

City of San Antonio



Minutes Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Chair: Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7

Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Thursday, January 19, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall

The Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:07 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Ana Sandoval, *Chair*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes for the December 13, 2022, Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve the minutes from the December 13, 2022 Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Sandoval, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. A briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on the COVID-19 Community Response and Equity Coalition's (CREC) reports to be released regarding

lessons learned from the pandemic. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Health Director]

Director of Metro Health Claude Jacob presented the 10 essential public health services and provided the Technical and Community Reports on the best practices and lessons-learned related to COVID-19 gathered through the Community Response & Equity Coalition (CREC) which was a community-driven process. Jacob provided an overview and timeline of the work of the CREC in developing the Reports, as well as a plan to distribute the Reports to the community.

Chair Sandoval opened the discussion by thanking Metro Health and the CREC for their work.

Councilmember Castillo recommended a follow-up briefing to the Community, Health, Environment & Culture Committee (CHECC) on the lessons learned as a result of the CREC and the implementation of the recommendations. She also requested information on the census tracts with less access to safe housing or increased air pollution that might have impacted COVID.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended more collaboration with other departments that impacted health outcomes such as Animal Care Services. Jacob stated that there were close ties to the Department of Human Services (DHS), Public Works, San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD), San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), and the Economic Development Department but he would prepare a list of all touchpoints.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia thanked the staff of Metro Health and appreciated that the CREC had multiple phases to address various needs, but requested more information regarding community feedback that would help implement the recommendations.

Councilmember Viagran congratulated the team on the COVID-19 response and thought the work of the CREC was successful and could be used broadly to help the community.

3. A briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Strengthening U.S. Public Health Infrastructure, Workforce and Data Systems Grant award. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Health Director]

Director of Metro Health Claude Jacob announced that Metro Health was awarded a five-year “Strengthening U.S. Public Health Infrastructure” grant in the amount of \$25,534,666 funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He noted that the grant supported the SA Forward Plan and would support workforce outcomes by increasing the size and capacity of a diverse public health staff and improving organizational systems and processes to create stronger public health foundational capabilities at Metro Health.

Chair Sandoval thanked Jacob for his presentation and commented that it was important that the workforce mirrored the demographics of San Antonio and not just the Metropolitan Area which included counties outside of Bexar. Jacob agreed and added that in addition to recruitment, retention was also critical which would include career ladders within the department.

Chair Sandoval asked for more explanation on the new positions related to Environmental Health and Safety. Jacob stated that there would be more Vector Control Technicians and a case

manager for the Stand Up Family Violence Prevention and Interruption Program.

Councilmember Castillo commented that the Stand Up Program had been successful.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez was excited that more funding was available for Metro Health through the grant and requested more information regarding the new positions in the Office of Policy & Civic Engagement as well as the work of the Office.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked what technologies might be improved through the grant. Jacob stated that although Metro Health did not receive a technology specific grant, the grant had an earmark for the Domestic Violence Case Management System. Councilmember Rocha Garcia inquired which divisions in Metro Health would educate the public about the warning signs of domestic violence and signals to communicate that a victim was in crisis.

Councilmember Viagran suggested that the community benefitted from Metro Health attending events around the City to educate and provide services. Councilmember Viagran requested regular updates to CHECC to track the success of the grant and was looking forward to the new positions.

Chair Sandoval asked what would happen to the funding programmed for SA Forward in the City's Budget since the department received the grant. Jacob noted that there was still a funding gap but the grant would help noting that two-thirds of the department's Budget was from grants.

4. A briefing on the Language Access Plan and next steps. [Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Jennifer Mata, Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility]

Emily Yaffe, Language Access Manager for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Office, provided background information on the mission of the Language Access Office and noted that language access was governed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166. Yaffe provided data on language needs in Bexar County from the 2020 Census which indicated that 45% of the households spoke Spanish at home. Yaffe stated that ideally people should be able to receive communications in their own language and listed 10 languages spoken in San Antonio in Tiers. Tier 1 languages included distribution of information in those languages including: English, Spanish and American Sign Language. Tier 2 languages for which translation was recommended were: Arabic, Vietnamese, and Pashto. Tier 3 languages for which translation was encouraged were: Korean, Tagalog, Chinese, Gujarati.

