted that services were also provided to senior residents and homeless individuals.

Heller Stevenson reviewed services provided by the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department to include the Housing Stability Program, permanent supportive housing projects, the YWCA campus project and the Crosspoint Women's Wellness Campus Program. She noted that each program addressed restorative services of individuals impacted by domestic violence.

Heller Stevenson reviewed the Collaborative Commission on Domestic Violence (CCDV) and stated that CCDV was comprised of city and county stakeholders to address domestic violence issues. She noted that CCDV was established in 2019 and she reviewed the 2022 highlights. She added that CCDV 2023 priorities included communication of strategy to increase awareness of domestic violence and available resources; and to provide training, technical assistance and capacity building to people who work in domestic violence services.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that staff wanted to brief this Item to make the Committee aware of the progress of services to address domestic violence issues and partnerships at the local level.

DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for further clarification on the DVHRT services provided. Heller Stevenson stated that the program was initially created by Metro Health but worked closely with SAPD. She noted that the collaborative worked closely with police reports and investigations to make sure to remove victims from dangerous situations and to increase communications for all providing services. SAPD Captain Gallegos with the Domestic Violence Section reviewed collaborative efforts by the DVHRT to make sure victims were prepared with a safety plan to remove them from domestic violence situations. Chair Cabello Havrda asked if local businesses could be included in the DVHRT. Heller Stevenson confirmed that businesses could be included

and security was in place for victim protection.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for further elaboration on services provided by delegate agencies. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the delegate agencies were brought in to address all areas of domestic violence restorative services which had proven very successful.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if SAPD domestic violence incidents were most volatile and if 24 hours was sufficient. SAPD Chief William McManus noted that the Danger Assessment for Law Enforcement (DALE) was continuously addressed and utilized in domestic violence situations. He stressed that the DALE provided more than excellent guidance in addressing domestic violence incidents and responses.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if school districts and faith-based communities were included in the DVHRT strategies. Department of Human Services Assistant Director Jessica Dovalina stated that faith-based group programs were crucial in the delivery of services. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that outreach had occurred and UTSA provided input. Councilmember Pelaez requested that Region 20 and other school districts be included in the DVHRT.

Councilmember Pelaez asked how the City addressed trauma response situations. Heller Stevenson reviewed the standards for SAPD, SAFD and other City Departments.

Councilmember Pelaez asked how the Municipal Court System could also be included in the providing of services to victims and addressing domestic violence offenders. Bexar County Judge Margaret Diaz stated that judges had discretion in addressing domestic violence offenders to include removal of gun licenses and prison holding terms to assure time to provide services to victims and removing them from violent situations. She added that the Municipal Court System could also speak to what that court did in these situations.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that he was pleased with community agency partnerships and City provided services that did not solely include police action. He asked how triage services for mental and services response were addressed. Heller Stevenson reviewed the process for evaluating situations and what services needed to be prioritized under the interview process of incidents.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how domestic violence programs addressed incidents involving LGTBQ victims. Heller Stevenson stated that DALE reviewed the traditional male/female incidents but that domestic violence programs serviced all incidents of domestic violence to include those of LGTBQ victims.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked what legal services were provided to victims. Heller Stevenson stated that most legal services were provided by the Rio Grande Legal Aide which was regularly used to address legal service needs. Bexar County Judge Diaz stated that the County also had programs to provide legal services and worked closely with Rio Grande Legal Aide. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that DALE tool was key to address domestic violence issues and that the Committee needed to advocate for more funding for the tool.

Councilmember Viagran noted her support of the efforts to address domestic violence programs

and that the Item addressed many of the Status of Women charges to make women feel safe in San Antonio. She supported inclusion of faith-based organizations in the DVHRT. She stated that it was also important to include Animal Care Services in the analysis since many animal abusers were also domestic violence abusers. Councilmember Viagran supported the triage component of the programs but stated that more education should be provided to victims and providers of legal services.

Councilmember Pelaez asked how advertising was being used to promote programs. Heller Stevenson stated that staff was reviewing an expanded communication plan throughout the year rather than just during certain times.

No action was taken on this item.

Executive Session

Executive Session was not held.

Consideration of items for future meetings

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Approved

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk