

**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 13, 2023**

**2:00 PM**

**Council Briefing Room**

The City Council convened a Budget Work Session meeting in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:06 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 potential amendments to the FY 2024 Proposed Operating and Capital Budget. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Justina Tate, Director, Management & Budget]

Mayor Nirenberg thanked his colleagues for the healthy discussion at yesterday's work session and noted that City Manager Erik Walsh provided an updated amendment memorandum based on the feedback. City Manager Walsh stated that there was consensus on \$22.1 million which was \$2.1 million over the amount available so his proposed amendments kept within the \$20 million available. City Manager Walsh provided the City Manager's proposed list of

amendments which he considered to be a document reflecting the consensus from yesterday's meeting (Attachment 1).

City Manager Walsh did not recommend using the General Fund for the permanent construction grant funds; instead he recommended a conversation next fiscal year through the Council Consideration Request (CCR) process. He did not recommend smoke detectors funding for SAFD. Mayor Nirenberg commended City Manager Walsh for his work on creating the consensus document and fully supported the recommendations.

Councilmember Courage noted that he was planning to comment from the memorandum received last evening rather than the new City Manager proposal. He supported the City Manager's recommendations but noted that the City Manager was only recommending \$100,000 for the Neighborhood Access Mobility Program (NAMP) and none for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Instead, Councilmember Courage proposed \$150,000 in NAMP and the same amount in CIP per council district for a total of \$3 million annually. Councilmember Courage supported \$50,000 for printing and engagement in each council district. However, Councilmember Courage did not support buying a Cellebrite Premium Technology License and ballistic glass for SAPD and suggested that the Confiscated Property Fund could pay for this. Councilmember Courage recommended more funds for Big Brothers/Big Sisters and requested an additional \$100,000.

Councilmember Courage explained that his reductions totaled \$4 million that could be provided to Morgan's Wonderland, the Air Service Incentive Fund, ChildSafe, 100 flashing stop signs, Urban Champions Academy, additional funding for Dream Week, VFW Post 76 and the Food Policy Council Urban Farming Pilot Program. He supported alternative funding for Cuellar Park.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported the City Manager's recommendation but advocated for the Kelly Heritage Museum. She asked Animal Care Services (ACS) Director Shannon Sims about the three-year plan to step up the response to all critical calls. Sims stated that besides hiring, there were three aspects to consider: training capacity, ordering of vehicles and capacity of the shelter itself which would take time. City Manager Walsh noted that in FY2023 funding was set aside for temporary kennel space which needed to be built-out, along with coordination with rescue organizations. Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested coordination with and marketing of the community animal support and assistance programs.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there was a way to adjust within their own City Council Budgets to do more printing and mailing. City Manager Walsh stated that there was flexibility, and the proposed printing Budget had increased by 50% already. Councilmember Rocha Garcia continued to support the Senior Assistance Pilot Program and asked what the funding for the Children's Rehabilitation TelethonUSA (CRIT) would cover. Assistant Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Jessica Dovalina stated that the CRIT funding would be operational funding for the agency to support the families of disabled children.

Mayor Nirenberg reminded the City Council to work from today's City Manager recommendations so that everyone could stay on the same page.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that while 24/7 SA CORE coverage was important,

it was also critical to cover the peak call times. She thanked her colleagues for their support of the ACS Store Front for spay/neuter surgeries for Council Districts 1, 2, 5 and 7. Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested clarification on most of the cost for ballistic glass being moved to the FY2025 Proposed Budget. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez explained that the plan was to include the ballistic glass in the new SAPD replacement vehicles as those would be ordered in 2024 and would be delivered in 2025.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported Councilmember Courage's recommendation to increase the NAMP and CIP Proposed Budgets further. She supported the City Manager's recommendation for additional funding for City Council for community engagement/printing, funds for Opportunity Home, CRIT, Morgan's Wonderland Inclusion Foundation, Air Service Incentive Fund, Reproductive Justice Fund to help women in a legal way, debt payment for Child Safe, 100 Flashing Stop Signs, Urban Champions Academy, Cellebrite Premium Technology, Senior Assistance Pilot Program, Diabetes Continuum of Care, Dream Week, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, VFW Post 76, Food Policy Council, Cuellar Park and the Kelly Heritage Foundation. She expressed concern with slow implementation of the expansion of responses to ACS critical calls.

