

# 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, April 18, 2023

9:30 AM

Alamo Regional Security  
Operations Center

The Public Safety Committee convened a regular meeting in the Council Briefing Room in the City Hall Complex beginning at 9:31 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*  
Mario Bravo, *Member*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Manny Pelaez, *Member*

**Members Absent:** Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from the March 21, 2023 Public Safety Committee Meeting

Councilmember Pelaez moved to Approve the minutes of the March 21, 2023 Public Safety Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

### Briefing and Possible Action on

#### 2. Briefing on the implementation of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the completion of the SA- CORE Team one-year pilot. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Claude Jacob,

Director, Health]

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez introduced the Item and speakers. Jelynn LeBlanc Jamison, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Healthcare Services (CHCS), the local mental health authority, provided history on the 9-8-8 dialing code which was operating as what was formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Jamison stated that the plan was for 9-8-8 to grow in familiarity similar to the 9-1-1 system, however, the 9-8-8 technology does not track callers or their location like 9-1-1 which presented a challenge for crisis responders.

Jamison reported that the State of Texas designated each of the 39 local mental health authorities to manage a 24-hour call center with all but four contracting the services to a third party. She listed several outstanding goals and targets related to the crisis care continuum including: connection of individuals to crisis care in real time, services in accordance with Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Guidelines, cultural competence, services provided regardless of the ability to pay, tailored services for populations and peer networks.

Jamison displayed a chart of statistics on the number of 9-8-8 calls placed in Bexar County over the past year from CHCS's third party vendor AVAIL. She noted that the statistics were reported to the Texas Council of Community Centers which represented all local mental health authorities in Texas.

Jessie Higgins, Chief Mental Health Officer, provided background and overview of the San Antonio Community Outreach and Resiliency Effort (SA-CORE) Pilot Program which was initiated in 2022. Higgins stated that the SA-CORE team consisted of a mental health clinician, San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) Paramedic and a San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Officer. Higgins reported that the team responded to 1,465 calls during the first year and listed the call resolution status and follow-up process. Higgins recommended expansion of the program to add two more teams for a total of three at a total annual cost of \$2.7 million.

Chair Cabello Havrda recommended the SA-CORE program coordinate with the Good Neighbor Program. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that the addresses that had mostly mental health calls under the Good Neighbor Program were being evaluated by mental health clinicians. Chair Cabello Havrda asked about the recommended expansion to north and south versus east and west. Higgins reported that the plan was to divide the city in half. Deputy City Manager Villagomez clarified that the central substation would continue to serve downtown and Haven for Hope.

Chair Cabello Havrda requested lessons learned from the SA-CORE Pilot Program. Higgins reported that teamwork was key for mental health services, but individuals under the influence of substances did not experience immediate benefits from the SA-CORE Team intervention. Deputy City Manager Villagomez added that it was important for dispatch to realize that the SA-CORE team was available. Chair Cabello Havrda requested data on the results and impact to upstream issues.

Chair Cabello Havrda recommended coordination with the Center for Health Care Services (CHCS) and the 9-8-8 Program. Higgins stated that CHCS provided all clinical support for SA-CORE and they would work to coordinate the 9-8-8 response. Jamison referred to the challenges experienced by 9-8-8 related to location services as connected to the core value of anonymity related to mental health services, however, she agreed that monthly meetings could help facilitate improved coordination.

Councilmember Viagran supported anonymity but expressed concern that it was important to be able to get to someone in crisis and recommended educating the public about the 9-8-8 limitations or rolling out a local crisis line to be able to collect location information and respond. She requested more data breakdown from the SA-CORE Team related to types of calls, location of calls and services provided as well as demographics related to age, gender and veteran's status.

Councilmember Viagran also recommended that the SA-CORE Team work with the neighbors to help them understand the issues related to the mental health of their neighbors whom they might be calling 9-1-1 about.

Councilmember Bravo noted that there were 32,190 total 9-1-1 mental health calls in 2022 and suggested that many more SA-CORE Teams were needed to address the need if one team could respond to about 1,400 calls annually. Deputy City Manager Villagomez noted that there were other programs available to assist in addition to the SA-CORE Team. Councilmember Bravo supported additional SA-CORE Teams to meet the actual need. Deputy City Manager Villagomez stated that information on the full number of SA-CORE teams required to address mental health calls would be provided along with a schedule of what period of time it would take to reach the full number.

