

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Public Safety Committee

### 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6  
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3  
Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

**Tuesday, August 16, 2022**

**9:30 AM**

**City Hall**

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in City Hall at 9:37 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair  
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Member  
Phyllis Viagran, Member  
Ana Sandoval, Member  
Clayton Perry, Member

**Members Absent:** None

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from the June 21, 2022 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes from the June 21, 2022 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Cabello Havrda, Viagran, Sandoval, Perry  
**Absent:** McKee-Rodriguez

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez entered the meeting at 9:41 AM after the Approval of the Minutes vote.

## **Public Comment**

The following individuals spoke on Item 2:

Doug Beach spoke in support of ARPA funding for mental health services and partnerships and the hiring of a Mental Officer.

Richard Davidson spoke in support of City efforts in gaining community input for services in the community and support for mental health issues. He spoke of the need for expanded mental health services.

Ryan Lugalia-Hollon, Chief Executive Officer of Up Partnership, spoke in support of mental health services and priorities set by the City and best practices.

Julia Doski, Youth Commission Member, spoke on the current teen mental health crisis and the need to further address mental health issues to include LGBTQ concerns.

Lourdes Mendoza, Youth Commission Member, spoke in support of funding for youth mental health issues and expressed the importance of addressing mental health programs in schools.

William Tutt, Director of Greg Rehabilitation In Progress (GRIP), spoke of the importance of cognitive and gang rehabilitation efforts in the community and requested \$1.25 million for programs supporting these efforts.

Bill Neely Director of San Antonio Community Resource Directory (SACRD), spoke in support of continued funding for mental health services and provided an overview of services provided by his organization. He stressed the importance of communications to the community of available services.

Jessica Weaver, Director of Communities in Schools – San Antonio, spoke of services provided by the organization and stressed the importance and need for mental health services at the school level.

Maureen Galindo spoke of the need for ARPA funding for mental health issues and the need for all non- profits to be funded to provide mental health services at the youth level. She stressed the importance of obtaining data and providing data to the community.

Kim Abernathy, Director of Child Safe, spoke of the current state of child sexual and mental abuse cases in the San Antonio area. She stressed the importance and need for mental and sexual abuse services for youth in San Antonio and funding for organizations that provide these services.

## **Briefing and Possible Action on**

- 2. Briefing and Possible Action on an Implementation plan for the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for the category of Mental Health.** [María

Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Claude Jacob, Director, Health]

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez provided an overview of implementation plan for the use of ARPA State and local funds for the category of mental health. She reviewed community engagement efforts and the associated timeline of engagement results. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that comment results stressed the use of mental health upstream efforts and expanded access to mental health providers.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the mental health plan development included the identification of COVID-19 impacts, program strategies, desired outcomes and metrics and development of the plan for 2023 and 2024. She noted that the program would concentrate on services for youth, older adults, homeless and community collaborations with total funding of \$26 million. Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided specific strategies of services and program expansions for each of the categories. She stated that the funding for mental health services would be awarded under a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided an overview of the RFP eligibility and scoring of organizations submitting proposals and reviewed the timeline of the RFP, evaluation and approval by City Council.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda thanked Deputy City Manager Villagomez and staff for the presentation and stated that it was important that services be provided to agencies assisting youth. Chair Cabello Havrda asked how many youth were being serviced under the Project Worth Youth Program. Claude Jacob, Mental Health Director, reviewed the program and services provided under the program and stressed that the funding would expand the program and reach of services and that he would provide the specific data on those served to the Committee.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if senior center hours would be increased under the funding. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that hours would not be expanded but available services would be expanded and possibly partnerships with other organizations to add services and available times.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked that decreased funding program information be provided. He expressed support of the increased focus on youth and senior services. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how the LGBTQ+ community would be included in the programs especially within faith based groups. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that services expectations would be stressed to all organizations applying for funding.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the eligibility of organizations ability to apply. Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided clarification on the eligibility requirements. Councilmember McKee- Rodriguez stated that there were many organizations that had been established during the pandemic and it was important for them to apply for funding and he was pleased that they would be able to do so.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed concern regarding housing services for the homeless. Deputy City Manager Villagomez noted that meetings with City staff and homeless services coordinators identified many needed services and possible implementation of the programs under this funding.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if a community oversight board could be established to review funding initiatives and implementation. Deputy City Manager Villagomez noted that there were reporting requirements at the Federal level and along with quarterly reports from City staff to the City Council but stated that staff would review the option of establishing an overview board.