Councilmember Castillo expressed concern that additional funding for the CIP was not included as streets, sidewalks and lighting were high priorities in her council district and in the City-wide Community Survey. She supported the Opportunity Home Assistance Fund and suggested that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding might be an option to provide more funding as well as the remaining Housing Bond funds since the request was originally for \$3.5 million and the City Manager's new proposal was for \$1 million.

Councilmember Castillo commented that Morgan's Wonderland had already received \$15 million in ARPA funding and suggested reducing their award to \$500,000 to fund the second year of the Reproductive Justice Fund; with funding for Morgan's Wonderland potentially coming from the Tourism Public Improvement District (TPID), Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) or other sources. City Manager Walsh questioned the legal use of those funds for the project.

Councilmember Castillo noted that the Cellebrite Premium Technology License for SAPD reduced the amount of time for investigations to provide swifter justice for victims. She supported the Diabetes Continuum of Care and the Kelly Heritage Museum. City Manager Walsh clarified that funding for the Kelly Heritage Museum was recommended from the Capital Project Inflation Fund and not from CPS Energy revenues. Councilmember Castillo supported the spay/neuter storefronts and suggested looking to add more SA CORE Team Members in mid-year FY2024.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the City Manager's recommendations; however, he suggested some opportunities for growth and was interested in having two nighttime SA CORE Teams and hiring a fourth team during the summer to be more effective in the daytime. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that one team was not enough to cover the entire City.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez was supportive of the spay/neuter storefront. He expressed concern that the recommendation was to fund NAMP and recommended instead putting the funds into CIP as it was more flexible. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that his newsletter had been effective at getting more residents involved in budget townhalls and suggested

that each council district had access to a Graphic Designer.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested delegate agency proposal scoring information on CRIT proposing that the funding for CRIT could be reduced and used for CIP. Dovalina stated that CRIT scored well but were ranked 9th out of 11 respondents and there was not enough money to fund them. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez agreed with Councilmember Castillo to reduce Morgan's Wonderland award to \$500,000 to fund the second year of the Reproductive Justice Fund; adding that the name of the fund was fitting.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested reducing the Air Service Incentive Fund by \$50,000 and Dream Week from \$75,000 to \$50,000 to use that money elsewhere. He supported the Cellebrite Premium Technology License but suggested it could be funded elsewhere. City Manager Walsh stated that the software was not a request from SAPD, rather the request came from City Council. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the Senior Assistance Pilot Program and the Diabetes Continuum of Care.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended a zero cost move of one position such as a Senior Management Analyst (SMA) or coordinator to the Office of Innovation from Metro Health to seek and coordinate grants for crime and recidivism prevention.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how long it would take to build the SAPD Academy Fitness Center and how many vacancies there were at SAPD and how many classes were being planned for next year. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that it would take 12 months to build the outdoor pavilion, but the classroom was a temporary building that could be purchased and brought in. She stated that there were 50-60 vacancies and City Manager Walsh stated that there were five classes starting right away to train the new hires to fill the vacancies and the new 100 Police Officers. Deputy City Manager Villagomez explained that the Cadets were funded as a class, and once they completed their training they were funded as class A Officers for a few months until they could serve on their own.

Councilmember Kaur asked Dovalina about the total budget for the Child Abuse Prevention Category as well as the scores for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Any Baby Can and CRIT. Dovalina stated that the category amount was \$987,000 and Big Brothers/Big Sisters ranked 6th, Any Baby Can ranked 7th and CRIT ranked 9th. Councilmember Kaur suggested \$1 million over two years for CRIT might be high based on the scoring and the total money in that category.

Councilmember Kaur commented that 80% of the mental health calls were received between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. and suggested that not all three SA CORE Teams needed to work all night. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the Mental Health Unit was available 24/7 and staff had recommended the hours at SA CORE from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. originally but the City Council wanted an amendment. Councilmember Kaur suggested that there be only one SA CORE Team overnight and the use of the rest of the money to have more daytime coverage. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that one team addressed 1,500 calls and there were 21,000 and recommended more evaluation before adjusting the coverage.

Councilmember Kaur agreed with Councilmember Castillo's points regarding the need for more

CIP Funding and suggested that more funds should be allocated equitably for infrastructure. Councilmember Kaur recommended allocating funds for the Construction Assistance Grants in FY2025.

Councilmember Kaur agreed with Councilmember Castillo's assessment that Morgan's Wonderland had already received \$15 million in ARPA funding and the suggestion to reduce their award to \$500,000 to fund the second year of the Reproductive Justice Fund.

Councilmember Whyte supported the City Manager's recommendations but recommended more money for NAMP. He saw CRIT as a great program and was dismayed that there was a suggestion that funding from Morgan's Wonderland be moved to fund abortions.

Councilmember Whyte suggested looking for money in other places for infrastructure and recommended reducing the funding for the Public Art Maintenance Fund in half by \$250,000, reducing the incentives for fostering animals, cutting the thriving workforce position, and removal of the \$500,000 for the Reproductive Justice Fund.

Councilmember Whyte suggested that the City would have legal problems with the Reproductive Justice Fund. Segovia stated that there was no criminal liability to the array of services the Reproductive Justice Fund would cover except that any citizen could sue the City under the Bounty Law. First Assistant City Attorney Elizabeth Provencio provided some recent court cases that showed that HB 1280 did not apply to or penalize out-of-state abortions.

Mayor Nirenberg asserted that if there was a need to seek advice from the City Attorney about legal liability, it should be discussed in Executive Session.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked colleagues to hold their moral judgement of each other. She supported the City Manager's recommendations to fund Cuellar Park, Urban Champions Academy, the ACS Storefront, Morgan's Wonderland, Dream Week, CRIT and the Cellebrite Premium Technology License for SAPD. She supported the reallocation of the vacant Senior Management Analyst (SMA) from Metro Health to the office of Innovation to write grants for Crime & Recidivism Prevention.

Councilmember Viagran supported the recommendations of the City Manager and understood that not all amendments would be selected for funding but thought amendments could use further discussion and more time for analysis. She requested more information regarding the SA CORE Team citywide call volume to ensure sustainability as there was significant burnout among Case Workers.

Councilmember Viagran commented that the Brooks Spay/Neuter Clinic was closed for over a year because there were no providers and cautioned that the storefronts might not be able to provide the projected 30-50 surgeries per day due to a lack of Veterinarians. City Manager Walsh clarified that the clinics would take a year to get up and running and confirmed that the contractor for the Brooks Spay/Neuter Clinic had pulled out and services were not provided as planned.

Councilmember Viagran agreed with moving the new ACS positions to FY2025 and noted that

there were challenges to hiring staff. She supported requesting different types of funding or matching funds for Morgan's Wonderland and supported moving \$500,000 to the Reproductive Justice Fund. She supported the Diabetes Continuum of Care and Dream Week and asked why there was not more funds going to the Diez y Seis Commission citing the rich listing of events happening this month.

Councilmember Viagran suggested a review of diversity on the board for Big Brothers/Sisters even though she supported funding for the organization. She supported the Food Policy Council and alternative funding for Cuellar Park and the Kelly Heritage Foundation. Councilmember Viagran recommended addressing lower performance of the sales tax revenues which included helping local small businesses, particularly with construction mitigation grants.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that he had spoken to Gordon Hartman, founder of Morgan's Wonderland, who agreed to support reducing \$500,000 from Morgan's Wonderland's \$1 million to be reallocated to the Summer of Service (SOS) and the SOS students would perform work at Morgan's Wonderland.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that he reviewed the Cellebrite Premium Technology Software which allowed SAPD to unlock mobile phones and download data to help solve crimes and help prosecutors closeout cases more quickly. He expressed concern with violent crimes and shootings so he fully supported the technology.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez agreed that the City Manager provided a consensus document which the Councilman fully supported but recommended funding CIP instead of NAMP. He recommended making the Reproductive Justice Fund reoccurring rather than one-time and proposed expansion of Teen Court Program. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez understood that hiring and training for new ACS staff was a challenge so that funding was in the second year. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez reiterated his proposal to move the vacant SMA from Metro Health to the Office of Innovation to write grants for crime and recidivism prevention

