

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San**



**Meeting Minutes
Public Comment 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, August 31, 2022

5:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 5:05 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 9 – Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello
Havrda, Sandoval, Courage, Perry

ABSENT: Viagran, Pelaez

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearings on the City's 2022 Ad Valorem Tax Rate for the FY 2023 Proposed Budget and the FY 2023 Proposed Budget. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Justina Tate, Director, Office of Management and Budget]

City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre read the caption and Mayor Nirenberg opened the Public Hearing at 5:05 PM.

Justina Tate, Director of the Office of Management and Budget provided an overview of the FY 2023 Proposed Total City Budget which was \$3.4 Billion and provided a breakdown of the \$1.5 billion General Fund Revenue Sources. She outlined property tax relief that included increasing homestead, disabled and owners over age 65 property tax exemptions. Tate listed the various meetings allowed for public and City Council input.

Mayor Nirenberg opened the public hearing at 5:11 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mariah Smith stated she was disappointed that the City provided \$10 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Texas Biomed and suggested the funding could be better spent to help residents. She noted a report on the Executive Director of Texas Biomed that alleged.

Ananda Tomas, leader of ACT for SA Coalition, reported that the coalition had developed a “people’s budget.” She recommended that public safety could be accomplished with more programs that did not involve Police including investments in housing, human services, public health, and other quality of life issues. Tomas recommended that more money be invested with Small, Minority, and Woman Owned businesses and VIA public transit. She supported funding for after school, nutrition programs, housing, and health programs.

Stephen Lucke recommended using the CPS Energy excess funds to address San Antonio’s climate crisis since it was largely due to the urban heat islands and suggested that adding white roofs would be a good way to spend the money.

Charles Blank stated that he had been to town halls in Council Districts 2, 4, 5 and 9 and in every case, multiple residents questioned the rebate and suggested that the extreme increase in bills from \$100 to \$300 or \$400 per month would be wasted on a one-time \$30 rebate. Blank stated he was an urban farmer who lost some of his chickens in the extreme heat. Blank mentioned the Heat Island effect occurring with additional pavement over surfaces led to poor air quality resulting in EPA non-attainment. Blank recommended investment in solar, wind, thermal and other renewable energy sources. Blank also recommended weatherization of homes, particularly low income housing, double pane windows, carbon sequestration, increasing tree canopies, investment in an arboretum or urban forest, urban farm, green infrastructure, low impact development, reducing urban sprawl and overall creation of a sustainable and resilient future.

Nokita Moore commented that public safety funds had historically increased at a higher rate than other services, and recommended investment in public transportation and other programs to bring residents out of poverty. She stated that when basic needs went unmet, crime rates would increase.

Mayor Nirenberg announced that the next public hearing would be held on September 8, 2022 and City Council would consider adopting its FY 2023 Budget on September 15, 2022. Mayor Nirenberg stated that the first of two combined FY 2023 Budget and 2022 Tax Rate Public Hearings was hereby closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

2. Public Comment is your opportunity to address your City of San Antonio elected officials directly about issues that are important to you and your community. To sign up to speak visit www.saspeakup.com. Click on meetings and events and select the meeting you'd like to

participate in. Sign up to speak or submit a written comment. Members of the public are given up to three minutes to speak, and groups are given up to nine minutes.

Kris Keller thanked Council District 1 for helping to get a port-a-potty removed from in front of his property. He also thanked Council District 2 for helping with a homeless encampment and Council District 10 for referring him to TXDOT to address trash along I-35. Keller requested assistance with removing homeless individuals from sleeping in front of his property and suggested that something needed to be done with the homeless problem. Keller stated that he paid extra taxes for Centro Public Improvement District (PID) and recommended that no homeless individuals be allowed within the Downtown PID boundary.

Members of the SATX Harm Reduction Coalition (Social Worker Taylor Bazajou, Claudia Delfin and Madeleine Santibanez with Corazon Ministries, Maria Turvin and Monica Dyer with Yanaguana Herbalarios) spoke as a group regarding developing a community of care for persons with substance abuse disorder and noted that today was international overdose reduction day. The group advocated for human centered treatment for substance use and homeless outreach and noted that the strong drug Fentanyl was being found in many substances leading to more overdoses contributing to rises in deaths citywide. The group requested Fentanyl test strips which were illegal in Texas and asked for more treatment services and detox beds. They asked for the City to support HB1178 and work toward legalizing Fentanyl test strips.

Martin Leyvani, resident of Beacon Hill, proposed a gateway arch over Blanco Road to identify the entrance to Beacon Hill.

Will McLeod supported funding the Police and stated that Fentanyl was caused by a porous southern border. McLeod complained that gypsies were panhandling and selling flowers on N. New Braunfels Avenue as well as Marbach and Loop 410. He stated that there were homeless encampments on Potranco Road at Hwy 151 and on IH-10 at Houston Street and recommended building fences along the underpasses. He requested information on permits required for selling flowers at the intersections.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 5:51 PM.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk

DRAFT