

**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

**Wednesday, September 6, 2023**

**2:00 PM**

**Council Briefing Room**

The City Council convened a budget work session in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:04 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, Alderete Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

**ABSENT:** None

**ITEMS**

1. Staff presentation on the FY 2024 Proposed Budget focusing on, but not limited to, the following City Departments or Initiatives: [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Justina Tate, Management & Budget]

A. All other City Departments that have not presented on the FY2024 Proposed Budget

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the Item and provided an overview of the timeline of the budget process, noting that a memorandum would be released with updated sales tax revenues and a listing of council-proposed budget amendments.

Alfredo “Freddy” Martinez, Assistant Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), presented an overview of the FY2024 Proposed Budget and provided detailed information regarding the remaining departments not previously presented during the Budget Work Sessions. He noted that the departments were categorized as operating support, internal services and community services.

Martinez listed the operating support departments FY2024 Proposed Budgets as follows: Office of the City Attorney at \$18.9 million, up \$1.1 million from the previous year including two new positions for the Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART) and the Good Neighbor Program (GNP); Office of the City Auditor at \$3.9 million with no changes in the Proposed Budget or staffing from the prior year; Office of the City Clerk at \$5.7 million, up \$0.5 million from the previous year with no new positions; City Manager’s Office at \$4.3 million, up \$0.3 million from the previous year with no new positions; Communications & Engagement (C&E) at \$9.2 million, up \$0.4 million from the previous year with one new position; Government Affairs (GA) at \$1.5 million, down \$0.2 million from the previous year with no new positions; Mayor & Council Support at \$15.1 million, up \$0.8 million from the previous year with no new positions; Office of Military & Veteran Affairs (OMVA) at \$4.1 million, down \$1.7 million from the previous year with no new positions; and Municipal Elections which was managed by the Office of the City Clerk and included a decrease of \$1.7 million as no election was expected in FY2024.

Martinez listed the internal services departments FY2024 Proposed Budgets as follows: Building & Equipment Services at \$142.5 million, up \$15.9 million for 424 vehicle replacements and one new position; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA) at \$3.2 million, up \$0.1 million with two new positions; Finance Department at \$32.4 million, up \$5.3 million with 22 positions reorganized from other departments for procurement; Office of Innovation at \$2.2 million, up \$0.1 million with no new positions; Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) at \$117 million, up \$1.1 million for enterprise-wide software/hardware maintenance/support and a reduction of two positions; Office of Management & Budget (OMB) at \$3.5 million, up \$0.3 million with no new positions; and Risk Management at \$33.5 million, up \$2.9 million to cover increases to property insurance premiums with no new positions.

Martinez listed the community services departments FY2024 Proposed Budgets as follows: Center City Development & Operations (CCDO) at \$25.5 million, up \$0.3 million; Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) at \$3.3 million, up \$0.4 million with no change in staff; Transportation at \$3.8 million, down \$0.4 million; and World Heritage Office (WHO) at \$2.1 million, an increase of \$0.6 million and four new staff to operate the new World Heritage Center.

Martinez highlighted non-departmental allocations as follows: \$8.2 million in expenses related to collection of sales tax, \$3.9 million for the Bexar County Appraisal District (BCAD), \$1.9 million to support collection of property tax, \$1.2 million in maintenance funding for the International Center, \$1.0 million General Fund Contingency, \$572,000 in association dues, \$285,000 in credit card fees, and \$150,000 for the Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI).

## DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg reminded City Council that 96% of the Proposed Budget was reviewed prior to today's meeting so this presentation reflected 4% of the Proposed Budget and asked how many town hall meetings were held and whether they were well attended. City Manager Walsh stated that there were

nine Town Hall meetings conducted with attendance better than usual and City Council could expect a report next week regarding the input received from the Town Halls as well as the Budget Work Sessions.

Councilmember Castillo observed that there was a reduction in the OMVA. Martinez reported that the Economic and Justice Assistance Grant was running out. She supported the GNP and asked how the new DEIA staff would be utilized. Dr. Jennifer Mata, Director of DEIA, stated that the Data Analyst position would help align city performance measures and the two new Disability Access staff would ensure compliance with inclusive design and policies. Debra Scharven, Disability Access Manager, stated that staff would ensure compliance related to affordable and accessible housing and digital accessibility as well as coordination with the Public Works Department for City projects. City Manager Walsh noted that this was the first time the Disability Access staffing levels were increased since the beginning of the program.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the candidates for DART or GNP would need to have experience with these or similar programs. City Attorney Andy Segovia described the role as being complementary to those teams. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked who decided how to create or divide departments. City Manager Walsh stated that there were no new departments included in the Proposed Budget and the last big one was consolidating all functions into the DEIA.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the procurement reorganization. Martinez stated procurement-like positions were scattered across departments and this would reorganize them to the Finance Department, Purchasing Division. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the City bought All Terrain Vehicles as a part of the vehicle replacement fund. Tate stated that they did.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia expressed concern with the reduction in funding for the OMVA. City Manager Walsh stated that the only thing to be kept from the DEAG Grant would be employment of military spouses which the City was leading. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked the Communications & Engagement Office if they served all departments or if some had their own staff and how was audio and visual equipment funded and replaced. Director Alanna Reed stated that some departments had their own staff but some used C&E's Team, however, C&E coordinated with all regarding communications. Reed stated that DEIA managed all interpretation services and C&E had an equipment loan closet.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked what was done with old computers. Chief Information Officer, Craig Hopkins, stated that computers and laptops were replaced every five years and the hard drives were wiped from those old devices, 90% were refurbished and 10% scrapped. He noted that of the 90% that were refurbished by a private vendor, 30% went back into the community and the rest were sold.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended that OMVA apply for more grants to make up for the lost funding but asked if the grants would displace the General Fund. City Manager Walsh stated that new grants would provide extra money along with extra work. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested clarification on how the facilitation of hiring military spouses would be handled without the grant. General Juan Ayala, Director of OMVA, stated that they would continue to coordinate with the Chambers of Commerce but the City of San Antonio had an initiative to hire military spouses as City employees.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked about the reduction in the Transportation Department. Martinez stated that funding was reallocated to Public Works and contracts had ended which were included as grant match funding. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended establishment of agreements with the local universities to provide research and studies.

Councilmember Courage asked how the CAO paid off lawsuits and settlements. Segovia stated that City Council approved all settlements over a threshold and the funding was reflected in the Risk Management Department Proposed Budget. Councilmember Courage asked where the 22 positions relegated to the Finance Department were being transferred from. Deputy Chief Financial Officer Troy Elliot stated that they would come from other departments and the funds for those positions came with them.

Councilmember Courage asked about the funding source for the Office of Historic Preservation. Tate explained that OHP was funded out of the General Fund and the Hotel Occupancy Tax reserve for historic preservation funded facilities such as the Riverwalk, La Villita and the Spanish Governor's Palace.

Councilmember Courage asked how many of the new vehicles were for SAPD. Director of Building & Equipment Services (BESD) Jorge Perez stated that 209 replacement vehicles were police vehicles and 15 were fire department vehicles, and offered to provide a breakdown of vehicles by department. Perez stated that BESD managed the Vehicle Replacement Fund (VRF) city-wide which was an internal transfer from the operating department to the VRF. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that initial allocations to buy a new vehicle, the new vehicle was funded from the operating department, while money was moved annually into the VRF to replace a piece of equipment already purchased. He requested a breakdown of the VRF.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended ensuring that the new Animal Care Services positions had equipment and vehicles necessary for their work. Deputy City Manager Villagomez confirmed that the positions and the corresponding equipment was included in the FY2023 Mid-Year Budget Amendment.

Joe Nino, Assistant City Attorney, stated that 40 properties were included in the DART Program this year with nine being commercial. Councilmember Alderete Gavito suggested that more properties could be addressed with the additional position. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that the new positions would enhance monitoring activities for both DART and GNP.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked which departments the DEIA Data Analyst would serve. Mata stated that through the Budget Equity Tool, the Data Analysts would work with all City departments to offer Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle explained that the 3-1-1 Data Analyst was connected to the GNP. Councilmember Alderete Gavito clarified that the council district offices would work with the 3-1-1 Data Analyst directly.

Councilmember Kaur asked whether DEIA had the staff to proactively analyze Ordinances. Mata stated that there would not be enough staffing to go back historically and bring equity to all past Ordinances, however, the team coordinated with each department to promote equity city-wide. Councilmember Kaur recommended an equity analysis to be included on each department's budget

presentation. First Assistant City Attorney Elizabeth Provencio stated that the goal was to hone-in on data and metrics to ensure outputs were adequately measured.

Councilmember Kaur asked if the City was expecting to inherit SA 2020 in this position. Provencio stated that the City would continue to provide data to SA 2020 and track metrics internally. Assistant City Manager Coyle commented that SA 2020 tracked 50 community indicators which the City reported 10 high level metrics to SA 2020 but the new Data Analyst staff would be able to dig deeper into the metrics. Councilmember Kaur acknowledged that the community visioning session was important and did not recommend that the City take over SA 2020. She recommended consolidating all staff under a Chief Data Officer. City Manager Walsh suggested that the tracking be held by the department reporting in order to inform and implement operational improvements.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on the credit card fees and association dues. Deputy Chief Financial Officer Troy Elliott stated that these were the fees charged by the credit card vendors. Martinez stated that association dues included Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), Texas Municipal League (TML), United States Conference of Mayors and other similar organizations. Councilmember Kaur supported funding for DART and GNP.

Councilmember Whyte requested information about the number of process improvement projects. Director of the Office of Innovation, Bryan Dillard, stated that there were three large projects completed by two staff and one of those staff managed the Innovation Academy to train 30 city staff per year to go out and improve services in their own departments. Councilmember Whyte recommended measuring customer satisfaction with 3-1-1 in addition to output measures. Assistant City Manager Coyle stated that there was a new process to survey the resident which a small team would analyze. Councilmember Whyte asked how the Office of Innovation picked departments or projects to assess. Dillard explained that most of the projects came from the City Manager's Office, but each department worked their own innovation projects through the Innovation Academy.