City Manager Walsh asserted that if he made a commitment, he wanted to deliver on it, cautioning that accelerating funding for ACS might not be able to meet their challenges, therefore, his recommendation for the three-year implementation was a realistic timeline.

Mayor Nirenberg suggested an assessment of the progress on the ACS staffing at mid-year FY2024.

Councilmember Courage supported adding \$150,000 per council district for CIP and taking it from the second year of the cost for ballistic glass for the SAPD vehicles and felt that the City Manager would find funds in FY2025 for the glass from somewhere else. Councilmember Courage asked SAPD Chief William McManus if the Cellebrite software was already available. McManus stated that the software was available through the United States Department of Homeland Security (USHS) and was used by the Secret Service currently and SAPD accessed it approximately 25 times per year. Councilmember Courage requested additional funding for Big Brothers/Big Sisters and suggested that the City Manager would be able to find another \$1 million somewhere.

Councilmember Castillo supported the zero-cost request from Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez to reallocate the vacant SMA from Metro Health to the Office of Innovation to write grants for crime and recidivism prevention.

Councilmember Castillo concurred that the CIP was more flexible and some of the other improvement requests not funded could be covered by CIP and suggested that more money was needed for the CIP. Councilmember Castillo commented that HSN charged \$1,000 per phone to unlock it so SAPD was already spending money on the technology anyway.

Councilmember Whyte supported Councilmember Courage's recommendations but suggested taking \$250,000 from the Public Art Maintenance Fund to cover the Cellebrite software, provide some CIP funds and help fund the second year of the ballistic glass. Councilmember Whyte proposed that the Reproductive Justice Fund be limited to women's health that did not include abortion access.

City Manager Walsh stated that the amendment list came from the Budget Work Session comments over the past month and another option was to take the \$15 million and bring it to a later B Session which would allow more time for review and noted that City Council had the option to delay discussion on these amendments.

Mayor Nirenberg commented that this discussion could continue shifting \$20,000 here and \$50,000 there all day long but ultimately a cohesive Budget needed to be passed.

Councilmember Kaur echoed her support for the new spay/neuter storefront and recommended a review of the implementation as it went on as well as listening to the needs of the providers and the community when developing the operation. She supported funding for Summer of Service (SOS) but not if the funding came from Morgan's Wonderland and the reallocation of the SMA from Metro Health to the Office of Innovation.

Councilmember Viagran supported the grant coordinator position and changing the NAMP to CIP but expressed concern that there might be difficulty implementing the program. She supported moving \$500,000 from Morgan's Wonderland funding to the Reproductive Justice Fund for the second year and suggested that there were other options to fund Morgan's Wonderland.

Mayor Nirenberg supported Attachment 1 that was provided by the City Manager. He expressed concern that NAMP money divided by ten council districts created inequities and recommended collectively looking at community needs for infrastructure. Mayor Nirenberg supported asking non-profits to raise matching funds, however, the City's funding was usually used as a match. He supported Councilman Pelaez' requested move of \$500,000 to SOS. He announced that the Big Give was coming up and that would help non-profits raise their match.

City Manager Walsh thanked the Mayor for his summary and stated that he would continue to work on the amendments this evening and provide an updated amended Proposed Budget for City Council consideration tomorrow.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting into Executive Session at 4:10 p.m. to deliberate and discuss the following:

- A.** Economic development negotiations pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087 (economic development).
- B.** The purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.072 (real property).
- C.** Legal issues related to litigation involving the City pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- D.** Legal issues relating to emergency preparedness pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 4:58 p.m. and announced that no official action was taken in Executive Session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

**Approved**

**Ron Nirenberg  
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre  
City Clerk**