

**PUBLIC SAFETY  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MAY 18, 2021  
2:00 PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, <i>Chair, District 6</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Ana Sandoval, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	None
<b>Staff Present:</b>	María Villagómez, <i>Deputy City Manager</i> ; Liz Provencio, <i>First Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Jim Kopp, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; William P. McManus, <i>Chief of Police</i> ; Charles Hood, <i>Fire Chief</i> ; Thomas Filopoulos, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Stephen Ersch, <i>Fire Captain, SAFD</i> ; Brian Reyes, <i>Captain, SAPD</i> ; Rey Garcia, <i>Sergeant, SAPD</i> ; Richard Riley, <i>Assistant Police Director, SAPD</i> ; Juan Mandajano, <i>Police Officer, SAPD</i> ; Aurora Perkins, <i>Deputy City Clerk</i> ; Denice Trevino, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Pat Murphy, <i>Senior National Account Executive, Axon Enterprise</i>

**Call to order**

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda called the meeting to order. She led the meeting in a moment of silence to honor one of the City's fallen heroes Firefighter Scott Deem who bravely lost his life four years ago.

**1. Approval of minutes from the Public Safety Committee meeting on April 20, 2021**

Councilmember Sandoval moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 Public Safety Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

**Written Testimony**

There were no written comments submitted.

**Live Testimony**

There were no citizens registered to speak.

**Items for Consideration**

- 2. Briefing and possible action on the Police Department procurement to replace existing Tasers with an upgraded Taser model.** [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; William McManus, Chief of Police]

Chief McManus reported that the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) began utilizing tasers in 2006. He indicated that the current model of taser was being discontinued and SAPD recommended to replace the current model (TASER X26P) with TASER 7. He stated that the TASER 7 had been tested at the Police Academy and was recommended for approval by the Labor Relations Committee.

Chief McManus stated that a Request for Offer (RFO) for the Taser 7 was released on March 1, 2021 and Axon Enterprise submitted a response to the RFO on March 23, 2021. He indicated that the Taser 7 offered numerous improvements over the current model which included:

- Automatic software updates and uploading of data when the taser was docked
- Increased audit capabilities
- Inclusion of virtual reality training
- Recharging of batteries while docked

He noted that the proposed term of the contract was for five years with a renewal option of five additional years. He reported that the transition would require a two-day training class. He stated that the benefits of utilizing tasers included:

- Reduce injuries to the public and Police Officers
- Allow for use of less-than-lethal tool to defuse escalating situations
- Reduce use of deadly force

Chief McManus indicated that the contract would allow for replacement of 1,450 units for SAPD and 252 units for Park Police and Airport Police Departments. He reported that the taser end user training (16 hours) would include:

- Voluntary exposure/weapons familiarization
- Hands-on drills/isolation drills
- High stress scenarios
- Live cartridge qualification
- Taser General Manual Policy review

Chief McManus added that an annual recertification (2 hours) would be required.

Chief McManus stated that in 2006-2007, Police Officers were not mandated to carry a taser and prior to authorization for use of a taser, a 40-hour block of crisis intervention training was required.

Chief McManus reported that the contract provided for training in enhanced mental health crisis which was a scenario based training with an emphasis on gaining compliance without ever having to fire the device. He noted that the training utilized virtual reality delivered in 360-video and would develop an Officer's ability to quickly recognize, describe and de-escalate situations involving individuals with mental health conditions.

Chief McManus stated that the annual amount of the contract was \$824,180 for a five-year contract of \$4,120,900. He indicated that the City would have the option to extend the contract for an additional five-year extension and receive the most up-to-date taser model at an annual amount of \$1.1 million. He reported that the contract would provide the City with:

- Taser 7, handle, holsters, unlimited field use cartridges, recharging docks, rechargeable batteries and a hardware warranty
- Evidence.com licenses
- Training cartridges delivered annually, training suits and instructor-led training

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda asked for more detail on the mental health training. Pat Murphy reported that in 2018, Axon Virtual Reality was introduced and was designed to complement SAPD's existing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). He stated that Axon Virtual Reality included modules for autism, schizophrenia, hard of hearing, PTSD, domestic violence, etc. and each of the modules would put the trainee in the shoes of individuals experiencing crisis and then the roles would be reversed. He indicated that as the situation evolved choices emphasized around de-escalation could be made. He noted that this type of training enhanced critical thinking skills.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that the value of the contract was over \$1 million which would normally go through a high profile solicitation process. She asked what process was utilized. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez stated that the contract had a public safety exemption because the equipment was only provided by Axon Enterprises and that was the reason the contract was brought before this Committee rather than the Audit and Accountability Committee.

Councilmember Viagran asked how to ensure that a taser would not be mistaken for a gun. Mr. Murphy stated that there had been 4.6 million exposures in the field using a taser device and out of those, there were four incidences that resulted in death due to weapon confusion. He noted that the risk could be reduced by enhancing training to include roleplay scenario based training. Chief McManus stated that the taser was carried on the weak hand side and the service weapon was carried on the strong hand side. He added that one would have to reach across their body to retrieve the taser with the strong hand or would have to retrieve it with the weak hand.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if there was a voltage stop on the Taser 7. Mr. Murphy stated that an automatic shutdown feature was included on the Taser 7 whereby it would shut down automatically after five seconds. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the Taser 7 would interrupt a heart defibrillator. Mr. Murphy stated that he didn't think the Taser 7 would have an effect on a defibrillator but would check.

