

Attachment A

Phoenix City Council Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee Summary Minutes Wednesday, March 5, 2025

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ

Subcommittee Members Present
Councilman Kevin Robinson, Chair
Councilwoman Betty Guardado
Vice Mayor Ann O'Brien

Subcommittee Members Absent
Councilman Jim Waring

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee (PSJ) to order at 10:00 a.m. with Vice Mayor O'Brien and Councilwoman Guardado present. Councilwoman Guardado attended by phone.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Christina Tyler commented on an interaction her friend experienced with Phoenix Police.

Orla Bobo commented on the need to improve Phoenix Fire response times and provide additional funding to the department.

Matt Evans commented on the need to improve Police and Fire response times. He advocated for the reallocation of funding from other programs towards public safety.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee Meeting

Vice Mayor O'Brien made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2025, Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilwoman Guardado seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2. Protest Planning and Response

Executive Assistant Police Chief Dennis Orender, Executive Assistant Police Chief Derek Elmore, Police Assistant Chief Nick DiPonzo, Police Commander Dave Seitter, and Assistant Fire Chief Justin Alexander presented on this item.

Chief Orender provided an update on the First Amendment Facilitation and Management policy. He stated it is set to go live in April 2025 and includes several recommended remedial measures from the Department of Justice. The Policy includes guidance on first amendment protected activity and responsibilities during planned and unplanned events.

Chief Elmore provided detail on the Public Safety Response Team (PSRT). He noted there are 61 full-time members assigned to the Downtown Operations Unit (DOU) which is the core of the PSRT, as well as 530 collateral duty members dispersed across various precincts.

Commander Seitter detailed the PSRT training. He noted the civil disturbance tools used includes verbal communication and commands which can be given in person or by amplified device, distraction devices which are used to create a loud noise that may distract individuals committing crimes, and as a last resort, less lethal munitions which can be used for area denial, dispersal, or direct impact. He noted that when less lethal munitions are used, Fire staff will be present to address any medical concerns.

Chief Alexander provided detail on the collaboration between Police and Fire. He stated that during mass demonstrations, the National Incident Management System is used which allows public safety staff to coordinate and communicate effectively. Specifically, Fire staff are responsible for threat liaison officers and medical response personnel to address onsite response needs. He also spoke about dedicated tactical radio operators, who also assist in placing virtual boundaries into computer aided dispatch systems to ensure calls for service within or around the demonstration area are addressed with proper coordination and communication.

Commander Seitter stated Police can respond to two different events, planned and unplanned. He noted that planned events includes those that provide 24 to 48 hour advanced notice, community response squad contacts organizers, Community Response Squad (CRS) works with Homeland and DOU, and appropriate resources have been identified. Commander Seitter said unplanned events include those events that do not provide advanced notice, intelligence and planning occurs simultaneously, and response decisions are made with limited information.

Moreover, Commander Seitter provided detail on the three-tiered response options. Tier 1 requires the CRS to respond, and Homeland and DOU are notified of the incident. A Tier 2 response requires uniformed officers support the CRS and PSRT and staff may be on standby. Finally, a Tier 3 response requires PSRT to stage nearby and Homeland initiate the Tactical Operations Center.

Chief DiPonzo noted when the Tactical Operations Center is activated during a Tier 3 response, it is a partnership between the Police and Fire departments, managed by the Homeland Defense Bureau. The staffing required totals 286 individuals. In 2024, out of the 313 events, there were 10 Tier 3 events, and 28 coordinated arrests. From January

30, 2025, through February 8, 2025, there were 19 demonstrations requiring 7 PSRT deployments, 1 gas deployment, 7 shows of force, 0 uses of force, and 1 arrest.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if Police tracks the number of protesters during the events.

Chief DiPonzo responded the information is not tracked but an estimate could be provided.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked about the legality of protesting when traffic is obstructed.

Commander Seitter indicated it is not legal to obstruct traffic, noting it requires the organizers to request a permit for street closures. However, he noted Police considers the circumstances and weighs them against First Amendment rights. If the only violation is obstructing traffic, Police will escalate the event to a Tier 2 designation to allow patrol officers to assist with traffic control.

Councilwoman Guardado asked how the Phoenix Police Department Homeland Defense Bureau was named.

