

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING – Gender Equity
APRIL 30, 2021 2:00PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
Members Absent:	Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i>
Staff Present:	David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Andy Segovia, <i>City Attorney</i> ; Monica Hernandez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; James Flavin, <i>Assistant Police Chief</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Maria Salazar, <i>Attorney, Chair, LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee</i> ; Rev. Naomi Brown, <i>Member, LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee</i>

Call to order

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

1. A series of discussion on policing as it relates to gender equity presented by topic experts.

Chairwoman Sandoval stated that last year, after the events of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the impact of George Floyd's death in police custody, Mayor Nirenberg addressed a memo to the City Councilmembers and multiple Council Committees to provide an analysis on different issues. She added that this Committee was charged with reviewing best policing practices to help promote racial and gender equity across the community, and to review mental health de-escalation measures. She stated that the goal of today's meeting was to discuss SAPD's relationship with the LGBTQ+ community and to receive and forward recommendations to the Public Safety Council Committee.

Reverend Naomi Brown reported that she began gender equity training under the Stonewall Democrats and for the past eight years, she has served under the Pride Center San Antonio to provide LGBTQ+ awareness and diversity training for cadets at the SAPD Training Academy. She added that she also provided policing policies and recommendations, and worked as an outreach Minister for the Metropolitan Community Church.

Rev. Brown detailed some of the aspects of the LGBTQ+ awareness and diversity training program. She stated that the course opened up with questions to the class such as: "What are your thoughts and feelings about people in the LGTBQ+ community?" and "Does anyone in this room not know someone who is LGTBQ+?" She reported that basic training also covered vocabulary and descriptions such as gender non-conforming, gender-variant, and non-binary. She stated that the coming out process was addressed in training because coming out could often prompt domestic or intimate partner violence with threats to reveal gender identify to employers, families or Churches. She added that during training, officers took up a position as someone who had come out to experience the potential loss of family, Church, and the right to exist as the gender one identified with. She noted that the training emphasized

not the importance of not making assumptions during a call and how to de-escalate anxiety due to fear of arrest and being placed in a general population when an ID did not match one's appearance or if hormone medications could potentially withheld while in custody. She added that officers were informed to refer to Assistant Police Chief Flavin for liaison assistance as needed.

Rev. Brown stated that providing equity to a vulnerable population that was already marginalized, fearful and oppressed was not a form of special treatment. She noted that LGBTQ+ awareness and diversity training should be provided to Bexar County law enforcement officers.

Assistant Police Chief James Flavin reported that he served as SAPD's fourth LGBTQ+ Liaison since the position was established in 2006 by Chief McManus, who served as SAPD's first liaison. He stated that he served as a resource for the City's LGBTQ+ community and processed complaints and troubleshooted issues as they arose. He noted that SAPD did not receive many gender equity complaints about how a police call was handled, and such complaints were referred to the SAPD Internal Affairs Department. He added that he served to identify LGBTQ+ issues for improvement and cited an example of an arrest made by SAPD in 2019 where a transgender female was processed under her legal (birth) name, also sometimes referred to as a "dead" name. He noted that the first attending Officers were ignorant as to what was acceptable in the LGBTQ+ community and did not intend to discriminate against her. He stated that this incident triggered a discussion between the LGBTQ+ Community, himself, and Chief McManus to develop a comprehensive training program that was established in 2020.

Assistant Police Chief Flavin reported that since 2020, every police officer received diversity training that addressed LGBTQ+ terminology, forms of address, and report writing details with the purpose of promoting respectful interactions between the LGBTQ+ and SAPD.

Maria Salazar stated that she identified as LGBTQ+ and her law office was located in Council District 2 where she represented children and juveniles in the foster care system. She added that she moved to San Antonio from San Francisco in 1997 and in her early days here, it was common for LGBTQ+ persons to be harassed or assaulted and it was unheard of to call the police for help as the relationship between LGBTQ+ and law enforcement was almost non-existent. She acknowledged that tremendous policing improvements had been made since then and SAPD was more interactive and proactive in their approach.

Ms. Salazar reported that one of the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community was to be counted for in the data captured when SAPD service calls were completed. She referenced the research findings captured in the 2017 Strengthening Colors of Pride Survey which was the largest survey of LGBTQ+ identified individuals ever conducted in South Texas with 1,819 responses collected from Bexar County and surrounding areas. She stated that the survey provided data regarding community health, education, food, employment, and housing for LGBTQ+ in the area and their experiences with homelessness, familial rejection and support, financial stability, resiliency and much more. She noted that the survey data reflected the need for cultural competency training within SAPD that was much broader, more consistent, and ongoing for the local LGBTQ+ community which was always changing.

Ms. Salazar stated that the dynamic of the local LGBTQ+ community encompassed different perspectives and SAPD policing policies needed to be consistent in the areas of de-escalation and improving crisis situations for persons that identified as LGBTQ+. She urged the Committee to review

the Colors of Pride Survey to inform and implement SAPD training and policies and to include SAPD training costs into the City's future budget.

Chairwoman Sandoval asked of the length of diversity training for police officers and how was the effectiveness of the training gauged. Rev. Brown reported that training was 4 hours long and was usually offered towards the end of cadet training. She added that training performance metrics consisted of evaluations turned in by the cades at the end of the course.

Chairwoman Sandoval asked how many SAPD Officers still needed training and if there was a manual related to officer conduct that addressed LGBTQ+ awareness. She asked of the duties of the SAPD LGBTQ+ Liaison, the selection process for the position, and how much time the Liaison spent with the LGBTQ+ community. Assistant Chief Flavin reported that since 2009, every officer that completed training at the SAPD Training Academy received LGBTQ+ diversity training. He noted that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, some LGBTQ+ diversity training was not completed and was reinforced through policy changes and training bulletins. Assistant Chief Flavin added that he was the SAPD Training Academy Commander from 2011-2014.

Councilmember Treviño referenced the Strategic Plan to Respond to Homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County that was released by the Department of Human Services in December 2020 which stated that almost one in five of LGBTQ+ residents had experienced homelessness as a child or teenager, having been kicked out of their homes because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. He added that the Battered Women's Shelter reported that 82% of homeless individuals in San Antonio experienced domestic violence. He highlighted that there was insufficient outreach to meet the needs of the local homeless and LGBTQ+ demographic and observed that homelessness dovetailed with need for more funding for engagement, augmented support services, and police training to meet the LGBTQ+ community where they were at. City Attorney Andy Segovia stated that the City's Strategic Homeless Plan informed the need for proper training and proper resources to ensure appropriate services were available not only to customers, but to everyone. He added Code Enforcement was working to ensure that City facilities were code compliant. Assistant Chief Flavin reported that Police Officers used their discretion during a call and oftentimes connected individuals to the services and resources to improve their situation and not to make their situation worse.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that many LGBTQ+ murder cases went cold and recalled the case of her uncle who was transgender and was murdered without any follow-up in his case provided to the family. She requested the current number of unsolved LGBTQ+ murder cases in the City. She asked if SAPD could provide a designated safe area for interviews where LGBTQ+ individuals could report traumatic events. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the Office of Equity could implement sensitivity training in all City departments and to be included in City policies and procedures going forward. Assistant Chief Flavin stated that he could coordinate a follow up meeting with Chief McManus, or provide further information on any specific cases in question in an offline discussion. Ms. Salazar observed if the LGBTQ+ demographic was not taken into account, then providing adequate remedies and resources would not be possible. She pointed out that only eight beds in the City's homeless shelters were designated for LGBTQ+ youth. Rev. Reed reported that the Pride Center offered case management services and approximately 70% of their services focused on housing insecurities. Assistant City Manager David McCary stated that gender, sexual orientation, and equity were data components tracked by the City's Human Resource (HR) Department, and HR would further analyze the data to identify disparities and gaps to develop strategic solutions.

City Attorney Segovia explained that by design, the City's Budget Plan only examined racial and socio-economic lines, and did not specifically examine gender under those equity components. He added that City's Budget Plan was based on a strategic equity approach and was a policy decision developed by the City Manager in conjunction with the Office of Equity.

Councilmember Treviño stated that the amount of LGBTQ+ youth beds and detoxification beds that the City had available came down to funding and equity should be focused on meeting people where the needs were. He added that he would take a closer review of the City's equity policy which he believed had flaws. He highlighted that the Pride Center was located near a new SAPD substation currently under construction that would feature a community center and noted its future opportunities to foster closer relationships between the LGBTQ+ community, the Pride Center, the Strip, and SAPD. He called for Committee Members to reflect on meaningful efforts to build community equity within the City's upcoming Bond Program and Budget Plan.

Ms. Salazar impressed upon the Committee that the LGBTQ+ community was everywhere and asked the Committee to review the Colors of Pride survey that captured local LGBTQ+ demographics. She emphasized the need for continuous conversations with the LGBTQ+ community and the fostering of a partnership with public officials. She called for equity in human services outreach, and for more opportunities for growth within the tourist and business industries.

Assistant Chief Flavin stated that SAPD had made great strides over the years implementing gender equity policies and procedures. He emphasized that SAPD would continue to make improvements, and would grow and adapt to changes that were always part of society and policing.

Rev. Brown stated that the City had to keep working as best as it could for approximately 70,000 residents that identified as LGBTQ+ that lived in the City and Bexar County and intersected with society as a whole.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk


Ana Sandoval, Chair