

City of San Antonio



AGENDA City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
105 Main Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council of San Antonio convened in the “B” Room of the Municipal Plaza Building. City Clerk Leticia Vacek took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

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

1. Briefing on the Migrant Resource Center and Associated Services to Asylum Seekers traveling through San Antonio. [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Colleen Bridger stated that the goal of the Migrant Resource Center (MRC) was to provide services and a welcoming environment for traveling asylum seekers in San Antonio. She noted that the City began to observe an influx of migrants traveling through San Antonio to their ultimate destination in early 2019 and in late March 2019. The City’s non-profit partners requested assistance in providing services to said migrants. She stated that the City has partnered with Catholic Charities, the Food Bank, Travis Park United Methodist Church, and the Interfaith Welcome Coalition to provide the basics; food, shelter, travel assistance, and medical triage and services. She noted that 29,000 migrants including women and children have travelled through San Antonio on their way to their host city. She stated that the majority of the asylum seekers were from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Haiti. She added that the people served were cleared by the Federal Government to be travelling legally. She reviewed the following pathways into the United States for asylum seekers: 1) Refugee Resettlement Process where permission was granted before entry; 2) Affirmative Asylum Process with a visa; and 3) Arriving asylum seekers who request asylum at the border. She stated that 100-500 migrants were served daily at the MRC and 19,586 have been sheltered overnight since March 30, 2019. She noted that over 2,000 migrants have received medical screenings and 13% of the city civilian workforce have volunteered at the MRC.

She stated that over 520 community members have volunteered and committed almost 13,000 hours at the MRC or the Travis Park United Methodist Church. She noted that the total direct expenditures by the City, as of August 5, 2019, were \$296,633 which did not include the cost of City Staff either volunteering or being deployed to the response. She stated that \$141,000 in expenditures was directed

to Catholic Charities and the Food Bank; and \$155,633 was directed to MRC expenses. She noted that partner expenses to date included: 1) \$211,558 for the Food Bank; 2) \$337,633 for Catholic Charities; and 3) \$33,465 for Travis Park United Methodist Church. She added that the City would seek reimbursement from the Federal Government. She noted that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated \$30 million to local governments for their response to the migrant surge and \$25 million of that was reserved for Border States. She stated that reimbursements were administered by the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program and food and shelter expenses would be prioritized for reimbursement. She noted that the application for reimbursement was not available at this time, as soon as it was, the City would have receipts that would justify reimbursement of approximately \$620,000 and partners would have receipts which total approximately \$600,000.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked City Staff, volunteers and partners who made the MRC possible. He asked how individuals could get involved in this effort. Dr. Bridger replied that individuals could get information on the Immigrant Services Website at www.sanantonio.gov. Mayor Nirenberg requested that a link to that website be provided to the City Council and a proposal be made for a permanent or semi-permanent operation for migrants.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that she would like to see a long-term solution for migrant processing in terms of facilities and costs.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if there were any private sector partners. Dr. Bridger replied that there were not but many private individuals and companies providing funding and donations.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that company teams were represented at the MRC.

Councilmember Treviño suggested that municipalities share resources such as data and information with each other.

Councilmember Perry requested information on the indirect and direct costs associated with the MRC. Erik Walsh stated that he would include that in his end of week report.

Councilmember Viagran asked of the number of migrants who have come through San Antonio in 2019 to date. Dr. Bridger stated that staff would partner with Catholic Charities to provide that data.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if a partnership with Bexar County to provide volunteers or funds had been discussed. Mr. Walsh replied that financial support from Bexar County had not been discussed but the public agencies were challenged to provide volunteers at the MRC. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan suggested that a partnership with Bexar County be discussed.

Councilmember Courage spoke of the need for guidance and direction from the Federal Government to sustain this effort.

Councilmember Peláez spoke of the compassion and generosity of the community and documenting efforts by the City and its partners at the MRC.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 3:48 p.m. to discuss the following items:

- A. Economic development negotiations pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087 (economic development).
- B. The purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.072 (real property).
- C. Legal issues related to collective bargaining pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- D. Update on legal issues relating to the Paid Sick Leave Ordinance pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- E. Litigation related to opioid manufacturers, distributors, and promoters pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

RECONVENED

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mayor Nirenberg called upon the citizens registered to speak.

Nazarite Ruben Flores Perez spoke about the shooting in El Paso and noted that there have been shootings for three years in a row.

Henry Rodriguez spoke for the group “Riverwalk Stationary Vending/Parking for Sanchez” in support of Sanchez Ice House #1. He stated that parking was taken away under the expressway and patrons were given parking tickets. He asked that the parking tickets be nullified.

Antonio Diaz requested installation of street banners for Indigenous People’s Day to be placed throughout the City.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
MAYOR

Attest:

LETICIA M. VACEK, TRMC/CMCMMC
City Clerk