Chairman Robinson stated the Bureau has held the name for over 20 years. During the period following the events of September 11, 2001, homeland defense was a key priority for the Police Department.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed a preference for more planned events rather than unplanned ones. She noted the Bureau's current name might give the impression that the City is coordinating with U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, which is not the case. She suggested this perception could hinder coordination, resulting in more unplanned events. Councilwoman Guardado asked if the name could be revised to better reflect that it is a City of Phoenix Bureau.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays indicated discussions could occur to explore ways to better communicate the Bureau's purpose to the community, whether through a name change or another approach.

Councilwoman Guardado asked how Police is addressing street racing, noting it is occurring alongside others who are exercising their First Amendment rights.

Chief DiPonzo indicated there is a Street Racing Taskforce based out of the Maryvale Estrella Mountain Precinct which addresses that activity. The enforcement is addressed away from where the protests are occurring.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed frustration over the individuals engaging in this behavior as she does not consider them a part of the protest. She asked if these individuals are being apprehended.

Chief DiPonzo confirmed yes, depending on the activity observed by Police.

Councilwoman Guardado asked about the possibility of further communicating with protesters to help them distinguish between actions protected under the First Amendment and those that are not.

Assistant City Manager Bays stated public education campaigns have been previously shared with the community and added updated social media campaigns could be developed.

Chairman Robinson requested clarification on the 530 collateral duty members assigned to precincts under PSRT, including the extent of their training.

Chief Elmore explained that collateral duties encompass roles in neighborhood response teams, community action officers, or gang squads, with participation in the PSRT as needed for events. The training includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 24-hour Mobile Field Force course, Downtown Operations Unit 10-hour class, 4-hour annual recertification, 20-hour grenadier school, and 40-hour extrication school.

Chairman Robinson asked if the FEMA 24-hour Mobile Field Force course is provided to PSRT officers annually.

Commander Seitter explained all members of the DOU first take the FEMA 24-hour Mobile Field Force course, followed by the Phoenix Downtown Operations Unit 10-hour class. He stated Police is in the process of transitioning all collateral and duty members to this training.

Chairman Robinson asked if the grenadier and extrication school is provided annually.

Commander Seitter confirmed the schools are provided annually, training provided quarterly, and recertification occurs annually.

Chairman Robinson asked how the response to an unplanned event would look like.

Commander Seitter explained contingency plans are incorporated into the training. He noted most collateral officers are patrol officers and that an effort is being made to enroll more officers in the FEMA 24-hour Mobile Field Force course to ensure each precinct can operate independently. Since the DOU is not available 24/7, each precinct must have at least 40 collateral duty mobile field force officers. The precinct handles the initial response, with the lieutenant and commander in charge of managing the incident. If the situation becomes unmanageable, the DOU will be notified to take over responsibility.

Chairman Robinson emphasized the importance of ongoing training to ensure consistent deployment throughout the Department.

Vice Mayor O'Brien emphasized the importance of first amendment training throughout the department so officers are prepared to handle these types of events.

Chairman Robinson asked who makes the decision to deploy projectiles, such as gas.

Chief Elmore stated that the process follows the chain of command, all the way to the Chief of Police. This applies only to planned events, whereas for unplanned events, the type of projectile that may be required is not known nor carried by the responding units.

3. Taser 10 Training Update

Police Commander Sara Garza presented on this item.

Commander Garza outlined the features of the Taser 10, highlighting its extended range for improved communication with the subject, as well as its audible deterrent, which includes a warning sound and flashing lights.

Commander Garza outlined the training program for the Taser 10. She explained it begins with a 10-hour classroom session covering the new Department policy, de-escalation tactics, decision-making models, and the tool's nomenclature. She noted the classroom session is followed by a virtual reality component designed to assess proficiency under stress, decision-making, communication, and de-escalation skills. After completing the VR scenarios, trainees debrief with their partners who observed the exercise. The program then moves to practical exercises, where trainees use the device at various distances, before transitioning to scenario-based training that evaluates when and where to deploy the Taser 10. Commander Garza stated that currently, 200 individuals have completed the training, with multiple classes of 30 students held each week.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if there is annual training after the required training.