Councilmember Whyte requested clarification on DEIA goals and metrics including training goals being not applicable for FY2022. Councilmember Whyte noted the metrics for language interpretation services. Emily Yaffe, Manager of DEIA's Language Access Office, stated that the process to request interpreters had been changed so the metrics needed to be updated. Councilmember Whyte requested clarification on the difference between what the Public Works Department did to maintain ADA compliance. Scharven stated that her team was the technical advisor and provided design review guidance to the Public Works Department and the new staff would review the housing bond projects to ensure they met Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) housing design standards; the other staff person would review digital access including review of City digital and website content. Segovia stated that the two new staff would help the Disability Access Office focus on the new bond projects and the airport expansion. Councilmember Whyte asked if there was anyone currently providing data analysis in DEIA. Mata stated that no one was looking at the data city-wide.

Councilmember Viagran recommended an analysis of the parking rates collected by the Parking and Maintenance Fund in comparison to private lots and requested more detailed information on the Parking Fund. She expressed concern that the General Fund Budget of CCDO was increasing and suggested more funding could come from parking revenues. Councilmember Viagran noted that the Convention Center Garage was not full during the San Japan Conference and the parking attendant was

closing the garage and not reopening it when a person left. Tate stated that the Parking Fund allocation was decreasing as debt was decreasing.

Councilmember Viagran asked whether there were enough resources to promote digital inclusion at the State level. Dillard stated that there was a partnership with SA Digital Connects and the Government Affairs Office to focus on digital inclusion. Councilmember Viagran commented that the City of Los Angeles was getting into the fiber business. Dillard reported that the relationship with AT&T had improved.

Councilmember Viagran commented that every fortune 500 company had a Data Analyst on staff and supported the new positions in DEIA and 3-1-1 to help coordinate and align metrics across departments. Councilmember Viagran supported the growth of OMVA and WHO.

Councilmember Pelaez asked why the City paid \$3.9 million to BCAD and what were the penalty and sales tax fees. Elliott stated that the \$3.9 million was the allocated portion and the City contracted with Linebarger to collect delinquent taxes and this was their fee which was tacked onto the taxpayer's bill and there was a 2% administration fee to the State for collection of sales tax. Councilmember Pelaez requested clarification on the increase in cost to the Office of Risk Management.

Councilmember Pelaez asked about the SA 2020 contract and a recent report. Assistant City Manager Coyle stated that there were four to increase new users to their website, time on website, data sourced indicators released in January 2023 and there was a SA 2020 Report released last week that criticized the City's performance metrics. Councilmember Pelaez commented that the City should not just be data informed and had brought in its own team of Data Analysts to meet those goals. Assistant City Manager Coyle read an excerpt from Bloomberg's What Works Cities Certification highlighting the work of the City of San Antonio to have meaningful performance measures and look at staffing across functions and departments. City Manager Walsh commented that there was no finish line as we could always do better. Mayor Nirenberg commented that the City was one of the inaugural partners in the certification program.

Councilmember Castillo asked if the Park Police Headquarters had been relocated to Hemisfair and asked of CCDO's Proposed Budget for contracted security. City Manager Walsh confirmed that the Park Police had moved CCDO's security which was for La Villita and Market Square. She suggested that there was significant investment in downtown such as cameras in the park that could be funded by Visit San Antonio.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia offered to ask VSA to fund the cameras since she was a member of the VSA Board. Councilmember Rocha Garcia thanked Mata and Office of the City Clerk for working to improve diversity of boards and commissions. She supported the work of SA 2020 and did not expect the funding to be completely cut which was rather sudden and there needed to be an infusion of the work of DEIA before the budget cuts were made. Mata stated that DEIA was offering suggestions but not making any decisions about cuts.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested the full policy on replacement of computers and mobile devices as well as a status update on the sanantonio.gov Website. Hopkins stated that six more months were needed to move all the departments over to the new platform. Councilmember Rocha

Garcia requested clarification on PreK 4 SA's Proposed Budget.

Councilmember Viagran supported the Disability Access Office's work on city infrastructure but requested information on their view of housing accessibility. Scharven stated that the work on housing had not begun as it was the work of the new position. Councilmember Viagran requested information on vehicles and equipment that were constantly broken down.

Councilmember Whyte asked how many Attorneys were on staff and whether they worked on billable hour. Segovia stated there were 66 Attorneys, Dallas had 101 and Houston had 117. He noted that Assistant City Attorneys supported departments, but they did not work on a billable hour basis.

Mayor Nirenberg asked City Manager Walsh to provide a recap. City Manager Walsh stated that there was a follow-up memorandum expected.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Executive Session was not held.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

**Approved**

**Ron Nirenberg  
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre City  
Clerk**