Councilmember Perry asked if senior residents were surveyed on services needed or desired. Deputy City Manager Villagomez confirmed that seniors were surveyed, and that input was provided on service hours of centers. She noted that service hours would be increased but not to the extent requested so to be able to provide additional program services. Human Services Director Melody Woosley provided an overview of survey results and requests gained from the community survey. Councilmember Perry asked that staff take the proposed recommendations back to the senior centers to gain feedback from senior residents.

Councilmember Perry requested that applicants provide information on continuation of services after the two year funding had been exhausted. He expressed concern on only providing one month for applicants to submit proposals and the need to allow for teaming efforts within organizations and asked that the submission time be expanded. Deputy City Manager Villagomez noted that that teaming effort applicants would be given additional points in the evaluation process. Chair Cabello Havrda asked if expanding the application process would hinder any other area of the evaluation process. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that it the timeline could be adjusted without impact.

Councilmember Viagran asked if applicants would need to address specific programs or if they could incorporate innovative programs. Councilmember Viagran noted that there was no input from Southside organizations and stressed that input be included. She asked that delivery of services timelines be considered in the evaluation process and also services expansion in cases where caregivers are not parents but extended family. She stressed the importance of inclusion of Veterans services.

Councilmember Viagran agreed that teamed applicants were important to consider and applicants providing information on programs would be continued to be delivered after funding was exhausted. She supported the senior services pilot program and other implementations.

Councilmember Sandoval thanked staff for their presentation and the organizations providing input on the Item. She supported the senior services pilot but expressed concern of not expanding hours on all days. She asked if Spanish programming would be included in the RFP. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that Spanish services would be included in the RFP.

Councilmember Sandoval supported youth services programs and especially mobile unit

implementation. She noted that gun ownership and suicide were related and asked if gun ownership programs would be included in the RFP. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that gun ownership could be included in the RFP. Councilmember Sandoval asked if there were any mental health stigma campaigns reviewed under the RFP. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that staff would research the campaigns.

Councilmember Perry expressed concern regarding a discussion on gun ownership restrictions among seniors.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the reduction of caregiver program funding. Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided clarification and stated that she would provide an updated report to the Committee.

Councilmember Sandoval clarified gun ownership restrictions among seniors would not entail removing property but that a discussion on mental health issues and suicide among seniors was what was requested.

Councilmember Viagran noted that gun ownership and gun violence were related, and that an expanded discussion was needed. She stated that expanded suicide data was also needed.

Chair Cabello Havrda stated that she supported the RFP and noted that the need for mental health programs was real and that she often encountered often mental health issues during meetings with clients in her law practice.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve. Councilmember Sandoval seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Cabello Havrda, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Sandoval, Perry

**3. Overview by Bexar County District Attorney Joe Gonzales of the Bexar County Criminal District Attorney's public safety initiatives and ways the Office is focusing on violent crime prosecutions.**

District Attorney Joe Gonzales provided an overview of public safety initiatives and ways the District Attorney's Office addressed client matters under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. He reviewed that Bexar County Sheriff Officers practices under the Cite and Release Program (CRP) pertinent to arresting, citing and prosecuting lower level offenses and impact to prison occupancy, recidivism and offender outcomes. He noted that officer discretion in these matters allowed for an officer to cite and then release an offender based on a case by case basis and advisement and guidance by officer line leadership.

Gonzales provided an overview of violent crime statistics in Bexar County and noted that there was an increase in violent crimes primarily due to increase in gun sales. He stated that the increase in gun sales and impact of COVID were the main factors impacting the increase in violent crimes.

Gonzales noted that the District Attorney's Office had prioritized gun violence cases and had shifted staffing and efforts to address the increase in violent crime and domestic issues. He noted that by not concentrating on minor crimes allowed the additional attention to violent crime prosecution. He stated that additional funding was provided to meet this demand and spoke to community partnerships to support of violent crime victims. He stressed the importance of providing these services to violent crime victims and breaking the cycle of violence in the community.

Gonzales stated that he looked forward to continuing partnerships with the City of San Antonio and community organizations to provide services to victims and ending the cycle of violence in the community. He noted that the City had utilized ARPA funding to address these issues and that funding at the County and City level would need to continue in the future.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda asked how the CRP could be expanded. Gonzales stated that the program was governed at the State level but added recommendations for expansion of the program for appropriateness.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked what the rate of recidivism was in the CRP. Gonzales stated that it was 7.9% which was a good level. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the capacity of the Bexar County Jail facility. Gonzales stated that the facility was already at capacity and stressed the importance of the CRP which would highly negatively impact capacity at the facility. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked clarification on bond setting practices and process. Gonzales stated that the bonds were set at the court level but that his staff provided input as needed but reiterated that the court system had jurisdiction on the setting of the bond amount.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked what Gonzales views were on the development of an Office of Recidivism. Gonzales stated that he supported the development of the Office. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that she supported the establishment of a joint County/City Office of Recidivism.

Councilmember Perry expressed concern of the CRP and concerns within his district of felons being released back into the community. Councilmember Perry asked how many individuals were out on active arrest warrants. Gonzales stated that he would need to provide that information to the Committee due to the different types of warrants, case specificity and the need for addressing of bond appropriateness recommendations for different offenses. Gonzales stressed that his direction to his prosecutors was to keep community safety at the forefront when requesting bond levels.

Councilmember Perry asked how many individuals arrested on gun related crimes were released after being arrested. Gonzales stated that he would provide the information to the Committee but stressed that these cases were case specific and would be addressed as such.

Councilmember Perry asked for clarification on the CRP and noted that the program was

costly to the City and questioned if there was any cost benefit analysis of the program outcomes and impact to the community and victims impacted by the program. He requested data on the diversion program participation. Gonzales clarified the cases eligible for cite and release and impact to victims on those instances and he reviewed the participation of the program. Councilmember Perry reiterated the concerns of his district residents and had data to support their concerns. Chair Cabello Havrda requested that the data be shared with the entire Committee.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if there was a dashboard available for the program metrics. Gonzales stated that there was a website dashboard available which was updated regularly and that he would provide the link to the Committee for their review.

Councilmember Viagran stressed the need for domestic violence prosecution and should be a priority. She stated that it was important for officers to have discretion and hold offenders accountable for their actions. Councilmember Viagran stated that she understood the importance of addressing the offender's rehabilitation but to keep in mind victims and communities that are impacted by the visible activity of offenses. She stated that it was important to take into consideration all victims.

Councilmember Viagran asked for clarification on crimes against senior residents. Gonzales stated that his office had dedicated staff to address crimes against seniors to include fiscal fraud cases. Councilmember Viagran noted the importance of officers to use their discretion in arresting habitual offenders.

Councilmember Perry stated that he was concerned with offenders that are continuously arrested for violent crimes and continued to be released. He stressed the importance to address all offenses for those type of offenders. Councilmember Perry asked if partnerships with other counties to house offenders. Gonzales stated that this could be looked at but not decided at his level.

Councilmember Perry stressed to the Chair that additional meetings with the County and City officials to address all areas of concern.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez reiterated his support of the Cite and Release program and the positive impact it had on black and brown community impacted by poverty and circumstance. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked Police Chief McManus the City's practice on cite and release practices specifically on domestic violence. Chief McManus stated that arrests were on a case by case basis due to circumstances and stressed that all staff was aware of use of discretion and safety to the community.

Councilmember Viagran stated that it was important to consider a wholistic conversation and survey of stakeholders to include police officers. She noted the importance of community stakeholders' input to the program.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked Judge Obledo to address bond setting practices. Obledo clarified that City judges would magistrate cases for all City police agencies and aligning bond setting and arrests.

No action was required for Item 3.

**Executive Session**

No Executive Session was held.

**Consideration of items for future meetings**

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Chair Cabello Havrda adjourned the meeting at 11:52 AM.

**Approved**

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*Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*