Councilmember Sandoval asked how many times tasers were used versus firearms in interactions with individuals. She asked of the distance at which the taser could be used. She asked if other non-lethal tools such as bean bags and rubber bullets were considered for use. Chief McManus stated that not every Police Officer had access to rubber bullets and bean bags but it was an option if there was enough time. Police Officer Juan Mandajano stated that the maximum range of the current taser was 21 feet but the preferred distance was 12 to 15 feet. Mr. Mandajano stated that the taser was utilized approximately 225 times per year; the baton was used approximately 38 times per year; pepper spray was used approximately 25 times per year; and firearms were utilized approximately 11 times per year.

Councilmember Perry moved to recommend and forward the procurement to replace existing tasers to the City Council for consideration. Councilmember Sandoval seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Overview of the San Antonio Fire Department to include the Fire Training Academy. [Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager; Charles N. Hood, Fire Chief]**

Fire Chief Hood played a video depicting the training at the Fire Training Academy. He stated that the Cadet Fire Training Academy provided education to certify new employees as Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) structural Firefighters and Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) EMT-Basic. He noted that the training lasted for 27 weeks and required a 100% pass rate (including retests). He indicated that continuing education and professional development training was provided to all Firefighters, Paramedics and Officers with 250,000 hours of training provided in 2020. He reported that training was available on-line and in-person and included courses from Blue Card, National Fire Academy, U.S. Fire Administration and internal curriculum.

Fire Chief Hood stated that the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) was an “all hazards” department and during 2020 SAFD provided vaccinations, fought wildfires in California, dealt with the loss of power during the storm, delivered oxygen, worked on the coast and in other areas of the country during flooding events and provided whole blood.

Fire Chief Hood reported that SAFD resources included:

- 1,766 uniformed employees (General Fund- 1,734; Airport – 32)
- 123 civilian employees
- 54 fire stations
- 54 engines
- 21 ladder trucks
- 2 Hazardous Materials Teams and equipment
- 2 Technical Rescue Teams and equipment
- Airport Crash Rescue Team
- 43 ambulances (35 full time and eight peak period)

Fire Chief Hood provided a map of the fire station locations. He reviewed the department demographics including ethnicity (50.3% white; 41.9% Hispanic or Latino; and 7.8% other) and gender (94.9% male and 5.1% female). He reported that metric analysis over the past five years reflected hiring percent increases of 104% and 98% for black/AA and female categories respectively and a 25% hiring decrease in the Caucasian category. He stated that notable equity-based recruitment programs that had contributed to metric improvements included:

- Hero Like Her Campaign
- Annual free Café College workshops
- Informal mentorship programs to connect minority and female candidates to SAFD minority and female members
- Annual free Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) conditioning classes

Fire Chief Hood reported that there were 207,443 incidents and 398,850 responses in 2020. He reviewed the top 10 non-medical incidents and top 10 medical incidents in 2020:

FY 2020 Top 10 Non-Medical Incidents		FY 2020 Top 10 Medical Incidents	
Fire alarm	11,942	Sick person	26,703
Lift assist	6,157	Fall	14,843
Asst police	3,673	Breathing problems	14,399
Unauthorized burn	2,093	MVC	14,324
Assist public/service call	1,672	Chest pain	8,375

Structure	1,493	Uncon/faint	7,807
Brush – grass	1,387	Assault	7,729
Odor	1,155	MIH	7,382
Vehicle fire	1,152	Convul – seizure	6,932
Smoke investigation	926	Weak/dizzy	5,509

Fire Chief Hood reported that SAFD innovation in the industry included:

- Whole Blood Program
- Mobile Integrated Healthcare
- Quarter Master Program
- Clinical dispatchers

Fire Chief Hood reviewed statistics related to clinical dispatchers and played a video of a cardiac arrest, stroke and a fire call.

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda asked what contributed to increased diversity in recruitment. Fire Chief Hood stated that a Recruiting Chief was hired whose main objective was to improve diversity. He noted that SAFD provided CPAT training, offered classes at Café College, provided informal mentorships and would begin to provide recruitment in schools.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the Stop the Bleed Training could be provided to faith-based leaders. Fire Chief Hood replied that it could.

Councilmember Sandoval asked how SAPD and SAFD worked together on mental health calls. Ms. Villagomez stated that the work of the Meadows Foundation would be presented to the Community Health and Equity Council Committee in June 2021 and would address the response to mental health calls. Councilmember Sandoval suggested that every individual on the recruitment team be female.

Councilmember Viagran asked of the savings in resources due to use of the Good Sam Application. Fire Chief Hood stated that the average cost of an EMS run was just under \$2,800 and the application enabled SAFD to send the most appropriate resources.

### **Consideration of items for future meetings**

There were no items considered for future meetings.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:28 PM.

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*Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair*

*Respectfully Submitted*

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*Denice F. Trevino, Office of the City Clerk*