

ATTACHMENT A



City of Phoenix

Minutes

Meeting Location:
City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson St.
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

City Council Policy Session

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

2:30 PM

phoenix.gov

CALL TO ORDER

The Phoenix City Council convened in Policy Session on Tuesday, March 19, 2023, at 2:34 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Present: 9 - Councilwoman Yassamin Ansari, Councilwoman Betty Guardado, Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington, Councilwoman Ann O'Brien, Councilwoman Laura Pastor, Councilman Kevin Robinson, Councilman Jim Waring, Vice Mayor Debra Stark and Mayor Kate Gallego

Vice Mayor Stark and Councilman Waring attended virtually.

City Attorney reads Public Comment.

COUNCIL INFORMATION AND FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS

Councilwoman O'Brien discussed various events she attended over the weekend. She participated in the Fire Department's Annual Awards Ceremony, the I Cycle Phoenix event, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Mahjong event, and kicked off the 4th Annual Phoenix Police Honor Week with a 5K run and walk event.

Councilwoman Ansari discussed the successful 3rd Annual Nowruz celebration with approximately 2,000 attendees at Civic Space Park, highlighted by live performances and appearances from Grammy winner Hamid Sedi. She also discussed the upcoming Right to Counsel discussion at the Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee and the need to invest in programs to prevent homelessness. Additionally, she mentioned upcoming events in District 7, including participation in the Phoenix Pride Rainbows Festival and the launch of service at the Phoenix Bookmobile in Estrella Village.

Councilwoman Pastor highlighted several upcoming events and initiatives in District 4, including a coffee and discussion session with the Police Department and Neighborhood Services Department, improvements to bus stops in collaboration with local businesses, the arrival of the CVS Health van for a mobile clinic, and the 3rd Annual 5K with the African American Reconstruction. She also mentioned hosting a brunch event at the Carver Museum to kick off Women's History Month to promote a cancer screening program for underserved communities. Additionally, she shared updates on community events such as the Oak Street Memorial Mural Festival and participation in the St. Patrick's Day parade. Lastly, she encouraged community participation in budget hearings and provided contact information for her office.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed gratitude to community partners for their commitment to District 5 and announced several upcoming events and initiatives including the grand opening of the Realtime Operations Center at Cactus Park police precinct, the Easter Jubilee event at Homestead Park, the Maryvale Mercado, and budget hearings where community input is encouraged. Additionally, she highlighted the Maryvale Jobs and Resource Fair, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in shaping the district's future.

Roll Call and City Clerk Reads 24-Hour Paragraph

CONSENT ACTION

This item is scheduled to allow the City Council to act on the Mayor's recommendations on the Consent Agenda. There is no Consent Agenda for this meeting.

CALL FOR AN EXECUTIVE SESSION

A vote may be held to call an Executive Session for a future date.

REPORTS AND BUDGET UPDATES BY THE CITY MANAGER

This item is scheduled to allow the City Manager to provide brief informational reports on topics of interest to the City Council. The City Council may discuss these reports but no action will be taken.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 1-3)**1 Fiscal Year 2024-25 City Manager's Trial Budget****Discussion**

City Manager Jeffrey Barton provided updates on the trial budget and the balanced budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25. He proposed setting aside the \$80 million surplus as a reserve fund to address future budget challenges, particularly for FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27, due to state actions impacting revenue streams. Mr. Barton expressed confidence in maintaining essential City services.

Budget and Research Director Amber Williamson provided an overview of the proposed City Manager's Trial Budget for FY 2024-25. She highlighted the General Fund budget status, which accounts for 30 percent of the City budget, and funds core programs like police and fire services. She discussed the \$80 million surplus and the projected deficits in subsequent years due to state actions impacting revenue streams. She recommended setting aside the surplus as a reserve fund. She outlined steps for community engagement in the budget process, including community hearings and online feedback channels. She also detailed the timeline for budget adoption, with key dates in May and June.

2 Fiscal Year 2024-29 Preliminary Five-Year Capital Improvement Program**Discussion**

Budget and Research Deputy Director Christopher Fazio provided information on the comprehensive budget of \$11 billion over five years, with \$3 billion proposed for the next fiscal year. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) encompasses nearly 900 projects, leveraging grant funding and partner agency contributions. He said the program predominantly focuses on infrastructure sectors including: aviation, water, wastewater, transit, and street transportation, alongside drainage infrastructure. Funding sources include: the general fund, voter-approved General Obligation (GO) bond, special revenue funds, enterprise funds,

bond funds, and other capital funds. He summarized the projects covered by the 2023 GO Bond program, which include: public safety, library, park, historic preservation, economic development, environmental sustainability, cultural facility, and affordable housing initiatives. He highlighted specific allocations from the General Fund, including facility maintenance, information technology improvements, flood hazard mitigation, fire apparatus replacement, and public safety radio replacements. He concluded with an overview of the extensive CIP details available on the City's budget website, with plans for updates and adoption steps in the coming months.

Vice Mayor Stark acknowledged resident concerns about the impact of the rental tax loss on day-to-day operations. She requested clarification from staff regarding the continuity of these services despite the budget challenges.

Ms. Williamson responded that residents should continue to report any issues, such as potholes or park repairs, as the City remains dedicated to addressing concerns promptly. She reiterated that there are no anticipated service reductions for the upcoming fiscal year, reinforcing the City's ongoing efforts to meet the community's needs.

Mayor Gallego opened the floor to public comment.

Sebastian Del Portillo addressed the Council in solidarity with Poder in Action in support of the priorities outlined in the People's Budget. He stated these priorities arise from extensive conversations with community members and reflect the needs of those most affected by the city's history of racism and economic exploitation. Mr. Portillo highlighted the pressing issue of heat-related deaths in Phoenix, noting that 645 people died last year due to heat exhaustion and called for increased funding to install more water fountains in parks and outside City buildings to provide access to this basic human need. He advocated for funding for the right to counsel in eviction cases, citing the fast, confusing, and dehumanizing nature of the eviction system. Mr. Portillo emphasized the need for fair trials and due process to prevent homelessness and ensure community members remain safe and stable, especially in the face of fatal high temperatures. He stressed the importance of increasing the number of

permanent supportive housing units to address the homelessness crisis and urged the Council to listen to the community's demands and take action to address these urgent issues.

Viri Hernandez discussed the importance of allocating the \$80 million budget towards critical community needs, particularly amidst housing and heat crises. She stressed that the City's priority should be keeping people alive and sheltered, especially given the high number of heat-related deaths, increased homelessness, and eviction cases in the past year. She mentioned instances where legal representation, however basic, made a significant difference in preventing evictions and homelessness. She urged the City to invest in legal support services for those facing eviction and to provide portable and accessible water for the unsheltered population. She mentioned funds could be reallocated from the Police Department, which holds a budget of \$1 billion, in addition to the \$80 million under consideration. She emphasized the need to prioritize community needs and allocate resources accordingly, ensuring that every dollar serves to improve and safeguard lives.

Stephanie Gonzalez addressed the Council, drawing attention to the major concerns voiced by tens of thousands of people over the past five years, including housing, climate issues, mental health, and substance use. She urged the Council to invest the \$80 million surplus from the upcoming budget into three critical areas: increasing the number of water fountains both at and outside buildings owned by the City to address the pressing need for access to clean water, establishing an emergency eviction legal services program to assist individuals facing evictions or experiencing violations of tenant rights, and expanding the number of permanent supportive housing units for those experiencing homelessness. She expressed dismay at the disproportionately low allocation of funds to the Housing Department, which received only \$2 million from the General Fund compared to the substantial budget of \$741 million allocated to the Police Department, including funding for new job positions. She stated the need to prioritize community needs over unnecessary expansions within law enforcement, urging the Council to focus on addressing the pressing needs of the people they serve.

Shalae Flores urged the Council to reconsider its approach to addressing

the housing crisis, beginning with a story about an individual who tried to challenge the City's inherent white supremacy and patriarchy but faced backlash and ultimately left city government. Shalae criticized the Council's focus on maintaining the status quo rather than improving people's lives, highlighting how capitalist tendencies have led to the abandonment and dehumanization of Phoenicians. She said that the housing and unsheltered crisis is a governance failure, not an individual one, and criticized the trial budget for its surface-level approach. She called for significant preventative services to create long-term solutions, starting with humanizing those without housing by halting police sweepings and increasing access to water fountains for hydration during the summer. She also advocated for expanding the number of supportive housing units, which are outlined in the People's Budget, and expressed readiness to push back against any attempts to marginalize the community.

Blanca Abarca expressed frustration with the lack of funding and attention her community has received despite living in the area for 25 years. She stated the importance of conscious intention and action from the government to improve social conditions within communities. She criticized the budget presented by the Council, stating that it does not reflect the needs of her community and fails to allocate sufficient funds for social development and youth programs. She highlighted the discrepancy between increasing funding for the Police Department while neglecting community needs. She mentioned a promise made to 52 children in District 7 that has not been fulfilled, questioning the Council's commitment to its proposals. She shared the importance of accessibility in interpretation and expressed her desire to see her community's needs reflected in the budget.

Councilwoman Ansari acknowledged Ms. Abarca's concerns and provided context regarding efforts to secure a permanent space for her dance group. She mentioned ongoing collaboration to complete insurance forms required for the space and assured Ms. Abarca that staff would keep her updated on progress. Councilwoman Ansari said she is committed to addressing the issue directly and working with Ms. Abarca and her team to find a solution.

Maria Alonzo expressed her concerns about housing and the need for assistance, particularly regarding access to water during hot weather. She said that immigrants also contribute through taxes and voiced opposition to allocating more money to the Police Department, citing negative experiences with Police response.

Councilwoman Guardado clarified Maria Alonzo's concerns stating Ms. Alonzo had said that when residents call the Police Department, the Police arrive, and what the community has observed is that Police presence often results in harm to the community rather than assistance.

Viri Hernandez requested permission to serve as a spanish translator.

Mayor Gallego stated the need to remain with the interpretation staff.

Angelina Gil expressed concerns about the growing homelessness issue in parks, escalating rents, and the difficult choices families face between paying rent and buying groceries. She highlighted the increasing number of deaths due to extreme weather conditions and the lack of support for those suffering from addiction or other issues. Angelina stated the need for more community support and resources for crises, mental health, and homelessness, urging officials to take action to address these pressing issues.

Ms. Hernandez clarified the comment of Angelina Gil stating the scarcity of crisis support lines and resources, leading people to resort to calling 911 for non-emergency situations. She called for investment in additional crisis support services to help people navigate resources effectively. Additionally, she invited officials to join community members in parks and neighborhoods to witness firsthand the needs of the community.

Marisela Pedrosa commented on the need for specific allocations within the budget to address crises such as homelessness and housing insecurity. She stressed that these issues are not caused by individuals but by governmental shortcomings. Ms. Pedrosa called for significant investment in preventive services and long-term solutions instead of allocating millions of dollars to the Police Department. She expressed frustration that her message wasn't being translated and urged for

assistance in ensuring her concerns were heard.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed the need for translation assistance during the meeting, as attendees were having difficulty understanding the spoken translation. She apologized for the inconvenience and requested another individual to provide translation services to ensure that everyone could comprehend the proceedings effectively.

Mayor Gallego requested to switch interpreters.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays confirmed Mr. Mario Barajas was available.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed the need for improved translation services, noting that interruptions during translation were causing confusion and prolonging the process.

Marisela Pedrosa pointed out that while millions of dollars are allocated to the Police, hundreds of people are living and dying on the streets. She stressed the urgent need for permanent housing and support for those in crisis, rather than funding for Police who may use force against vulnerable individuals. She shared personal stories about friends, including single mothers, who cannot afford rent and end up living in cars with their children.

Isabel Garcia expressed her opposition to the trial budget, highlighting the historical neglect of marginalized communities by the City. She criticized the allocation of funds towards the Police Department, emphasizing that the money should instead be invested in essential resources and services for these communities. She cited the high budget for the Police Department and the allocation of funds for new Police positions, stating that the Police do not need more money. She advocated for redirecting funds towards infrastructure for affordable housing and implementing critical interventions such as an emergency eviction legal services program and increasing the number of permanent supportive housing units. She called for more water fountains in parks and outside City-owned buildings.

Betra Rita expressed frustration with the interpretation during the meeting, noting that the messages from Spanish-speaking individuals may not be clearly conveyed or understood by the Council due to translation issues. She voiced her opposition to the trial budget, stating that it does not address the needs of the community, particularly those who have been impacted by homelessness, especially in the Maryvale area. She criticized the emphasis on investing in more police officers, arguing that criminalizing actions in their neighborhoods is not a solution. She demanded that funds be allocated to address the real problems faced by the community, emphasizing the importance of finding solutions rather than exacerbating existing issues. She insisted that the Council prioritize investing in the community's needs.

Maria Sanchez expressed her opposition to the budget, highlighting the \$80 million surplus and disagreeing with the City Manager's recommendations. She stated the importance of investing in initiatives that will benefit the community and keep residents safe. She said there is need for investment in housing and support services for vulnerable communities, particularly in the face of challenges like extreme heat. She called for an increase in permanent supportive housing units and the creation of an emergency eviction legal service program to address rising eviction rates.

Rebecca Denis expressed her opposition to the proposed budget and voiced support for the Pueblo Budget. She said that the \$80 million surplus should not be reserved for a rainy day but should be used to address the immediate needs of Phoenix citizens who are currently facing economic challenges. She stressed the housing crisis in the City and called for concrete actions to support those struggling to keep a roof over their heads. She advocated for increasing the number of water fountains in parks and public spaces, as well as creating an emergency eviction legal services program to assist those facing eviction or tenant rights violations. She criticized corporate management companies for taking advantage of marginalized communities and urged the City to prioritize the needs of its residents over other budget allocations. She stated the importance of using the surplus funds to address pressing issues, prevent further harm and save lives in the future.

Luke Black voiced his opposition to the proposed budget and urged the Council to prioritize funding for the community. He stated three specific demands: increasing the number of water fountains in parks and public spaces, establishing an emergency eviction legal services program, and increasing the number of permanent supportive housing units for those without shelter. He stated the urgency of addressing these needs, particularly given the impending heatwave and the ongoing housing crisis. He criticized the City's allocation of funds, pointing out the disparity between the substantial budget for the Police Department and the lack of support for essential community services. He urged the Council to prioritize the needs of the people over other budget allocations and to take immediate action to address the pressing issues facing the community.

Ben Laughlin expressed his opposition to the trial budget and shared his thoughts on the City's budget allocation, particularly regarding the Police budget. He questioned the funding of 21 new positions that support the Police Department, questioning how much money is already allocated to the Police each year. He criticized the prioritization of Police funding over essential community resources needed for health and safety. He referenced the Pueblo Budget, which outlined nearly 70 investments identified by residents, primarily from Black, Indigenous, and other People Of Color (BIPOC) and working-class neighborhoods. He suggested reallocating funds from the Police Department to support these community needs, such as creating positions for trash and recycling services. He also raised concerns about the proposed allocation of the \$80 million surplus, questioning whether it would truly benefit the community or be used to maintain the Police budget. He urged the Council to invest in essential resources like water fountains in parks, an emergency eviction legal services program, and an increase in supportive housing units for the homeless. He shared the importance of prioritizing investments that will keep people alive and urged the Council to allocate the surplus funds accordingly.

Mayor Gallego closed the floor to public comment.

Councilwoman Pastor asked about the possibility of revisiting the budget to address essential amenities, considering the anticipated budget

shortfall for the next year. She expressed interest in exploring alternative approaches to ensure essential needs are met within the budget constraints.

Ms. Williamson explained that changes to the proposed trial budget are possible before the final budget is presented in May. She stated that the allocation of the \$80 million one-time surplus is crucial, and that using any portion of this surplus for ongoing costs could create additional future challenges, requiring careful consideration to ensure financial stability and the ability to address future budgetary needs.

Councilwoman Pastor asked about the potential impact of using some of the \$80 million surplus for current needs.

Ms. Williamson replied that if any portion of the \$80 million surplus were to be spent, it would be factored into the updated status report for the FY 2025-26 budget, which would be presented to the Council next February. She said staff would discuss potential solutions for balancing the budget, which could include increasing revenue, cutting programs and services, or a combination of both.

Mayor Gallego opened the floor to public comment for one final comment.

Andrea Luna Cervantes advocated for using a portion of the \$80 million surplus in the FY 2024-25 budget to address the housing crisis. She stressed the importance of investing in affordable and accessible housing, increasing access to water fountains, and providing permanent supportive housing units for those without shelter. She highlighted the need for access to legal defense for tenants facing evictions and urged the Council to consider these priorities and allocate funds accordingly, stating that it would improve the quality of life for communities often overlooked.

Mayor Gallego closed the floor to public comment.

3 **Phoenix City Code Chapter 20: Office of Accountability and Transparency Proposed Amendments Including Civilian Review Board**

Deputy City Manager Ginger Spencer introduced Shannon Johanni,

Office of Accountability and Transparency (OAT) Interim Director, highlighting her law background and experience in victim advocacy. She then provided an overview of proposed changes concerning OAT, including the establishment a Civilian Review Board and aligning Chapter 20 with State law and current practices. She stated that the Civilian Review Board has been envisioned by the Mayor and Council since the creation of OAT, and with 11 of 15 positions now filled in the newly created OAT, staff is progressing towards this goal. She outlined staff's recommendation to remove language from the ordinance regarding OAT's involvement in Police Department investigations and disciplinary processes to align with State law.

Office of Accountability and Transparency Interim Director Shannon Johanni outlined the proposed Civilian Review Board's alignment with the Council's transparency goals for the Police Department. The board, starting with 12 members, would review OAT monitoring reports and Police Department responses, offering recommendations and determinations on independent monitoring reports available to the public. She said this structure aims to enhance community engagement, accountability, and collaboration between the community and Police Department.

City Attorney Julie Kriegh explained the alignment of Chapter 20 sections with current practices and Arizona Revised Statute 38-1117. She said the plan is to remove language referencing OAT's involvement in investigations and disciplinary actions against the Police Department in order to comply with State law, and outlined next steps involve gathering feedback from the Mayor, Council, and community, followed by revisions and formatting of the ordinance for approval by the Council. Ms. Kriegh stated the ordinance will then undergo review by an ordinance committee before final adoption at a Council Formal meeting.

Councilman Robinson mentioned section 20-14, concerning the assignment of administrative Police advisory members. He noted it may pose issues regarding representation from different Police associations and highlighted the potential for perception issues, particularly with the absence of representation from the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association (PLEA). Councilman Robinson stated the importance of addressing this issue to ensure fairness and transparency in the process.

He expressed gratitude for the work being done and underscored the significance of meeting the community's needs for transparency and accountability in law enforcement.

Councilwoman O'Brien inquired about section 20-8, mentioning language regarding prospective recommendations for future investigations and the appropriate disciplinary sanctions. She asked staff to clarify what appropriate disciplinary sanctions in future investigations entails, and how it might affect officers.

Ms. Spencer explained that OAT monitors cases and assesses whether the Police Department's investigations are thorough and complete. She said OAT makes recommendations regarding future investigations, policies, or training based on their findings. She then said regarding appropriate disciplinary sanctions in future investigations, OAT would observe discrepancies between the operations order and the actions taken by the Police Chief. She stated if such discrepancies arise, the Police Chief has 30 days to respond to the monitoring report and the Civilian Review Board would also consider this information when reviewing cases.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if the recommendation could harm officers who have already undergone investigations.

Ms. Spencer responded that OAT's recommendations would not affect ongoing investigations or the Police Chief's decisions on discipline.

Councilwoman O'Brien inquired about the distinction between monitoring and review.

Ms. Kriegh explained that while there may be legal distinctions between monitoring and review, in practice, OAT operates without a significant difference between the two.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked about the involvement of OAT representatives in interviews and sought clarification on their role.

Ms. Johanni replied that a staff member from OAT attending an interview

would serve as an observer only. She stated OAT staff would not participate in the interview process by asking questions or providing feedback, their role would be limited to listening to the interview in real-time.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked why OAT would attend the interview if they couldn't influence the interview process.

Ms. Johanni responded that OAT staff observations could inform future monitoring reports, particularly regarding interview techniques and types of questions asked. She said OAT staff's attendance wouldn't impact the current investigation, it is more about gathering insights for future recommendations.

Councilwoman O'Brien suggested adding clarity to ensure OAT staff can only observe and cannot participate in any way during interviews. She then raised concerns about the Mayor having sole authority to appoint all members of the Civilian Review Board and suggested that each Councilmember appoint a member, subject to approval by a supermajority vote. She questioned the process for inviting guest speakers to the board and suggested considering an appeals process to ensure all perspectives are represented.

Ms. Spencer replied that a solution to ensure balanced representation by proposing that guest speakers invited by the board be approved by the OAT Director and the Police Chief.

Vice Mayor Stark inquired about the process through which the Board would collaborate to make recommendations regarding training and best practices. She asked about the nature of discussions within the Board and the outcomes of deliberations.

Ms. Spencer explained the Board would evaluate the thoroughness of Police investigations and provide recommendations, particularly on training. She said the Board would have the authority to adopt, agree with, or decline the recommendations made by OAT. She said the Board could also request additional information if needed to make decisions.

Vice Mayor Stark asked whether OAT staff were examining the practices of other communities and if staff could engage with cities that have had review boards for a while to learn from their experiences. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that staff's approach to the Civilian Review Board is thorough and properly executed.

Ms. Spencer confirmed that OAT is actively researching other cities, including examining videos of their meetings. She said this research will help staff address any questions or concerns and ensure the City is well-prepared when establishing the Board.

Vice Mayor Stark expressed appreciation for the thorough approach and indicated openness to recommendations from all Councilmembers and suggested a potential hybrid approach for board appointments. She stated the need to align with State law and expressed support for moving forward with establishing the Board.

Councilwoman Pastor sought clarification on a specific scenario where a report recommended following the operations order, which required a certain suspension length, but a different outcome was given.

Ms. Johannni confirmed OAT cannot control outcomes and can only make recommendations.

Councilwoman Pastor highlighted the importance of clarifying the terms monitoring and review, to avoid confusion. She shared examples of previous reports where recommendations were made based on observations during investigations, such as ensuring questions about racial profiling are asked during interviews.

Ms. Johannni responded that one of the recommendations from a previous report was for OAT to ask specific questions about each allegation during investigations. She said in a recent case involving an allegation of racial bias, the investigator had only reviewed body-worn camera footage and reached a conclusion without directly addressing the allegation.

Councilwoman Pastor shared the extensive effort and research that went

into developing OAT, its purpose of promoting accountability and transparency for both the community and the City. She said OAT was intended to provide a platform for all sides to voice their concerns and ensure that decisions were based on evidence. She then said moving forward to the establishment of the Civilian Review Board, she expressed support for Council involvement in the selection process, suggesting a process similar to the one used for appointing members to the Ethics Committee, where candidates would apply and undergo various review stages before final selection by the Council and Mayor.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington inquired about the communication process with the community following officer-involved incidents. She suggested that OAT explore best practices for improving communication with affected individuals and their families, stating this suggestion aligns with section 20.1(C), which outlines OAT's responsibility to provide support services to the impacted community.

Ms. Spencer said OAT can collaborate with the Police Chief and the Human Services Department to enhance coordination in addressing this issue.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington expressed the need to improve awareness of existing services. She suggested exploring better communication practices to ensure that information about available services reaches those who need services most.

Mayor Gallego highlighted the establishment of the Civilian Review Board as the next step in enhancing the transparency and accountability of the Police Department. She expressed hope that the board would facilitate community conversation and trust-building. She mentioned the potential role of the Board in addressing emerging technology issues and clarified the intent for the Board to lead mediation efforts. She acknowledged the necessity of making changes to comport with State legislation, even if not initially supported by the City. She proposed adding more specific directions regarding partial terms for board members to ensure continuity while allowing new members to join over time.

Mayor Gallego opened the floor to public comment.

Luke Black expressed frustration with the lack of accountability within the Police Department. He referred to the violent incidents in 2018 and subsequent years, emphasizing the need for independent oversight and accountability measures. Mr. Black criticized the changes to OAT, suggesting that they diminish its effectiveness by limiting its involvement in investigations. He also raised concerns about the selection process for the Civilian Review Board, arguing that it could be influenced by the Mayor's agenda rather than serving the interests of Phoenix residents. He vowed to continue advocating for justice and holding both the Police and the Council accountable for their actions.

Jose Hernandez shared his and his mother's experiences as victims of Police violence, particularly the loss of his younger brother. He echoed concerns raised by another speaker about the erosion of power within OAT. He then highlighted the community's efforts in 2019 and 2020 to advocate for independent and transparent civilian oversight in Phoenix. He criticized certain Council members for what he perceived as insincere support for OAT, motivated by political considerations rather than genuine commitment. He recounted the legislative efforts to weaken OAT, culminating in House Bill 2721 introduced by former Police officer and State Representative John Kavanagh, which aimed to increase law enforcement representation within oversight bodies. He argued that such measures perpetuate a culture of impunity within the Police Department and undermine efforts for accountability. He referenced the resignation of Roger Smith, the former Director of OAT, citing lack of independence as a reason. He also mentioned an ongoing lawsuit related to internal interference in OAT's operations. He concluded by expressing disappointment in the current proposal to further restrict OAT's powers, emphasizing that inadequate oversight is not preferable to none at all.

Maria Sanchez spoke against the proposed changes to OAT, emphasizing the need for independent oversight due to a lack of trust in the Police's ability to investigate themselves. She criticized certain individuals for what she perceived as political maneuvering rather than genuine commitment to oversight. She expressed concern that the proposed changes would render OAT ineffective and likened it to the internal investigations conducted by Police. She argued that the budget

allocated to OAT would be wasted if its effectiveness was diminished. She highlighted the upcoming election year and urged decision-makers to address safety concerns rather than engaging in political posturing.

Rebecca Denis voiced strong opposition to the proposed amendments to OAT, particularly City Code section 20-6.8, which she believes would further weaken OAT's already limited power to hold the Police Department accountable. She expressed dismay at the inclusion of Police officers on the proposed Civilian Review Board, arguing that it contradicts the very definition of civilian. She spoke about her journey to radicalization, attributing it to witnessing Police violence, experiencing racial profiling, and seeing people who resemble her being killed by law enforcement. She recounted her efforts to engage in reform processes, only to be met with inaction and broken promises from City officials and Police leadership. She criticized the lack of trust in the Mayor and City Council and vehemently opposed the notion of them appointing nine members to the Civilian Review Board.

Viri Hernandez expressed deep disappointment with the proposed policy changes, noting that when the initial policy was passed, there was widespread community support for transparency, accountability, and investigations. She now sees the current proposal as falling short of those goals and described it as "trash." She criticized the political direction behind the proposal, particularly the provision for the Mayor to appoint nine members to the Civilian Review Board. She highlighted the alarming statistics of Police shootings and killings under the Mayor's leadership and accused the Council of failing to understand racial disparities and the experiences of communities of color. She pointed out the influence of Police unions in the proposed board, expressing concern that it does not adequately represent families, survivors, or victims of Police violence. She concluded by emphasizing the lack of accountability and transparency in the proposed process, suggesting that the allocated funds would be better utilized elsewhere.

State Senator Anna Hernandez expressed her appreciation for the discussion and shared her concerns about further stripping power from OAT. She highlighted how progress made in the Chamber in February 2020 was undermined by Police unions at the State legislature,

emphasizing the need to avoid similar mistakes. She criticized the influence of Police unions and their lack of good faith in advocating against victims of sexual violence receiving reports within a 14-day window. She found it undemocratic for the Mayor to have sole authority in appointing a nine-member board and suggested that each Council District should have a say in the appointments. She also voiced concerns about the supermajority requirement, advocating for equitable representation across all districts to uphold democratic principles.

Ben Laughlin stated that the policy passed to establish OAT was not the vision of the majority of the Council or the Mayor in 2019. He explained that community members spent significant time drafting a policy for civilian oversight, emphasizing the importance of independence, investigative capability, transparency, and accountability. He criticized efforts by some Council members to undermine civilian oversight and protect the Police Department at all costs. He warned that approving changes to OAT as proposed would create something more harmful than having no oversight at all. He accused some Councilmembers of shaping the changes to serve the interests of Police unions, rather than prioritizing community safety. He urged the Council to prioritize the people's safety over political considerations and suggested that OAT should be dismantled if changes continue to weaken its effectiveness.

Catherine Bowman expressed support for the Police Department's efforts in managing public safety issues in the City. She stated the importance of ethical and law-based policing. She shared her personal experience of losing a family member who was in county jail experiencing alcohol withdrawal. She then addressed the proposed changes in Title 20, specifically regarding the Civilian Review Board. She raised concerns about the prohibitions outlined in section 20-5D, which could impact individuals and their family members who have any affiliation with law enforcement. She suggested that the language in the job posting for Monitor positions may not align with the Council's intent and urged staff to review section 20-5D to ensure it reflects intentions accurately.

Mayor Gallego closed the floor to public comment.

Councilwoman Pastor expressed her concerns about the changes to

OAT, noting that the initial intention was to include an investigative component. She acknowledged the community's input and emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability. She asked how these values could be upheld considering the community's current perceptions of OAT.