Yaffe provided an overview of the Language Access Plan which included roles of the Language Access Office, department liaisons and individual staff as well as four factor analyses: 1) Analysis of linguistically diverse residents, 2) Frequency of contact, 3) Nature of the program/service, and 4) Resources available. Yaffe stated that all City staff would be trained, and departments would develop their own plans.

Chair Sandoval thanked Yaffe for her presentation and invited members of the public to speak.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Nadia Mavrakis, Chief Executive Officer of Culturingua, stated that the Arab and Afghan population in San Antonio had increased and requested more language access for diverse languages.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented on the diversity of the San Antonio community and requested information on languages spoken by City employees and suggested that the information could be used to ensure that city staff mirrored the population demographics. Yaffe stated that a comprehensive employee service was needed. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended more timely payment to the interpreters and suggested that meetings that were televised could include closed captioning in languages other than English.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented that most of the communication in San Antonio was in English and we should respect all of the other languages spoken by others.

Councilmember Castillo noted that there was a growing population of individuals in Council District 5 who spoke Arabic and Pashto and asked if the Office could translate flyers into those languages. Yaffe stated that translation contracts needed to be translated.

Councilmember Viagran noted that there was a strong Asian American Pacific Island community in Council District 3 which would like translation services so she requested more information on the process of accessing those services.

Chair Sandoval requested information on how to access translation services to be provided to the City Council Offices. Chair Sandoval requested an overview of the roll-out of the program.

5. A briefing on the implementation status of the SA Climate Ready, Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; Douglas Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer]

Doug Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer, provided preliminary findings of the greenhouse gas inventory which indicated that transportation was 35% of the emissions, commercial energy comprised 28% and residential energy was 19%. Melnick provided a chart of the changes in emissions since 2013, which showed a slight overall decrease. Melnick reported that the City had made significant improvements and highlighted that CPS Energy had developed an energy production portfolio to reduce emissions for the commercial energy sector.

Melnick highlighted key projects such as benchmarking of building energy consumption, development of a zero net energy affordable housing program, implementation of a City of San Antonio Energy Policy, adoption of the 2022 International Energy Codes, and incentivizing electric vehicles. Melnick recommended education and empowerment programs to help get the word out about climate change and to collaborate with a network of organizations. Finally, Melnick applauded City Council for approving the Cool Pavement Pilot Program and recommended seeking Federal Funding.

Chair Sandoval thanked Melnick and the Advisory Committee for their work.

Councilmember Castillo recommended analysis of other cities that had made more reductions in emissions from transportation sources to learn their strategies. Councilmember Castillo recommended more information to be included with the community regarding e-bike rebates.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended interdepartmental collaboration to prepare for resiliency and to reduce climate change. Melnick stated that the additional staff would help the Office of Sustainability to collaborate more with other City departments. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commented that members of the Bond Committees were interested in sustainability when they developed the Bond Program recommendations. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez commended Chair Sandoval for her leadership in this area.

Councilmember Viagran noted that there was a police substation planned for Council District 3 and wanted to ensure that there were funds for sustainability related to that project. Melnick stated that he would discuss this with her office alongside the Public Works Department. Councilmember Viagran thanked Councilmember Sandoval for her leadership on the Committee.

Chair Sandoval recommended looking at the greenhouse gas benefit of each program that was being implemented. Melnick stated that the City was in the fourth year of the five-year Climate Action Plan and it was time to translate the priorities into specific benefits. Chair Sandoval requested adding the scope 3 emissions into the plan such as eliminating single use plastic bottles. Melnick stated that there was a plan to partner with the City of Austin to study how to reduce all emissions. Chair Sandoval encouraged action now even before the plan.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:19 PM.

APPROVED

Ana Sandoval, Chair

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Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk