

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, 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
Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

9:00 AM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 9:09 AM. Interim City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 11 — Nirenberg, Pelaez, Courage, Bravo, Perry, McKee-Rodriguez, Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval

ITEMS

1. City Council Budget Goal Setting Session establishing budget policy direction that will guide the

development of service priorities for the FY 2023 Trial Budget and ultimately the FY 2023 Proposed Budget and the FY 2024 Budget Plan to include possible action on matters presented and discussed. [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Justina Tate, Director, Management and Budget]

Mayor Nirenberg opened the meeting by setting goals and expectations for the meeting.

City Manager Erik Walsh provided an overview of the agenda's planned presentations to include revenues and identifying priorities for expenditures. City Manager Walsh stated that the presentations would begin with a Financial Update, Property Tax & Homestead Exemptions, Streets, Sidewalks & Pedestrian Safety (Vision Zero), Civilian Compensation, and Police Services.

Kevin Orton, Executive Management Assistant, provided a matrix of the Top 10 Service Requests received by the City's 3-1-1 Customer Service Office.

Mayor Nirenberg asked Councilmembers to provide their priorities for the FY 2023 budget.

Councilmember Viagran stated that Council District 3 priorities were to improve missing or old infrastructure (streets, drainage, utilities), reduce violent crimes (particularly against women), provide resources for the fire department, accessible housing, access to healthcare, arts as a budget line item as it was an economic generator, increase access to digital, ensure competitive and fair wages for City employees.

Councilmember Courage expressed that Public Safety was a top priority and recommended adding Police Officers dedicated to traffic and pedestrian safety. Councilmember Courage mentioned increasing exemptions to provide property tax relief, expansion of the Brook Hollow Library, improved intersections and traffic flow, reconsider processes/procedures for utilizing City Council Project Funds (CCPF) and the Neighborhood Accessibility and Mobility Program (NAMP), provide funding for the Arts and to save the San Antonio Symphony.

Councilmember Perry listed his top 3 priorities as: 1) Reducing property taxes and increasing the homestead exemption; 2) Improve San Antonio's infrastructure, particularly drainage and streets (increase to \$130 Million in General Fund and double the \$200,000 per year for NAMP; and 3) Add Police Officers to patrol the streets.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that traffic and pedestrian safety was a top priority and recommended dedicated funding for sidewalks by creating a sidewalk mitigation fee for developers and a transportation impact fee. Councilmember Sandoval also noted that the Failed "F" Streets should be prioritized using an equitable approach. Councilmember Sandoval recommended a mental health response team for Council District 7 along the border with District 8 armed with less lethal weapons instead of guns. Councilmember Sandoval reminded her colleagues that they had declared racism as a public health crisis and recommended full funding for Metro Health's SA Forward Plan. Councilmember Sandoval recommended the creation of a Drainage Oversight Committee and recommended additional funding for the Office of Sustainability.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda prioritized drainage funding, particularly, the Heath Road and

Water Quality projects and emergency funding for flood victims. Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that public safety personnel needed proper equipment and training including trainers and a licensed Physical Therapist at the workout San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) facility. Councilmember Cabello Havrda had a goal to improve the health of the Council District 6 Community, specifically adding a healthy cornerstore on Marbach Road, a Community Garden in the community workers council area and a Senior Activity Center at the Darner Facility.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported raising homestead exemption and recommended collecting information on the resilience of small businesses with a study by UTSA. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended funding for vulnerable populations such as children without foster placement and those aging out of the Foster Care system including funding for permanent supportive housing and to assist organizations such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended creating an effort to enroll all students in Council District 6 in Pre-K and a citywide effort to assist families in accessing health insurance through what she called the “Every Child Initiative.”

Councilmember Castillo stated that Council District 5 residents would support programs that improve the overall quality of life. Councilmember Castillo recommended an additional \$500,000 per council district for infrastructure with more staffing to assist with nonservice alleys and to address illegal dumping. Councilmember Castillo recommended increasing funding for sidewalks and suggested that creating the Drainage Oversight Board was needed. Councilmember Castillo supported affordable housing preservation, increased funding for home rehabilitation, support public housing with nearby infrastructure, build land banks, create a Code Compliance Case Management Program and assist residents with compliance, fund agencies that can help residents access property tax exemptions or reduce their valuations, ensure success of the deconstruction program, provide storefront grants to small businesses, support the San Antonio Housing Authority, revisit the San Antonio Symphony Contract to ensure the funding pays wages and not old debt, provide funding for animal care programs, and provide funding for a Physical Therapist for the SAFD.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended finding a solution for illegal dumping in alleys, supported property tax relief, wages for the Symphony and annual funding for “F” Streets. He recommended funding based on condition rather than size, funding for sidewalks and holding developers accountable with a multi-year funding plan for streets and sidewalks to help close gaps, funding for CASA, expanding Pre-K 4 SA and providing transportation accessibility to schools. He recommended increased funding for the 2023 MLK March that would bring high profile speakers, funding for the Juneteenth celebration, funding for traffic studies, helping low-income individuals and seniors that received code violations for overgrown yards, increased funding of Animal Care Services (ACS), sustainable funding for emergency housing, creating an office of crime and recidivism, and adding additional staffing for City Council.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia infrastructure including digital divide, hazard mitigation plan with funding for drainage, addressing SA Tomorrow and F Streets. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported more Code Enforcement Officers, an additional brush collection cycle annually, and funding for ACS and suggested they could share a database of infractions. Implement the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) and install community gardens throughout the City on vacant

lots. Supported property tax relief, funding to assist residents with the cost of Insulin, research think tank expanded beyond UTSA, programs for Seniors, small business support for business that promote culture.

Councilmember Pelaez supported a larger homestead exemption, requested funding for several infrastructure projects in Council District 8. He requested increased Economic Development Incentive Funds, funding for decreasing domestic violence, funding to complete the linear parks, investment in healthcare and programs for dementia, providing relief for owners of convenience stores, investing in incubators such as “Velocity” in Council District 2, a focus on retaining college students who leave San Antonio. He recommended a study to determine an appropriate amount of Police Officers and expected an increase in Police Officers. Councilmember Pelaez recommended funding to provide public accessibility of historical documents at the Office of the City Clerk.

Councilmember Bravo supported increasing the property tax homestead exemption and requested that other taxable entities follow suit. Councilmember Bravo recommended increased funding for homeownership, homelessness and permanent supportive housing, safe bicycle lanes, mental health, drainage, increased staff at the Office of Sustainability, creation of an Office of Crime and Recidivism, increased funding street lighting, arts, metro health, tree mitigation fund, assistance to businesses when road construction impacts them, research think tank, and bonding for small businesses.

Mayor Nirenberg closed the discussion by steering the conversation to identifying policies rather than programs such as analysis of the street grading program, ways to reduce crime, reducing homelessness and ensuring sustainability for Haven for Hope. Mayor Nirenberg supported tax relief for homeowners and residents and recommended reducing barriers to homeownership or assistance in retaining their homes including funding to help families get a clear property title. Mayor Nirenberg agreed with request to ensure that the needs of City Clerk’s Office would be preserved and that our City remains economically competitive particularly in the film industry. Mayor Nirenberg also supported the wellness model implemented by the SAFD and potentially expanded to SAPD and other front-line employees where there might be a high incidence of injuries.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

Justina Tate, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, presented the economic outlook, financial update and an overview of the financial policies. Troy Elliott, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, reviewed property tax information.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested review of homestead exemptions by other taxing entities including those which do not have a homestead exemption.

Councilmember Castillo requested data on building and demolition permits and a list of industries responsible for lowering the unemployment rates.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended funding for outreach to residents that might be eligible for homestead exemptions but have not applied.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that San Antonio has more taxing entities than comparison cities but requested a graphic of the proportion of revenues to the City versus the other taxing entities over time by home value brackets.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Tomika Monterville, Director of Transportation, focused her presentation on the 2023 Vision Zero plan to reduce auto, bicycle and pedestrian fatalities.

Razi Hosseini, Director of Public Works, provided an overview of the street network condition including the grading process, investment amount over the past five years, and future impact of funding using three different scenario amounts.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that eliminating traffic fatalities should to be a priority assigned discussion to develop desired streets maintenance and Vision Zero outcomes to the Traffic and Mobility Committee.

Councilmember Courage recommended more public service reminders, education and enforcement to support Vision Zero.

Councilmember Viagran recommended lowering the speed limit on Roosevelt Ave to 25 mph.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a list of “F” streets by council district.

Councilmember Castillo supported funding Vision Zero and street maintenance at \$110 million.

Councilmember Sandoval supported street maintenance funding following the equity guidelines established in FY2018 and increased capacity for traffic studies and suggested the City might be able to lower residential speed limit by Ordinance.

Mayor Nirenberg requested more data on pedestrian fatalities and a five-year history of the “F” streets to analyze the results of the equity policy established in FY2018. Mayor Nirenberg recommended setting goals and a timeline for both Vision Zero and the Streets program. City Manager Erik Walsh summarized the City Council direction by stating that Vision Zero should be layered into future projects, setting an overall street maintenance and “F” Street goal, and meaningful change beyond the FY2023 Budget.

Razi Hosseini, Director of Public Works, continued his presentation by listing the number and condition of nonservice alleys and sidewalks. Hosseini provided information on the Storm Water Utility Fee and use of these funds.

City Manager Walsh suggested that an increase in the Storm Water Utility Fee could be used for drainage capital projects.

Mayor Nirenberg recommended acceleration of the sidewalk program while taking equity

outcomes into consideration.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez clarified that Bond “F” street and drainage projects often included new sidewalks.

Councilmember Viagran requested information on streets where sidewalks were not on both sides and recommended prioritizing pooling water issues in the nonservice alleys that created health hazards.

Councilmember Sandoval recommended a citywide review of sidewalks by the Disability Access Office.

Councilmember Castillo wanted to find solutions for maintenance of nonservice alleys and did not recommend a reduction of funding for sidewalks.

CIVILIAN COMPENSATION

Renee Frieda, Director of Human Resources, presented an overview of the City’s workforce demographics, current labor market challenges and proposed restructure of the civilian pay plan. Frieda added that market adjustments, across the board increases, step pay plan allocations, performance pay and pay plan structure implementation would be budget considerations.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested information on the job classification study that led to market adjustments and the full survey results for the ARPA survey and a timeline on the phasing-in of the improvements. City Manager Walsh stated that he would provide City Council with a memo regarding the ARPA survey.

Councilmember Perry recommended a comparison of wages within the region versus national averages. Councilmember Perry requested historical vacancy rates and comparison to other area employers, metrics on numbers of employment applications received and how long it took to process an application to fill vacancies.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez thought the national wage information was important but also suggested comparison of other large Texas cities. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested the amount of ARPA funding that would be received per employee.

Councilmember Castillo supported longevity pay, a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees, and the one-time ARPA pay within employee paychecks.

Councilmember Viagran recommended addressing the issue of compensation compression and requested a review of the vacancy rate. Councilmember Viagran requested information on longevity for Animal Care Services, Development Services, Public Works and Solid Waste Departments.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chief of Police, William McManus described the Violence Reduction Study that was underway including an identification of “Micro Hot Spots” which were locations with high levels of crime that were targeted for crime reduction efforts. Chief McManus provided an overview of the new substation at N. St. Mary’s including proposed staffing and costs. Chief McManus provided a timeline for a planned staffing study for SAPD.

Mayor Nirenberg recommended a presentation on the Micro Hot Spots at B Session after it was brought before the Public Safety Committee and suggested that other information should be included in the study such as that from Community Health Workers. Chief McManus replied that he had requested an overlay of 3-1-1 calls for the areas.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended working with Metro Health on the Violence Reduction Study and requested a report on outcomes of work in the Hot Spots. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that funding for San Antonio Fear Free (SAFFE) Officers was a priority for Council District 6 and many neighborhoods Citywide.

Councilmember Perry suggested that SAPD staffing had not grown enough to keep up with the pace of population and crime growth of the City.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended collaboration with other City departments and added that the Hot Spots study by the UTSA Criminologist did not meet his request for an Office of Crime and Recidivism and recommended including the Office within the budget. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if UTSA could complete a study of what happens when Police Officers were added to communities of color.

Councilmember Courage requested information on the number of Police Officers eligible for retirement and how many units were assigned by council district. Councilmember Courage requested the number of traffic citations per month for speeding, speeding in school zones, distracted driving, and running red lights.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if an analysis could be performed for traffic violations as well.

Councilmember Viagran recommended coordination with other law enforcement agencies within the City limits and suggested that areas lacking access to healthy food might be areas with higher crime. Councilmember Viagran recommended an analysis on having a Police substation in every one of the 10 City council districts as there were currently only six substations.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended partnerships with school districts to help curtail speeding.

Councilmember Castillo suggested more coordination with the Property Room and the Magistrate and recommended the study consultants look at best practices of other cities.

Councilmember Pelaez requested information on the history of the Special Victims Unit and

suggested that the District Attorney could meet with neighborhoods along with the Chief of Police.

POLICY DECISIONS

City Manager Walsh outlined consensus from the day's conversation as follows: increases in homestead property tax exemptions (5% and higher), evaluation of the scoring metrics for streets and update on progress to date, finishing Vision Zero projects and incorporating Vision Zero principles into all street projects, prioritize additional drainage projects with an increase in the Stormwater Fee to support those projects, employee compensation layering, Public Safety crime reduction plan in a future B Session as well as funding for training of first responders, funding for Arts, SA Forward Plan funding, and affordable housing.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that equity came up in every conversation and recommended that equity be considered in all processes and decisions to reach those equitable outcomes including within spending and within tax relief. Mayor Nirenberg added his support for the SA Forward Plan implementation.

Councilmembers Viagran and McKee-Rodriguez expressed concern that any property tax relief should impact homes valued at under \$100,000 and not just those over \$100,000 valuation in order to be equitable.

Councilmember Viagran noted that even though Bexar County recently approved a homestead exemption, other taxing entities had not provided homestead exemptions and renters and legacy home dwellers could not access the homestead exemption.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that the Public Works Department develop a more equitable model for funding of street maintenance including basing infrastructure funding on the condition of the roadways, rates of degradation of roads and historical investment.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended policing models that recognized Racism as a public health crisis and reiterated his request for an Office of Crime and Recidivism.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended increasing staffing for City Council and wanted to ensure the continued success of the MLK March.

City Manager Walsh added that staff would review Neighborhood Access and Mobility Program Funding and sidewalk funding.

Councilmember Perry restated his support for increasing the homestead exemption by City Council and recommending other taxing entities follow suit. Councilmember Perry also reiterated that the City needed more Police Officers and that there should be sufficient and consistent funding for infrastructure.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia expressed her support for SA Forward and recommended an increase in staffing for the Office of Health Equity and Policy and Civic Engagement (PACE). Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended a study of all City services by systematically

disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, income and zip code. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested more information from Metro Health on incentivizing healthy restaurants. Councilmember Courage agreed that there was broad agreement on equitable property tax relief but noted the limitation of State law and suggested that more detailed numbers were needed. Councilmember Courage agreed with focusing on “F” streets but suggested that all grades of streets (B, C and D) needed to be considered so that they did not turn into F Streets. Councilmember Courage expressed concern that reductions in revenue could impact the employee compensation recommendations. Councilmember Courage suggested that the City should invest in existing housing to help maintain and create more affordable housing.

Councilmember Bravo had a goal of making San Antonio a high-quality place to live, balanced with affordability. Councilmember Bravo supported the homestead exemption but suggested that due to State law, most of the benefit would be received by homeowners in Council Districts 8, 9, and 10 which was not equitable. Councilmember Bravo emphasized that new developments needed to include home ownership, not just rentals or short-term rentals. Councilmember Bravo supported the MLK March.

Councilmember Sandoval supported Advanced Rapid Transit, increased funding for traffic studies related to Vision Zero, supported Dream Week and the MLK March, code compliance case management, housing deconstruction and preservation and increasing the threshold for exemptions for the disabled. Councilmember Sandoval suggested that residents needed training in how to protest their property tax valuations and recommended City sponsored workshops. She noted the need to increase staffing in the office of Sustainability and Transportation where they had been augmented by grant funded employees. She recommended asking Riverwalk restaurants to be a part of the healthy foods program “Por Vida” when they lease space from the City.

Councilmember Castillo recommended to protect renters, replenish funding for demolitions, activate vacant lots, basic infrastructure funding at prior levels built upon with ARPA and Bond funds, prioritize the Vision Zero Initiative, invest in libraries and parks and drainage. Councilmember Castillo recommended creating the Code Compliance Case Manager position.

Councilmember Pelaez recommended an analysis of how the innovation zones could be used to test different solutions and reexamine the borders of those zones. Councilmember Pelaez recommended adding other universities to the on-call research contract and there could be a discussion on whether to develop in-house think tank capabilities. Councilmember Pelaez suggested a review of how much the City itself contributed to the costs of living for residents such as building regulations.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that the amendments to the Unified Development Code should be the area where the balance of investment was considered regarding building costs. Mayor Nirenberg supported adding other universities to the on-call research contract. Mayor Nirenberg stated that the priorities of infrastructure, equity, housing, food insecurity were consistent over the past two years. Mayor Nirenberg also supported a review of underutilized properties and was looking forward to the new Bicycle Master Plan.

Councilmember Sandoval suggested that other cities in California and in Baltimore had models of

redevelopment in blighted areas and upgraded existing housing and provided assistant for local small landlords.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez advocated for an animal transport facility, increased clinic staffing, vaccinations, pet health and spay neuter at Animal Care Services (ACS).

Councilmember Courage noted that economic growth and building new homes cost current residents because it increased their appraised values. Councilmember Courage recommended only appraising homes every two or three years and was concerned about legacy homes.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended a think tank of multiple universities to provide studies and recommendations. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported an equitable homestead exemption, risk mitigation for flooding, and adding one more annual cycle for brush collection. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended partnering with the Bexar County Appraisal District (BCAD) to connect residents to various programs that were offered.

Councilmember Viagran wanted more information on the goals for ACS and more discussion on Arts and their economic impact on the City. Councilmember Viagran suggested a Dial-a-Trailer or additional brush collection cycle.

Justina Tate, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, provided an overview of the FY2023 Budget timeline.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At any time during the meeting, the City Council may recess into executive session to consult with the City Attorney's Office (Texas Government Code Section 551.071) and deliberate or discuss any of 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 collective bargaining pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- D.** Legal issues related to litigation involving the City pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- E.** Legal issues relating to COVID-19 preparedness pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Attest:

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk