

City of San Antonio



City Council Special Meeting

WebEx Meeting – No in-person access to this meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

1:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

Acting 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

Bexar County Clerk Lucy Adame-Clark took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Bexar County Commissioners present:

PRESENT: 7 - Judge Nelson Wolff, Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez, Justin Rodriguez, Tommy Calvert, Kevin A. Wolff, County Manager David Smith, and District Attorney Joe Gonzales

Once a quorum is established, the City Council, in a joint meeting with the Bexar County Commissioner's Court, shall consider the following item.

1. Briefing and updates on the City's COVID-19 response and preparedness and updates on the COVID-19 Community Action Working Groups and Economic Transition Team.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that he was pleased that the COVID-19 Economic Transition Team (ETT) Report was specific to the industries in San Antonio and was grounded in health guidance by the Health Transition Team (HTT). He noted that local government should not and would not have to choose between health and the economy.

County Judge Nelson Wolff stated that the community would have to learn to live with COVID-19 and it was essential to open the economy in a safe manner.

Kevin Voelkel, Co-Chair of the ETT and President of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas, Inc. stated that each member of ETT brought their experience to support the process and one should never have to choose between physical safety and economic health. He indicated that ETT was comprised of a diverse group of business and community leaders, entrepreneurs, consultants, and

planners which had experience in private, public, and non-proctored sectors. He stated that the objectives of the ETT included:

- Collaborate with HTT to prioritize public health as we develop guidance to protect employees, consumers, and visitors
- Apply a social equity lens to all guidance and recommendations
- Consider and include the diverse industry set and their unique needs
- Supplement the Governor's guidance by evaluating best practices and levels of risk by industry
- Maintain flexibility and ability to pivot as the environment changes

Julissa Carielo, Co-Chair of the ETT and President of Tejas Premier Building Contractor, Inc. noted that the ETT reached out to business owners for feedback and members reached out to the chambers, and industry associations to gather best practices.

Ms. Carielo stated that the HTT and the ETT were committed to bringing forth challenges faced by marginalized populations and recommending short- and long-term solutions. He noted that the HTT and ETT believed that the health of residents would be improved by providing increased support for small, minority, and women-owned businesses. She stated that the ETT's recommendations included review of small business resources for immediate needs and long-term planning.

Ms. Carielo reported that deliverables included developing a local playbook, creating a Marketing and Public Relations Plan, and identifying and facilitating access to business resources.

Mr. Voelkel stated that the Greater San Antonio Playbook expanded on the minimum standards included in the Governor's "Open Texas" Report and included a checklist for companies within key industries in San Antonio and Bexar County to open safely according to the State mandates and local health and business expert recommendations.

Mr. Voelkel stated that the "Open Texas" Report provided guidance for six business sectors and HTT examined the risk factors for nine business sectors. He noted that ETT added four additional business sectors and expanded the Playbook to include 13 business sectors.

Mr. Voelkel noted that the ETT proposed a pledge in which businesses would take to: 1) Use face coverings; 2) Practice physical distancing; 3) Conduct temperature checks; 4) Provide hand sanitizer; 5) Follow CDC cleaning protocols; 6) Implement contactless payment when possible; and 7) Provide general COVID-19 awareness training for employees.

Mr. Voelkel stated that a multi-channel campaign would provide businesses with messaging, social media tools, and signage.

Ms. Carielo stated that the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation (SAEDF) Business Recovery Team aligned with the COVID-19 Business and Employment Action Committees and addressed the immediate needs of small businesses and provided the following recommendations:

- Access for financial relief, loans and guidance

- Develop “Buy Local” Support Programs
- Safety training for preventing COVID-19 spread (English and Spanish)
- Financial literacy in English and Spanish
- Access to healthcare, COVID-19 testing, and safety equipment and supplies

Ms. Carielo noted that the ETT recommended that SAEDF partner with City and County leaders to develop a sustained, centralized body or “task force” specific to addressing small local business needs for future disaster and pandemic preparedness and equity concerns by improving small business growth.

Ms. Carielo stated that the new task force would identify the challenges, and resource partners to implement the solutions, measure progress, and report to the City and County. She noted that the success of reopening would depend on employee health and consumer confidence.

Commissioner Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez stated that it was necessary to ensure that all residents of Bexar County knew that they were represented.

Councilmember Viagran requested that Commissioners and City Council encourage their constituents who own businesses to take the pledge.

Commissioner Wolff encouraged the City Council to reach out to Chambers of Commerce and to utilize their resources.

Councilmember Perry suggested that the Chambers be utilized as a centralized body to provide expertise and resources, and to develop long-range and short-range plans for businesses.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez asked where small businesses with 25 employees or less would go for no touch thermometers, hand sanitizers, and face coverings. Erik Walsh replied that the city procured 6,500 thermometers which would be received by May 15, 2020. He noted that the city procured 14,000 gallons of hand sanitizer and a portion of that order would be delivered this week. He stated that the city targeted 56,000 face coverings of which 38,000 were ordered. He noted that these items would be packaged in sets targeting between 5,600 and 6,000 businesses. He noted that the city would partner with the Chambers in the effort.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez stated that he would like to hear how the HTT Plan would continue to lead the reopening of businesses.

Commissioner Calvert stated that the only way to keep people employed was for the Federal Government to issue universal stipends and we should advocate for that.

Councilmember Courage stated that the playbook developed needed to accommodate businesses with up to 200 employees. He noted that the PR Plan should be developed by the Chambers, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and the Metropolitan Health District.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if non-profits were eligible to receive supplies. Mr. Walsh replied that non-profits were eligible. He called for discussions on lessons learned.

Mr. Walsh stated that an internal group led by Craig Hopkins and David McCary was reviewing what the city’s workplace looked like and its effect on work space.

Fire Chief, Charles Hood stated that the San Antonio Fire Department started an after-action report and a team was holding interviews on lessons learned. He noted that the report would be shared with everyone as soon as it was completed.

Councilmember Sandoval asked that spatial and time density, air ventilation, and employee confidence be considered. She stated that an effort should be made to ensure that everyone who needed a surgical mask would receive one.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked who businesses could contact if they had a question not covered by the playbook. Mr. Walsh replied that she could contact Alex Lopez, Carlos Contreras, or himself.

Councilmember Gonzales stated that businesses should be allowed to develop their own recommendations and best practices instead of creating a task force. She indicated that the city should focus on training and retraining individuals for the new economy.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how it was determined that businesses with 25 employees or less would be targeted. Mr. Walsh replied that it was determined internally to provide procurement assistance.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how planners and caterers were categorized in the ETT Report. Mr. Voelkel replied that they were included in the restaurant category.

Councilmember Treviño spoke of including guidance to businesses on secondary issues that may arise. Ms. Carielo stated that the ETT discussed the fact that once businesses start to open there will be other issues which will need to be addressed and the ETT would continue to address those issues.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that the charge of the ETT was to establish model practices for reopening grounded in guidance from the HTT.

Judge Nelson Wolff stated that the task was to address job training, technology, and assisting small businesses.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 2:53 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
Mayor

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk