

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Public Safety Committee

### 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6, Chair  
Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Manny Pelaez, District 8

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

9:30 AM

Council Briefing Room,  
City Hall

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in the Council Briefing Room in the City Hall Complex beginning at 9:32 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*  
Mario Bravo, *Member*  
Jalen McKee- Rodriguez, *Member*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

**Members Absent:** Manny Pelaez, *Member*

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from the November 30, 2022 Public Safety Committee meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes from the November 30, 2022 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Cabello Havrda, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran  
**Absent:** Pelaez

### Public Comment

None.

## **Briefing and Possible Action on**

### **2. Briefing and possible action on an Interlocal Cooperation Contract between the Texas Department of Public Safety and the San Antonio Police Department.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Police Chief William McManus provided an update on the Anti Gang (TAG) Program Agreement with the Texas Department of Public Safety and the City of San Antonio. He provided a background of the interlocal agreement partners to include the FBI, Bexar County Sheriff's Office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives (ATF). He noted that staff was seeking an approval for a reimbursement of \$224,000 from the Program. He reviewed the next steps of the process to include consideration by the City Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the program and partnership activity in addressing gang activity. Chief McManus provided a review of the process and investigations conducted in addressing gang activity. Police Lieutenant Mark Molter provided an overview of anti-gang activity conducted by the Police Department to include arrests and community education. Assistant Police Chief Jesse Salame also provided clarification on processes and activity.

Councilmember Viagran expressed her support of the Item and the funding reimbursement. She asked where the City of San Antonio was ranked nationally in relation to gang violence. Chief McManus stated that gang violence was on the rise nationally to include San Antonio.

Councilmember Viagran asked if "Hot Spot Policing" had been beneficial in addressing gang activity. Chief McManus confirmed that Hot Spot Policing had proved beneficial and police leadership continuously reviewed activity in identifying other hot spots.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how the program worked in restorative justice. Chief McManus stated that restorative justice was not part of the program. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that the Item was only requesting reimbursement of funding but that other programs did address restorative justice and other programs would be briefed to the Committee which did address restorative justice.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked what the primary purpose of the program was. Chief McManus clarified that the program was to reduce gang violence, gun possession and other related activity. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed concern that the program did not address issues of restorative justice associated with new gang member orientation.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the costs associated with the grant reimbursement. Chief McManus provided clarification on the spending. Deputy City Manager Villagomez provided further clarification and noted that a crime analyst was anticipated to be hired with future funding. Lieutenant Mark Molter provided further clarification on the activity the crime analyst would be conducting. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez challenged staff to include additional duties for the analyst to include working with crime prevention and not just current activity. Assistant Chief Karen Falks stated that the crime analyst would work in partnership with

other crime analysts and Federal databases and other benefits to having a dedicated TAG analyst.

Councilmember Bravo expressed support of the program and efforts to remove guns from the community.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested efforts for redirection to address gang prevention and associated efforts. Chief McManus stated that the TAG unit was an investigative unit that addressed larger scale gang/cartel crime related activity.

Councilmember Viagran moved to recommend and forward the Item to the full City Council for consideration. Councilmember Bravo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Cabello Havrda, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran

**Absent:** Pelaez

**3. Briefing on the San Antonio Police Department 2022 Crime Statistics.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Police Chief William McManus provide a briefing on the FBI Crime Reporting requirements associated with the San Antonio Police Department 2022 crime statistics. He stated that reporting addressed most serious crimes to include homicides, assault, sex offenses and human trafficking. He noted that the FBI reporting system was changed to National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and categorized crimes in either Group A or Group B crimes. He provided clarification on which type of crimes were included in each group and associated activity. He noted that Group A consisted of crimes against a person, against society and against property. He reviewed the activity for each category and stated that San Antonio was still considered a safe City to live in.

Chief McManus noted that the City was working with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to analyze hot spot activity within the city and that the first update of findings would be presented to the City Council on February 2, 2023 with updates every six months. He stated that the City was conducting a police staffing study and the creation of violent crime program.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for statistics on, before and after activity associated with hot spot identification. She asked if hate crime activity included gender or sexual orientation identification and she asked for all statistics not just homicides associated with hate and road rage crimes. She stated that statistics provided more insight to the City Council on crime activity. Chief McManus stated that the data would be provided.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on activity/investigation associated with property crimes. Chief McManus stated that education efforts were important to continue and hopefully would impact a decrease in crime. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that while there were some crimes that had increased, she did feel that the City was safe.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how could victimization be determined in statistics. Chief McManus stated that crime numbers reported by the FBI are cautioned to be compared from City to City since how a City reports crimes could be classified different for certain crimes. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the risk for victimization had increased from the previous year. McManus stated that the risk of victimization remained low. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that data would be provided to the Committee on how staff determined the low risk for victimization.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if Metro Health data for violence interrupters could be utilized in these reports. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that data would be reported at a future A Session meeting. Chief McManus stated that there was a shift in public activity associated with violent crime which staff continued to address. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the shift in public activity could be addressed in City programs to address education and efforts to reduce crime activity. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the City's strategy to include findings from UTSA studies and other departments would be included in strategic plan.

Councilmember Bravo asked if NIBRS data was sufficient to address crime activity. Chief McManus stated and clarified that both the NIBRS and previous system were used to address crime statistics and trends. Councilmember Bravo requested data on seasonal trends of violent crimes. He asked what Councilmembers could do to assist in preventing crime. Chief McManus stated that continued education and communications were needed to continue so Police staff could follow up on reported activity.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on factors associated with decreased crime categories. Chief McManus provided clarification on reporting and statistics. Assistant Chief Salame stated that community education was key in reducing crime. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked of specific programs focused on education. Chief McManus stated that there were a number of programs with schools. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that education was provided via social media and onsite in mall parking lots.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if there was a dedicated unit that addressed crimes against society. Chief McManus stated that there were dedicated units that addressed many categories but not a centralized unit to address all crimes against society. Assistant Police Chief Karen Falks clarified that Police leadership had reorganized crime units to include VICE and other Violent Crime units to address overall crimes. Chair Cabello Havrda requested data on staffing for different units addressing specific crime categories.

No action was required for Item 3.

**4. Briefing on the Lights On! Program Implementation in San Antonio.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

Police Chief William McManus provided an overview of the Lights On! Program and introduced Sherman Patterson, Vice President for the Lights On! Program, which provided motorists with a \$250 voucher to repair vehicle lights at participating auto repair centers. Patterson noted that the program originated from an incident in Minneapolis where a civilian was stopped and arrested due

to a broken head light. He noted that the program addressed the downward spiral associated with auto equipment violations and associated fees and socio-economic issues.

Patterson provided an overview of the voucher program and associated program fees and reviewed benefits to the voucher program. He stated that the program had law enforcement, voucher recipient and community benefits to include safer vehicles and socio-economic disparities. He noted an increase in positive interactions with marginalized communities and law enforcement organizations. Patterson stated that the Lights On! Program had expanded nationally and if approved, San Antonio would be the first Texas city to have the program.

Chief McManus provided an overview of the program implementation in San Antonio which would concentrate rollout within the South, East and West Side service centers.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Cabello Havrda expressed her support for the program and asked how local sponsorships could be gained. Chief McManus stated that HEB Grocery chain had agreed to award \$10,000 grant. Patterson stated that he would provide information on donor identification.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if there were certain auto repair providers under the program or if recipients could go to any auto repair shop. Chief McManus stated that there were partner organizations that would be used for repairs and that they ranged from large to local providers.

City Municipal Court Judge Carla Obledo expressed support of the Lights Up Program. She stated that if individuals who received violations and showed correction of citations would greatly assist in repairing negative community perception of Police.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed his support of the Item and similar programs. He asked if residents could access a voucher prior to violation to address concerns. Chief McManus stated that it was recommended to leave the program at its pure form since it was difficult to monitor if grant was used appropriately. Patterson reiterated that the positive interaction with police and recipients was crucial to build community trust. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested that a program be identified to provide grants to those proactively repair their vehicles and not be pulled over by police and not have people fearful of getting pulled over. Chief McManus stated that all Police Officers would be mandated to provide vouchers. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that staff would provide report on issuance of vouchers and recipients utilization of vouchers.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if additional funding could be provided to the program as needed. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that City leadership would consider allocating funding as needed but that she was hopeful for more community partner donors adding funding to the program.

Councilmember Bravo expressed his support for the program and asked for clarification on the distribution of the vouchers. Patterson stated that vouchers were in paper form. Councilmember Bravo asked consideration of digital voucher in the future. Councilmember Bravo asked if voucher

recipients could replace their lights themselves if they could receive their voucher. Patterson stated that vouchers could only be redeemed at service centers and not by individual. Councilmember Bravo requested consideration of vouchers for individuals who replaced their lights themselves.

No action was required for Item 4.

### **Executive Session**

No Executive Session was held.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 AM.

**Approved**

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*Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*