

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



**Meeting Minutes  
City Council B Session**

No in-person access to this meeting

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

2:00 PM

Videoconference

**ROLL CALL**

The City Council convened in a Regular Meeting. City Clerk Tina J. Flores took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

**PRESENT:** 11 - Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Gonzales, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry

Once a quorum was established, the City Council shall consider the following:

1. Briefing on a five-year strategic plan to respond to homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County and the City's response and recovery initiatives for homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Melody Woosley stated that the 2020 Point-in-Time Count was mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and was taken in January of each year. She noted that the Point-in-Time Count covered Bexar County and was 2,932 of which 1,274 were not sheltered; and 1,658 were sheltered. She reported that 566 were sheltered at the Haven for Hope Courtyard and of the total count 152 were youth, 206 were Veterans, 388 were domestic violence survivors. and 271 were families. She indicated that the Point-in-Time Count for 2021 would be held on January 26, 2021.

Ms. Woosley reported that the Point-in-Time Count has grown by 1.5% since 2015, the total per capita (individuals experiencing homelessness per 10,000 of the Bexar County population) had decreased by 4.1% since 2015, and the unsheltered per capita had increased by 4% since 2015. She indicated that the investments in homelessness for FY 2021 totaled \$32,138,625 and included:

- Haven for Hope - \$8,644,128
- Homeless providers - \$3,204,957
- Human Services - \$1,312,024
- Indirect costs - \$18,977,516

Ms. Woosley stated that the Department of Human Services received \$16,853,222 in CARES Act Emergency Solutions Grant funding to be utilized over two years and included:

- Emergency shelter - \$6,400,944
- Rapid rehousing - \$6,991,613
- Homeless prevention - \$1,000,000
- Street outreach - \$2,210,664

Ms. Woosley reported that Bexar County received \$2.56 million and the San Antonio Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARA) received \$5.1 million.

Ms. Woosley stated that last year, City Council approved a consulting contract with Home Base to develop a five-year Strategic Plan to address homelessness. She noted that Home Base gathered data and conducted on-site interviews from November 2019 to February 2020. She indicated that the process included more than 50 meetings with over 500 community members to assess the current system and identify gaps, opportunities, improvements, and partnerships.

Ms. Woosley reported that the Strategic Plan identified the following community strengths:

- “Can do” attitude and spirit of innovation
- Culture of compassion and empathy
- Haven for Hope
- Strong network of providers
- Commitment to collaboration

Ms. Woosley stated that the Strategic Plan identified six main areas for improvement to the homeless system:

- Need for more housing and services
- Growing unsheltered population
- Limited coordination and communication
- Need for cross-system partnerships
- Need for additional funding
- Adjusting responses for unique groups experiencing homelessness

Ms. Woosley reported that Home Base made the following recommendations which supported an

intentional systemic approach to addressing homelessness through coordinated evidence-based and comprehensive services:

- Increase focus on consumer engagement and equity
- Expand outreach teams and improve outreach coordination
- Prioritize and tailor interventions for unsheltered homeless population
- Implement collective-impact leadership group
- Support development of service enriched housing options
- Conduct further analysis of high-utilizer population

Ms. Woosley stated that the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic was significant and included: 1) Limited access to emergency shelter; 2) Reduced availability of services; 3) Modified street outreach; 4) Paused encampment abatement; and 5) Increased households at risk of homelessness. She noted that to reduce the impacts, staff expanded coordination with partners, retooled programs, and launched new initiatives to limit the spread of COVID-19 among the homeless population and to help meet their basic needs. She added that collaboration between partners resulted in a relatively low COVID-19 rate among the homeless population.

Ms. Woosley reported that long-term and post COVID implementation of the Strategic Plan included: 1) Expanded street outreach and shelter options; 2) Increased collaboration with mental health providers; and 3) Increased focus on permanent housing.

Ms. Woosley stated that next steps included:

- Continued hotel lease and resource hubs through summer 2021
- 11 outreach teams deployed by January 2021
- Develop Strategic Plan Implementation Framework by March 2021
- Permanently house 350 chronic homeless and prevent homelessness for 102 households

Ms. Woosley indicated that residents could report encampments by calling 3-1-1 or by emailing [homelessoutreach@sanantonio.gov](mailto:homelessoutreach@sanantonio.gov). She added that individuals requiring assistance could call 210-207-1799 or send an email to [homelesshotline@sanantonio.gov](mailto:homelesshotline@sanantonio.gov).

Mayor Nirenberg asked of the gap that the collective impact leadership group would fill. Ms. Woosley replied that the collective impact leadership group would serve to coordinate policy and decision making of the City, Haven for Hope, and SARA.

Mayor Nirenberg asked how the Strategic Plan and the housing framework worked together. Ms. Woosley stated that Home Base found that there was not enough emphasis on the kind of housing needed to move chronically homeless individuals out of the homeless system and into permanent service enriched housing such as nursing, palliative, and hospice care. She noted that the recommendation would focus on ensuring that those types of housing were available. Mayor Nirenberg stated that he was pleased that immediate emergency shelter would be provided.

Mayor Nirenberg asked of the strategy regarding evictions in San Antonio and in other places. Ms. Woosley stated that a more detailed plan would be provided in January 2021 to address evictions.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke of framing homelessness as a State or local emergency and noted that she would like to explore the creation of a lending fund. She requested an update on the Council District Homeless Coordinators and the regional strategy to address homelessness. Ms. Woosley stated that she would provide that information.

Councilmember Treviño spoke of the need for additional funds for housing assistance. He stated that people of color, women of color, and single parents of color faced eviction and displacement at a disproportionate rate.

Councilmember Courage requested quarterly reports from Haven for Hope and SARA on their progress. He asked how the outreach teams would work for each Council District. Ms. Woosley reported that each outreach team would include an outreach specialist, a clinician or someone with a background in social work, and a social work intern from the colleges. She indicated that the outreach teams would become familiar with Council District staff, the field offices, and the constituents and businesses in the Council District.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if a report of vacant building inventory would be presented to the City Council. Ms. Woosley stated that a report would be available in January 2021 and would be provided to the City Council at a B Session and/or a City Council Committee once the City Manager reviewed it.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that individuals who identified as LGBTQ had more difficulty finding shelters that accepted and respected them and experienced homelessness at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation compared to heterosexuals. He requested that reauthorization of the Homeless Youth Act be included in the City's legislative agenda and suggested that the City partner with the Trevor Project.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if the CARES Act funding was included in the investments in homelessness for FY 2021. Ms. Woosley indicated that it was not.

Councilmember Sandoval asked how many notices to vacate included the notice of tenant's rights. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston stated that she would provide that information. Councilmember Viagran advocated for a governance structure with an equity focus.

Councilmember Perry asked how many non-profits and faith-based agencies there were in the City and their fundraising efforts for homelessness. Ms. Woosley stated that she would provide that information. He expressed concern regarding the funds allocated for homelessness. Councilmember Perry asked of the percentage of homeless individuals that accepted services offered to them. Ms. Woosley reported that 30% of homeless individuals accepted services offered.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if staff monitored other cities' efforts to address homelessness. Ms. Woosley replied that they did.

Councilmember Viagran asked if any of the recommendations conflicted with State Law. Ms. Woosley stated that she would follow up on that question.

Councilmember Treviño requested that staff coordinate with State Representative Lopez on Housing

First in the legislature.

2. Briefing on the status of the replacement project for the San Antonio Public Safety Radio System. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Craig Hopkins, Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Services]

Craig Hopkins reported that the current radio system was implemented in 2004 and had over 12,000 subscribers today which included almost 7,000 from the San Antonio Police and Fire Departments. He indicated that approximately 2,700 subscribers were from Bexar County, and 2,500 subscribers were from 56 external agencies. He noted that the current radio system covered 1,200 square miles which was approximately the size of Bexar County.

Mr. Hopkins stated that coverage would be enhanced with the new radio system as a 14-tower system would be replaced with a 28-tower system. He noted that efficiency would be further enhanced by purchasing radios with Bexar County, and CPS Energy. He indicated that the new radio system would provide communication across agencies.

Mr. Hopkins reported that the City would be a 56% owner of the new P25 system along with Bexar County and CPS Energy. He indicated that redundancy was built into the P25 system and a large trailer with a portable radio transmitter would be available for use. He noted that over 3,000 radios had been purchased and deployed for SAPD.

Mr. Hopkins provided a map of the tower locations and noted that the completion date was extended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the slow installation of repeaters in buildings. He noted that the completion date was pushed forward to June 2022 but the current Budget and the vendor contract had remained the same.

Mr. Hopkins reported that the cost for the purchase and installation of the P25 system was \$80.7 million and the cost for maintenance for the next 15 years was \$27.5 million.

Mayor Nirenberg asked how the increased timeline would impact the performance of the current system. Mr. Hopkins stated that there was no additional risk of utilizing the current system for six months. He noted that the primary risk was the lack of parts for the radio system and staff had refurbished replacement parts.

Councilmember Perry asked of the cost difference between the Harris Radio or the Motorola Radio for the San Antonio Fire Department. Mr. Hopkins indicated that \$3,500 was included in the contract for the Harris Radios and staff would have to negotiate prices with Motorola.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Nirenberg announced that the Executive Session would be carried over to December 17, 2020.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 4:40 pm.

**APPROVED**

**RON NIRENBERG**  
Mayor

Attest:

**TINA J. FLORES**  
City Clerk

DRAFT