Councilmember Pelaez expressed concern that the programs only addressed those who were reaching out for help, but not those who tended to be quieter and anonymous but might still be in crisis. Councilmember Pelaez supported the staff recommendation to increase services.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve. Councilmember Bravo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Cabello Havrda, Bravo, Viagran, Pelaez

**Absent:** McKee-Rodriguez

**3. Briefing on the San Antonio Fire Department accreditation process.** [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Charles Hood, Fire Chief]

Charles Hood, Chief of the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD), provided background and a description of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) designation which was held by only 1% of the Fire Departments in the nation and only 12% were Accredited by the Commission for Fire Accreditation International. Chief Hood reported that only 117 Fire Departments in the nation held both distinctions.

Chief Hood referred to the SAFD strategic plan as a wholistic approach to ensuring high quality

operations which helped lead to the designations. Chief Hood recommended improved staffing levels, additional stations, engines and aerials, improved preplanning and management of training records in order to maintain the ISO rating. Chief Hood described the accreditation process which included registration, strategic planning and reporting on annual compliance.

Chair Cabello Havrda supported SAFD's efforts to strive to keep its designations which were re-evaluated every five years, and to improve at the same time. Chair Cabello Havrda recommended gathering input from the entire organization for improvements as well as a mental health survey. Chief Hood offered to provide information on the existing mental health programs offered by SAFD to its employees.

Councilmember Pelaez spoke in support of the ISO and accreditation process and even higher quality goals. Chief Hood reported that when he came to San Antonio, getting ISO was a goal which began in 2014 and he expected to continue to maintain ISO and accreditation.

Councilmember Viagran suggested a review of the budgetary needs related to maintaining high quality services and expansion into new areas along with annexation.

No action was required for Item 3.

**4. Briefing on the San Antonio Police Department first quarter 2023 crime statistics for the period of January 2023 to March 2023.** [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; William P. McManus, Chief of Police]

William McManus, Chief of the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), provided the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) crime comparison statistics under the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for the first quarter of 2023. Chief McManus reported a 15.7% decrease in violent crimes against persons attributed to a significant decrease in assault offenses. He reported that homicides increased by 6.8% mostly motivated by altercations and simple arguments, then family violence with most of the perpetrators being male.

Chief McManus reported an overall decrease of 3.4% in property crimes, however, while theft was the most frequent, the most significant increase in theft was motor vehicle theft. Chief McManus noted that there was a plan to overhaul the method for investigating property crimes which he hoped to improve property crime rates.

Chair Cabello Havrda requested a reevaluation of the percentages as there was a typo on the stolen property percentage which might impact the total percent change. Deputy City Manager Villagomez confirmed that the total 3.4% decrease was correct. Chair Cabello Havrda noted an almost 60% increase in vehicle theft and asked the Chief what residents could do to protect themselves. McManus suggested that more staffing might be needed in the vehicle theft unit.

Councilmember Viagran expressed concern about the increase in kidnappings and stolen vehicles and requested tools to help prevent these crimes. Chief McManus recommended more staffing as well as educational campaigns related to crime prevention.

Councilmember Bravo requested information on the breakdown of crimes including gun thefts. McManus stated that the reports utilized FBI UCR categories which did not break down gun thefts but he would look at the system to see if this could be tracked. Councilmember Bravo recommended a community awareness campaign to help prevent vehicle theft and car break-ins.

Councilmember Bravo asked whether the staffing study recommended more San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) officers. McManus reported that the study only recommended Patrol Officers as SAFFE was outside the scope of the study.

Councilmember Pelaez suggested an awareness campaign surrounding stolen vehicles ending up being turned into armored vehicles by the drug cartels in Mexico. Chief McManus commented that people stole cars in order to use them to commit other crimes. Councilmember Pelaez noted that criminals avoided houses that had cameras and suggested a program related to assisting with the installation of security devices and a partnership with providers. Chief McManus stated that SAPD was able to retrieve camera footage after canvassing. Jesse Salame, SAPD Chief of Staff, stated that SAPD had a formal agreement with the RING doorbell camera company.

Councilmember Bravo requested a breakdown of the number of vehicles recovered from theft, comparison with peer cities, and how it might impact insurance rates. Councilmember Bravo suggested that people might not be reporting extortion.

No action was required for Item 4.

## **Executive Session**

Chair Cabello Havrda recessed the meeting into Executive Session at 11:09 a.m. to discuss the following:

- A. Discuss matters pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney).

Chair Cabello Havrda reconvened the meeting at 11:35 a.m. in Open Session and announced that no official action was taken in Executive Session.

## **Consideration of items for future meetings**

## **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Chair Cabello Havrda adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

**Approved**

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*Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair*

*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*