

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020  
10:00 AM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>Co-Chair, District 8</i> Commissioner Justin Rodriguez, <i>Co-Chair, Bexar County Commissioner’s Court, Precinct 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i> Commissioner Kevin Wolff, <i>Bexar County Commissioner’s Court, Precinct 3</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Carlos Contreras, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Camila Kunau, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Chelsea Mikulencak, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Director, Government &amp; Public Affairs</i> ; Gen. Juan Ayala, <i>Director, Military &amp; Veteran Affairs</i> ; Sally Basurto, <i>Assistant Director, Government &amp; Public Affairs</i> ; Christine Wright, <i>State Relations Manager, Government &amp; Public Affairs</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Lt. Col. Karen Rolirad, <i>Executive Director, Bexar County Military and Veterans Services Center</i> ; Melissa Shannon, <i>Director, Governmental Affairs, Bexar County</i> ; Kevin Kelly, <i>Lead Attorney, Government &amp; Regulatory Affairs Group, Clark Hill, PC</i> ; Lauren Lipin, <i>Legislative Government Affairs Office, Clark Hill</i> ; Baltazar R. (“Walter”) Serna, Jr. <i>Attorney, Serna &amp; Serna, San Antonio</i> ; Henry Bonilla, <i>The Normandy Group</i> ; Ron Eritano, <i>The Normandy Group</i>

**Call to Order**

Co-Chairman Pelaez called the meeting to order.

**1. Approval of the minutes from the October 14, 2020 and November 2, 2020 meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2020 and November 2, 2020 meetings of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. Pentagon Advocacy Trip Recap.** [Juan Ayala, Director, Office of Military & Veteran Affairs]

Gen. Juan Ayala reported that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Pentagon allowed only three visitors this year, which included Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Jenna Saucedo-Herrera, President & CEO, San Antonio Economic Development Foundation (SAEDF), and himself (the SA Team).

Gen. Ayala reported that the SA Team met with Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA) to make the following requests:

- Increase DHA presence in San Antonio
- Designate Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) a “Trauma Center of Excellence”
- Continued support of the Secretary of the Army Designee (SECDES) Program
- Expand Uniformed Services University College of Allied Health Services locally

Gen. Ayala reported that SECDES Program funded \$20 million, or 85%, of level one trauma medical care provided by BAMC to non-military patients. He noted that BAMC military medical personnel saved American lives locally on a daily basis, and abroad in wartime settings. He added that BAMC military medical personnel greatly benefited from repetitive medical practice on gunshots, stabbings, and vehicular accidents that provided firsthand trauma experience for combat readiness. He indicated that Lt. Gen. Place voiced concern about disproportionate costs that DHA was required to in Texas for treating uninsured at BAMC. He stated that the City was in collaboration with Senator Donna Campbell and Representative Ray Lopez to draft a State Bill that would designate such non-insured payments would be covered by Medicare.

Gen. Ayala reported that the U.S. Army Physical Disability Agency (PDA) was located in San Antonio and had 220 employees, and planned to expand its headquarters for an additional 700 employees. He stated that the City and JBSA/US Army North were in collaboration to ensure that the expansion of its headquarters remained here in the City.

Gen. Ayala reported that the SA Team met with Gen. John Raymond, Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force, to advocate for San Antonio to be the location of the headquarters for the U.S. Space Command. He stated that San Antonio was one of top six cities nominated for consideration from a pool of 100 cities and added that that a survey team was scheduled to pay a visit to San Antonio on December 12, 2020. He recognized concerns that a new administration was in transition and the proposed Space Command may be impacted.

Gen. Ayala reported that the SA Team advocate for the 2022 & 2024 Warrior Games to be held in the City, to consider San Antonio first for new USAF missions, to base 16<sup>th</sup> Air Force’s information warfare missions in San Antonio, to consider additional National Guard missions at Martindale Army Air Field/San Antonio, and to hold USAF 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in San Antonio.

Co-Chair Rodriguez asked if there was anything Bexar County could do to assist with the upcoming Survey visit for the U.S. Space Command.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested additional information on the PDA. Gen. Ayala stated that he would schedule a follow up meeting.

Councilmember Perry stated that it was critical for the City and Bexar County to focus on obtaining funding for the joint-use runway at JBSA-Lackland AFB and Port San Antonio, and the potential need to build an alternate landing strip.

Commissioner Wolff recommended that funding for the joint-use runway could be obtained through the U.S. Risk Management Agency, or through the creation of an airport authority could provide, which would attract U.S. Space Command initiatives.

**3. Bexar County State Legislative Program & Elections Legislation.** [Melissa Shannon, Governmental Affairs Director, Bexar County]

Melissa Shannon reported that Bexar County's State Legislative Program was divided into two categories: Initiatives and Policies. She explained that Bexar County Initiatives were priority items that were derived from submissions by county officials and departments, had a direct impact on county operations, and would be actively supported through drafting legislation, finding bill sponsors, providing testimony, and collaborating with legislative members to promote passage of bills. She added that Bexar County Policies established positions on bills filed that could impact County operations and provided guidance as to the general position of the Bexar County Commissioners Court.

Ms. Shannon presented Bexar County initiatives for the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, as follows:

- Cite & Release
- Open Court
- Parole Revocation Hearings
- Student Expulsion
- Vehicle Registration Fee Election

Ms. Shannon reported that Bexar County was currently tracking 53 State Legislative Bills it was in favor of that pertained to election operations, as the County was responsible for voter registration and election operations.

Councilmember Viagran asked why there was only one ballot drop off-box in Bexar County. Ms. Shannon explained that the State statute allowed for one drop-off box per location and Bexar County only had one Administrator, with one office location; and some County Administrators had more than one office location and thus, had more than one drop-off box. Co-Chair Pelaez noted that COVID-19 challenges would be discussed at the Legislative Session, and could provide an opportunity to propose additional drop-off boxes for Bexar County and added that City Council had ten field offices and Bexar County had five offices that could serve as drop-off box locations to accommodate voters during the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond.

**4. Update on State Legislative Interim Hearings.** [Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs]

Jeff Coyle reported that 2 House Bills were filed yesterday that would prevent a political subdivision, or a local government, from spending public funds to hire lobbyists, contract lobbyists, or spent public funds on a trade association that also performed lobbyist duties and noted that the Bills had a negative impact in terms of the City's position in the State.

Mr. Coyle reported that an interim hearing was held by the Senate State Affairs Committee yesterday where the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), a very conservative advocacy group, argued that a total of \$41 million was spent by local governments to lobby governments and that in itself was wrong to do; additionally, the TPPF called for a ban on local government staffers whose jobs were to engage in government affairs. He indicated that Bob Hall, the sponsor, argued that lobbyists hired by local governments regularly lobbied against residents' interests and therefore, it was the State's job to protect taxpayers. He reported that Senator Eddie Lucio spoke

up emphatically in support of local communities that relied heavily on professionals that understood the Legislative process and were full-time engaged with 181 members across the Capital. He noted that testimony from the Professional Advocacy Association of Texas, a lobby trade group, argued that lobbying practices were transparent and ethical and banning would not prevent lobbying and would instead send it underground. He stated that the Mayor of Grand Prairie, Texas argued that 7,000 Bills were filed during every Session, and it would take a very large, full-time staff to track all of the Bills, engage in advocacy, and work all year round to establish relationships with 181 members outside the reach of his local community. Mr. Coyle noted that the City's argument was very similar and that it was more cost-effective to retain consultants as was done for other areas and banning lobbyists would have the effect of not protecting taxpayers, but silencing taxpayers and the community. He added that the City was not invited to attend the hearing.

At this time, the Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee meeting was adjourned, and the Intergovernmental Relations COSA Subcommittee convened to consider the following items:

**5. Federal Representation Services Contract Renewals.** [Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs]

Mr. Coyle presented the 177<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session performance measures. He noted that lengthy discussions took place about the idea of scoring on particular issues on the Legislative Agenda because many items were governed by items broader than the City's Agenda, such as the makeup of both Chambers and gridlock scenarios. He reported that the City's current Federal Consultants Team (Team) worked with the City and framed the Federal program language to align with what they expected the Congressional term to be focused on for a number of fronts by successfully inserting items in the 12 Appropriations Bills and highlighted that 25 Federal funding opportunities were expected to be identified for the City through those efforts.

Mr. Coyle reported that the Team planned high-level meetings for the City and obtained access to high-ranking officials, such as the Pentagon visit that Gen. Ayala briefed this Committee on today. He added that the Team was expected to provide monthly reports and frequent reports on developments as they occurred, to include a very comprehensive Briefing Book that provided political context and biographical information for Pentagon and Government Officials, Legislative members, and key Organizational and Agency Representatives that local officials met with.

Councilmember Perry stated that metrics played an important role to track specific performance measures to determine success and requested that metrics be implemented. Mr. Coyle stated that success was measured annually through the annual performance evaluation of the Government & Public Affairs Department.

Assistant City Manager Contreras recommended that the Committee, and possibly City Council, be briefed at the end of every Congressional Session to discuss the outcomes of Bills that passed or failed and their impact on the City's Legislative Agenda initiatives.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve Item 5. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**6. Briefing on the City's Federal Legislative Program for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.** [Sally Basurto, Federal & Grants Administrator]

Sally Basurto reported that the 117<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session would begin on January 3, 2021 and the Federal Legislative Program will provide direction to staff and consultants on the City's Federal priorities for 2021-2022. The program guides the City's advocacy activities with members of the San Antonio Congressional Delegation, other key members of Congress and federal agencies.

Ms. Basurto reported that the development of the new Federal Program was launched in August 2020 in collaboration with City Departments and the City's Federal Consultant Team. She added that staff collaborated with the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, San Antonio Congressional Delegation, and community partners to identify issues important to the San Antonio community.

Ms. Basurto reported that the proposed Federal Legislative Program was comprised of the following priority issues:

- Coronavirus Response
- Military Protection
- Infrastructure Modernization
- Aviation Improvements
- Health & Human Services
- Housing Assistance
- Community Revitalization
- Workforce & Training
- Broadband & Digital Inclusion
- Tax Credits
- Public Safety Improvements
- Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Basurto stated that once approved by the Committee, staff will present the proposed Federal Legislative Program to the full City Council at the B Session currently scheduled for January 13, 2020.

Councilmember Viagran requested the inclusion of Opportunity Zones to allow residents to engage in the process of fostering economic growth in low income communities, and the inclusion of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested an update on the SA to DC trip. She asked if staff anticipated any federal grant opportunities in the upcoming months or for 2021. Ms. Basurto reported that the outlook for the trip remained the same out of extraordinary precaution and that a May 2021 or June 2021 timeframe was proposed for a potential virtual site visit as Capitol Hill still remained closed to visitors. She added that with the new administration coming in, there could be potentially new or different criteria or policies for visiting Agencies. Mr. Coyle noted that this was a lame duck period with a transition of the new administration underway. He stated that focus was on the next COVID-19 relief package that both sides were trying to package to keep the government funded through the next of year.

Chairman Pelaez requested the inclusion of the PAWS Act which was a Bill proposed by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs that provided grants to cities and organizations to make it easier for wounded warriors to obtain retired service K-9s to serve as personal support animals.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve Item 6, with the inclusion of Opportunity Zones to allow residents to engage in the process of fostering economic growth in low income communities, and the inclusion of the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, and the inclusion of the PAWS Act. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.

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*Councilmember Manny Pelaez,  
Co-Chairman*

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*County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez,  
Co-Chairman*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Nancy Cano  
Office of the City Clerk*