Ms. Johanni responded to the community's concerns by affirming the ongoing value of OAT to the City, the community, and Police Department. She clarified that the Police Department's value from OAT lies not in using it as a platform to promote Police reform efforts but in responding to OAT's reports and recommendations publicly. She acknowledged the frustration from the community but attributed the limitations of OAT to State law rather than the Council's actions. Ms. Johanni said that despite these constraints, OAT remains committed to being as robust as possible within the legal framework. She highlighted the importance of OAT's monitoring process in shaping misconduct investigations and ensuring thorough consideration of evidence, ultimately contributing to transparency and accountability in the community.

Councilwoman Pastor raised concerns about the implementation of recommendations, noting that while recommendations may be made, it ultimately falls on the Police Chief to decide whether to adopt changes. She mentioned the potential inconsistency if a new Police Chief does not prioritize community input. She said this dilemma underscores the challenge of ensuring sustained accountability and transparency over time, especially with changes in leadership. She asked how these concerns could be addressed and maintain community trust in the process.

Ms. Johanni replied that while OAT plays a crucial role in promoting accountability and transparency within the Police Department, it cannot be solely responsible for ensuring outcomes. She stressed the importance of collective advocacy from both the public and City leadership, including the Council and the Mayor, in demanding accountability and transparency. She said if changes and reforms are not implemented despite recommendations from OAT and public calls for accountability, then it becomes the responsibility of City leadership to address the issue.

Councilwoman Pastor asked staff to outline how OAT will remain independent.

Ms. Johanni emphasized that OAT operates independently and conducts its reports without external influence. She acknowledged that her tenure in the role has been relatively short compared to her predecessor, but stated she has not experienced any limitations on OAT's independence during her time in the position. She clarified that she has not received any demands or requests to alter the content or substance of OAT's reports, including annual, quarterly, or monitoring reports. She stated any edits made to reports were done internally by herself and OAT's monitoring supervisor for the purpose of clarity, consistency, and maintaining professionalism.

Councilwoman Pastor reiterated the importance of independence for OAT. She said independence, in this context, meant that OAT could function without external interference or influence, allowing it to conduct thorough investigations and write reports without undue pressure or manipulation of content. She reiterated the need for clarity and accuracy in reports but stressed that the content should not be altered.

Ms. Johanni affirmed that there had been no content editing in any of the reports released by OAT during her tenure. She said that the reports had been critical of the Police Department where necessary, demonstrating OAT's commitment to transparency and accountability. She clarified that any edits made were solely for correcting spelling errors and not for altering the substance or tone of the reports.

Councilwoman Pastor expressed her concerns about the future of OAT, the importance of ensuring its purity and adherence to its original intentions, even as personnel changes over time. She acknowledged the community's dissatisfaction with the current state of OAT, highlighting the need for transparency and accountability. Despite her skepticism, she expressed her commitment to ensuring that OAT remains independent and effective in its operations, holding individuals accountable regardless of who occupies positions of authority.

Ms. Johanni reassured that efforts are underway to ensure OAT's continued independence, accountability, and transparency. She acknowledged that there is still progress to be made, she expressed confidence in OAT's capacity to

issue critical feedback and recommendations to the Police Department. She emphasized the importance of community input and engagement in refining practices and policies to meet the community's needs. She affirmed the commitment to both delivering OAT's work to the public and ensuring its independence.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed disappointment in the current state of the OAT, acknowledging that it has deviated from the initial vision set forth in 2020. She apologized to the community members who advocated for OAT and expressed regret that it has not lived up to their expectations. She emphasized the need for stronger community involvement and collaboration to ensure that OAT truly serves its intended purpose. She expressed a willingness to work closely with OAT to amplify community voices and address the shortcomings of the current system.

Councilwoman Pastor reflected on the history of community activism, particularly in response to Arizona's State Bill 1070, which led to significant social and political changes over the course of a decade. She highlighted the role of community voices in rallying against unjust practices, including those of a sheriff who engaged in controversial actions that separated families and caused lasting trauma. She stated that the involvement of the Department of Justice (DOJ) in investigating these practices underscored the need for transparency and accountability. She expressed skepticism about whether OAT would truly bring about the necessary changes. She questioned whether OAT would provide the guidance needed to address systemic issues and meet the expectations set forth by the DOJ. She stressed the importance of ensuring that the community's concerns are heard and addressed transparently.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gallego declared the meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.