

City of San Antonio



Minutes Community Health Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members Chair: Teri

Castillo, Dist. 5

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

10:00 AM

City Hall

The Community Health Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:02 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Teri Castillo, *Chair*
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

Members Absent: Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the Community Health Committee meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the April 25, 2024 Community Health Committee meeting. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Castillo, Kaur, Rocha Garcia, Alderete Gavito

Absent: Viagran

Public Comments

Jack Finger spoke in opposition to Items 3 and 4.

Jennifer Potter, Professor at UT Health San Antonio, spoke in support of Item 4.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. **This briefing provides findings from a feasibility study and recommended action on a Council Consideration Request (CCR) related to a cost-free San Antonio Crisis Nursery Program** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services].

Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Melody Woosley provided an overview of the Council Consideration Request (CCR) #2023-0016 submitted by Councilmembers Rocha Garcia and Pelaez requesting the creation of cost-free childcare for families in crisis to keep children safe and keep families together. Woosley recognized the partnership between DHS, Metro Health, and the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) to research best practices, hold stakeholder and community meetings, and study feasibility. She added that these departments were referred to as the City of San Antonio (CoSA) Working Group.

Woosley reported that there were 4,675 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect of 12,878 cases reported in 2023 and she showed a heat map of the zip codes in Bexar County where these occurred. She stated that exposure to family violence was also a factor in child abuse and families reported a lack of support services. Woosley reported that considerations for the development of a crisis nursery care model included: age range, length of stay, therapeutic services and medical care accessibility, school assistance, child-to-staff ratio, location and number of centers, after crisis support, case management, and funding availability.

According to Woosley, the CoSA Working Group recognized that the type of model and provider would determine costs and community funding options. She stated that the estimated cost to implement a small daytime respite and overnight shelter program could range from \$1.5 million to \$2 million in the first year to include start up, capital, and training; operating costs could range from \$1 million to \$2 million annually.

Woosley stated that the proposed crisis nursery program had the potential to make a significant impact on the well-being of children and caregivers in San Antonio and recommended that staff work to identify a funding strategy in FY 2026 & FY 2027 and include the program in the Delegate Agency Consolidated Funding Request for Proposals (RFP) that was expected to be issued in the spring of 2025. She stated that using the Delegate Agency model would encourage collaboration of agencies with expertise in serving children and families and FY 2025 would be spent identifying investment from community funders such as the City, Bexar County, United Way, and community foundations.

Chair Castillo recognized the co-author of the CCR Councilmember Rocha Garcia and thanked her for spearheading the initiative. Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the development of the crisis nursery program as a very personal crusade. She noted that since 2015 our community buried 50 infants and toddlers and she mentioned that she had attended the Any Baby Can prayer garden event on Mother's Day and was moved by the grief.

Councilmember Alderete Gavido thanked Councilmembers Rocha Garcia and Pelaez as well as the community advocates that worked in the space of helping fight child abuse. She asked about the projected capacity for the budget considerations and requested metrics including how

much the cost increased incrementally with capacity and estimated daily need or usage. Woosley stated that the costs were based on a proposal received and the research of other programs and included lots of factors and she would provide more detailed information. Councilmember Alderete Gavito also requested information from other communities that had similar programs on outcomes in keeping families together. She supported the program as a Budget priority.

Councilmember Kaur thanked Councilmembers Rocha Garcia and Pelaez for initiating the CCR. She asked why the program would begin in FY 2026 rather than starting in FY 2025. Woosley stated that beginning the program in FY 2026 would align with the two-year consolidated funding procurement process and would provide time to help get into the budget cycles for Bexar County and other funders. Councilmember Kaur supported the program.

Chair Castillo wanted to ensure that a police report was not required for families to access services as many families might be hesitant to participate for fear of being turned in to the Child Protective Services and possibly losing their children. Woosley stated that there would be an assessment to ensure the services were appropriate and to provide the necessary wrap-around services, noting that the non-profit community would help define the model. Chair Castillo supported the program going through the community engagement process and noted that even eviction or utility shut off could necessitate crisis childcare.

Assistant City Manager David McCary told a story about his mother protecting him from an abusive situation and thanked Councilmember Rocha Garcia for initiating this program.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Castillo, Kaur, Rocha Garcia, Alderete Gavito
Absent: Viagran

3. A briefing on the San Antonio Public Library 2024 - 2029 Strategic Plan including a status report on Interlocal Agreement with Bexar County for Library services. [David W. McCary, Assistant City Manager; Kathy Donnellan, Interim Director, Library Department]

Interim Director of the San Antonio Public Library(SAPL) Kathy Donnellan provided background information on SAPL with over 3 million visits annually to 30 locations with 8.3 million items borrowed, 2.2 million hours of computer and Wi-Fi use, and a 94% customer satisfaction rate.

Donnellan read the mission statement which was “The San Antonio Public Library changes lives through the transformative power of information, imagination and ideas.” The strategic plan put the customer at the center of the plan through a community assessment, focus groups, and a statistically valid survey with the goal of understanding the library customer including non-users, according to Donnellan.

Donnellan listed the eight strategic goals:

Goal 1 was to grow staff capacity and skills to carry out the Library’s mission and achieve its vision with a strategy to conduct a staffing study and survey staff engagement annually.

Goal 2 was to enhance the digital experience to increase accessibility, usability, engagement, and overall customer satisfaction which included a website (mysapl.org) redesign.

Goal 3 was to provide enhanced Library services and programs to foster more meaningful connections with the community including a new “Learn at SAPL” site at Las Palmas Branch Library which was a part of the 2022 General Obligation Bond (Bond) Program and a focus on services to older adults.

Goal 4 was to build aspirational Library spaces to increase accessibility, safety, and inclusion which included new Tween space at the Carver Branch Library which was a part of 2022 Bond Program.

Goal 5 was to provide a diverse, inclusive, and responsive collection of library books and materials to reflect and meet the needs of the community including the New Corazon Collection and a refresh of the collection for Las Palmas Branch Library as part of the 2022 Bond Program.

Goal 6 was to increase the public's awareness of the Library's bountiful resources and services to increase the use of the Library which included a new marketing campaign.

Goal 7 was to pursue innovative approaches to extend the Library experience beyond its walls to engage with more people including a new online library card registration renewal system.

Goal 8 was to cultivate a portfolio of partnerships to extend the Library's reach in the community which included new agreements with the San Antonio Public Library Foundation, Friends of the San Antonio Public Library, and a partnership with the Texas Diaper Bank to help with diapers and feminine products at the libraries.

Donnellan outlined the status of the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Bexar County. Since 1936, Bexar County has had an ILA for SAPL to provide services to non-COSA residents of Bexar County, according to Donnellan and the current \$3 million ILA would expire on September 30, 2024. Donnellan reported that non-City usage was 26% and the City could no longer continue to subsidize the County's use of SAPL. In coordination with the SAPL Board of Trustees, City leaders presented three fee-for-service options to Bexar County in a letter on May 2, 2024. She reported that negotiations for Fiscal Year 2025 were ongoing, and the last meeting took place on May 28, 2024. Donnellan stated that a new ILA was expected by the end of June 2024 to have a FY 2025 ILA agreement with a Bexar County payment or develop a fee for out of service area users.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Castillo was excited that Las Palmas Library was getting more books and supported the partnership with the Texas Diaper Bank as there was a need for access to feminine products. She noted that her field office was in the Collins Garden Public Library and there was a high need for digital literacy. She asked how programming in each library was determined. Donnellan stated that Librarians offered one-on-one assistance to customers in conjunction with the 28 computer labs across the City.

Chair Castillo noted that 26% of non-city Bexar County residents using our services was significant and wanted to ensure they still had access to services but requested more information

on the negotiations and potential fee structure. Donnellan stated that if Bexar County paid the City based on usage of the library, the cost would be \$13 million and suggested three options for ramp up with Bexar County. Chair Castillo asked what the sentiment of Bexar County was noting that the City's proposals were fair. Donnellan stated that negotiations were currently underway. David McCary stated that a meeting with Bexar County was scheduled for Friday.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito applauded the Library for holding the client at the center of its goal setting. She encouraged prioritization of repairing air conditioning at Maverick Library and others during the hot summer. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended establishing digital navigators out of the libraries. She did not want to see Bexar County services halted but wanted to ensure that Bexar County paid its fair share.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia was excited about the partnership with the Texas Diaper Bank to help provide access to feminine products for young girls. She requested clarification on the process used by the library to update its collection. Donnellan stated that there were specifically trained Librarians who managed library development and kept close tabs on customer suggestions, use, as well as industry standards and opportunities. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the public library still had vinyl records. Donnellan stated the library did have vinyl records.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how the strategic goals would be measured. Visits, circulation, and hours of technology use were the overarching metrics but there were more specific operational performance measures associated with each goal, according to Donnellan. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the process used for the work of the Learn at SAPL Centers. Donnellan stated that the Training Officer conducted an intake process with the customer to determine what the customer was trying to achieve and there were group courses that focused on job searches and other services, but the Learn at SAPL Centers also provided resource referrals.

Councilmember Kaur echoed continued support for the work of SAPL and the strategic planning. She emphasized the importance of marketing and loved the campaigns. She recommended considering offering folks a room to rent for remote work. Donnellan stated that there were small collaborative rooms available for reservation that had an ideal space for video calls; these were not only used for remote work but for job interviews. Councilmember Kaur supported the partnership with the Texas Diaper Bank on the feminine products and suggested an education partnership with Thinking Of for young girls.

Councilmember Kaur asked if there were any ILAs with other Bexar County incorporated cities. Donnellan explained that the Bexar County ILA covered those cities. Councilmember Kaur recommended increasing the hours of the Tween Center to pre-COVID hours which were 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Donnellan stated that this was a point of dialogue within the strategic plan.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how the amended agreement with the SAPL Foundation and Friends of the SAPL might affect library services. Donnellan stated that updating the agreement was more of an academic exercise and she did not anticipate changes in services.

Chair Castillo thanked all Librarians for their work and recognized this was an important aspect of community service. Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

4. Resolution Declaring Overdoses a Public Health Crisis [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

Jessie Higgins, Chief Mental Health Officer acknowledged that the Resolution was tied to CCR #2023-0007 authored by Councilmember Castillo. Higgins provided background information and statistics on methamphetamine overdoses in San Antonio, Texas, and the United States.

Higgins presented an overview of the draft Resolution to the Community Health Committee for review and feedback. She reported that the Resolution included an overview of national, State, and local data; risk factors of including untreated mental health conditions; Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); trauma, and barriers to accessing health services and treatment; framework of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery, the harm to the individual and the stress to the system; the value of a coordinated response. Higgins recommended coordination with Bexar County to develop a Joint Resolution.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Castillo thanked all of the staff and stakeholders that helped developed the draft Resolution and thanked Dr. Potter for her work in the area of addiction. Chair Castillo supported de- stigmatizing addiction and supported a joint Resolution to ensure nonduplication of efforts and being strategic including looking beyond the Opioid Settlement dollars to fund initiatives. Chair Castillo noted that the key wrap around services such as housing, employment and childcare were all crucial in helping residents dealing with addiction.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that she had not seen the draft Resolution and asked what declaring overdoses as a public health crisis would accomplish. Higgins stated that it was important to provide education and clear communication to the community about the issue, but it might also help with grant applications. Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the concept.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia thanked Higgins for her work and noted that addiction to multiple substances had grown over time. She thanked the San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SACADA) for providing NARCAN training to her team and recommended training for all of the Local Government Corporation Council Aides. Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested coordinating with SAPL to become safe disposal sites. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the joint efforts with Bexar County. Higgins stated that staff met with Bexar County this morning and were looking at harm reduction and NARCAN kit supplies; noting that Bexar County issued a Request for Proposals for \$14.5 million which was significantly more than the City's \$1.4 million in the Opioid Settlement Fund.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on the Budget and recommended comparison of our spending to other peer cities. She noted that Fentanyl was a major issue statewide and wondered how our City compared. Higgins stated that the City of San Antonio was higher than the State of Texas for cases of addiction, but urban areas were more impacted. Councilmember Kaur noticed the Budget for harm reduction supplies was not increasing in FY 2025. Higgins stated that the hope was that Bexar County would match our funds for harm reduction supplies as we had been using Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants previously and these funds were from the Opioid Settlement. She added that NARCAN supplies were less for this year due to a ramp up and noted that there would be more for next year.

Chair Castillo emphasized the importance of the youth education component within the Resolution.

She noted that the Item was for discussion only so no action was taken.

Consent Agenda

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Approved


Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk


Teri Castillo, Chair