Commander Garza stated while there is no annual training requirement, virtual reality headsets are available for each precinct to use, allowing for more frequent training opportunities.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked when the goal is to implement Taser 10 across the Department.

Commander Garza stated the goal is to have Taser 10 implemented on all patrol officers by the end of Summer 2025, and across the entire Department by Summer 2026.

Chairman Robinson shared he had the opportunity to use Taser 10 at a conference he attended. He stated it is going to be a lifesaver due to its enhanced features.

4. Phoenix Fire Department Staffing and Response Time Update

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

Chief Riddle-Bigler shared an update on recruitment and staffing. As of January 2025, 1,809 sworn positions are currently filled, with an additional 45 in the recruit class, bringing the total to 1,854 sworn firefighters, out of the 1,870 authorized sworn positions. Chief Riddle-Bigler also showed 6-month data for separations listed as retirement and non-retirement. Further, she provided an update on firefighter recruit testing from 2016-2025 which includes the total applicants for the firefighter written exam, total recruits tested, and those that passed the test. She recognized there has been an increase in all categories. An analysis of the candidate pool indicated that recruitment efforts align with applicant trends.

Chief Kreis showed a chart that detailed the total incidents reported by Council District from January 1, 2025, through January 31, 2025. The different metrics and their associated standards include critical Emergency Medical Services (EMS) incidents, 5:00 set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); first arriving engine to a fire, 5:20 set by the NFPA; first arriving ladder to a fire, 9:20 set by the NFPA; and ambulance response times for critical EMS, 10:00 set by Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS).

Further, Chief Kries provided an overview on rescue conversions which the PSJ Subcommittee approved to convert ten part-time rescues to six full-time rescues with an intent to increase ambulance coverage across the City. He noted 48 new sworn positions and 4 administrative support positions for ambulance billing were created to assist with operations. Specifically, he focused on Rescue 45 and 49, noting response times have decreased since the conversions. All conversions are anticipated to be complete by the end of Fiscal Year 2025.

Moreover, Chief Kreis indicated the PSJ Subcommittee directed staff to study the social determinants of health, specifically why some Council Districts generate more calls than others. He spoke about how some of the social determinants of health can include education access and quality, health care access and quality, economic stability, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context. The Phoenix Fire Department, along with the City of Phoenix Office of Public Health, Maricopa County Department of Public Health, AZDHS, and Arizona State University are continuing to work on the study.

Chief Kreis provided visual examples of the impact of major incidents and associated response times.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if there has already been more applicants and recruits tested in 2025 than the totals in previous years.

Chief Riddle-Bigler confirmed this is the case.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked how much longer the Fire Academy would be extended if an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course were added to the curriculum.

Chief Riddle-Bigler stated this is being researched in comparison to the curricula of other departments. She noted the duration would likely be extended by approximately 4 to 6 weeks.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked for clarification on the resources that would be allocated to Fire through the increase in the Transaction Privilege Tax (TPT).

Chief Kries stated the resources could include the construction and staffing of Fire Station 71 and Station 93, Ladder 10, along with four medical response vehicles, several ambulances, and other supporting resources. These additions would contribute to reduced response times and activity levels. However, these plans had not been finalized.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked how the location of additional resources is determined.

Chief Kreis noted that several factors influence resource determinations, including fire station activity levels, population density, and future developments.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if the Fire Stations identified in the General Obligation Bond will move forward if the City cannot afford the personnel to staff it.

Assistant City Manager Bays stated the operating costs of the proposed Fire Stations are built in the projections.

Chairman Robinson shared an experience with a resident whose son is currently in the recruitment process and credited one of the veteran affinity groups for their support. He expressed gratitude for the ongoing recruitment efforts.

INFORMATION ONLY

5. Community Assistance Program (CAP) Expansion Implementation Report
Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

6. Phoenix Police Department Hiring, Recruitment and Attrition Update
Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Oladele Ibiyemi-Aluko commented on the presence of unsheltered individuals around her business, stating that it poses a safety concern. She requested the City consider allowing her to construct a fence around her business.

Adenike Ibiyemi-Aluko expressed similar concerns as Oladele Ibiyemi-Aluko, noting the presence of unsheltered individuals around their business is causing a disturbance.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Destiny Dominguez
Management Fellow

DRAFT