

**Phoenix City Council
Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee
Summary Minutes
Wednesday, December 4, 2024**

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ

Subcommittee Members Present
Councilman Kevin Robinson, Chair
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien
Councilman Jim Waring

Subcommittee Members Absent
Councilwoman Betty Guardado

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee (PSJ) to order at 10:02 a.m. with Councilwoman O'Brien and Councilman Waring present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Eric Neilson shared improvements he would make to the City of Phoenix Employee Memorial.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee Meeting

Councilwoman O'Brien made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2024, Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Waring seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

CONSENT ACTION

Item 2 was for consent action. No presentations were planned, but staff was available to answer questions.

2. Taser 10 Upgrade

Consent only. No councilmember requested additional information.

Councilwoman O'Brien made a motion to approve item 2. Councilman Waring seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

3. Phoenix Fire Department Staffing and Response Time Update – Citywide

Executive Assistant Fire Chief Tim Kreis and Deputy Fire Chief Reda Riddle-Bigler presented on this item.

Chief Riddle-Bigler provided an overview of department staffing and recruitment which included staffing levels (authorized and filled), data on testing and training, and demographics. She highlighted recruitment strategies used to gain more applications.

Chief Kreis noted some factors associated with managing response times, which included fire station locations, emergency service activity levels, and major incidents. He presented a chart which showcased response times by council district.

Councilman Waring stated District 2 has the worst response times for most of the categories listed on the chart. He asked if there were any anomalies in District 2 that resulted in the slow response times.

Chief Kreis stated the priority of the Fire department is to provide excellent service to everyone. He stated information specific to major incident activity levels in District 2 would be gathered and shared.

Councilman Waring asked if Chief Kreis could state how the Fire Department is supporting District 2. He specifically asked Chief Kreis to note in which council district the next four fire stations are planned to be built.

Chief Kreis stated two peak time ambulances in District 2 will be converted to full time ambulances noting that the conversion should have an impact and improvement on response times. Chief Kreis noted there are two new fire stations, with four planned to be built through the General Obligation Bond Program.

Councilman Waring asked how many of the fire stations are being built in District 2.

Chief Kreis indicated none were being built in District 2.

Councilman Waring expressed discontent with the response times in District 2 and asked why there are no fire stations being built in District 2.

Chief Kreis noted the network of fire stations is about delivering the best service to the community and so every time a fire station opens, regardless of district, it is benefitting the entire system.

Councilman Waring stated the placement of fire stations in another district does not benefit District 2 residents unless they are in that area and further advocated for fire stations in District 2 since they are experiencing higher response times. He asked what the anticipated reduction in response times is as a result the two new full-time ambulances to be converted.

Chief Kreis noted he could not confirm exact numbers but that it would be tracked. He added the network of services gets healthier when improvements are made noting that improvements all over are interconnected.

Councilman Robinson asked if the response time in District 2 has improved in comparison to two years ago.

Chief Kreis stated he did not have that information available but would follow up.

Councilman Waring speculated the response times are worse and expressed discontent with attention presented to District 2. He stated he would expect a response to the questions posed during this meeting.

Chairman Robinson asked what factors determine where fire stations will be built.

Chief Kreis stated the factors include travel time, population density, proposed developments, and activity levels.

Councilman Waring further advocated for additional factors to be considered for the construction of new fire stations such as call volumes as all EMS calls are to be taken seriously.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked what impact population density has on response times.

Chief Kreis stated population density has a significant impact on response times. He added residents outside the four-minute travel time will inevitably experience slower response times due to the distance between homes and fire station placement.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked for incident call volume and what types of calls were being received to understand the nature of incidents and their impact on service delivery throughout the entire City. Councilwoman O'Brien also asked Chief Kreis to explain how adding resources to Fire Station 7, the busiest station in the City, will benefit the entire City, not just the surrounding area.

Chief Kreis explained Fire Station 7 is already operating at maximum capacity and that adding another emergency resource to this station would help reduce the burden on neighboring fire stations, allowing them to maintain their current resource levels.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked how automatic aid factors into response times.

Chief Kreis stated automatic aid agreement is an intergovernmental agreement involving all fire departments in Maricopa County that dictates residents get service from the closest unit, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. He added training is similarly important, noting the Phoenix Regional Training Academy ensures all firefighters in the automatic aid agreement are following the same procedures when responding to calls.

Councilwoman O'Brien stated she would like to see data on the impact of the converted ambulances.

Chief Kreis continued the presentation noting the standard times for all response time types and monthly average patient transports.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if South Mountain was added for summer heat restrictions and asked if it was recently added.

Chief Kreis confirmed and noted it was approved at the October Board Meeting.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if data on the impact of restricting access to South Mountain during the summer would be available to be shared next year.

Chief Kreis confirmed yes.

Councilman Waring asked what caused the increase in transports and requested someone to research this matter.

Chief Kreis referenced Phoenix Fire Policy and State law which dictates that all patients must be taken to the hospital if they desire to do so.

Chairman Robinson asked why there is a decrease on applicants being tested.

Chief Riddle-Bigler stated the number represents the individuals that show up to take the test and attributed this to the increase in opportunities across the state.

Councilman Waring further echoed concerns over the significant decrease in tested.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked for retention rates as well as encouraged her colleagues to tour the member services to gain insight into the ways they support firefighter mental and physical health.

Chief Riddle-Bigler stated trends on testing are being tested and other forms to do so such as hybrid testing is being explored.

4. Phoenix Fire Department Academy Overview – Citywide

Assistant Fire Chief Mark Gonzales presented this item.

Chief Gonzales provided an update on the Phoenix Regional Training Academy. He provided details on the pre-academy, the regional curriculum, additional trainings, and events that complete the academy experience.

INFORMATION ONLY

5. Phoenix Police Department Hiring, Recruitment, and Attrition Report – Citywide
Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

6. Community Assistance Program Expansion Implementation Report – Citywide

Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Eric Neilson commented on Phoenix Police Department training practices noting that to better training, Police should attempt to raise money on their own. He also advocated for better response times in District 2.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Destiny Dominguez
Management Fellow