

# ATTACHMENT A

**Phoenix City Council  
Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee  
Summary Minutes  
Wednesday, May 6, 2026**

City Council Chambers  
200 W. Jefferson St.  
Phoenix, Arizona

Subcommittee Members Present

Councilman 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**

None.

**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 April 1, 2026 Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Waring seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

**CONSENT ACTION**

**2. Neighborhood Block Watch Grant Awards (NBGA)**

Councilwoman O'Brien asked item 26-155, in the amount of \$15,000, to be added to the list of approved items. She requested approval of item 26-058 for \$2,277. She requested lines 1-13, 22, 24-26, and 28 also be considered for approval by the subcommittee.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays asked Councilwoman O'Brien to make the request in the form of a motion.

Councilwoman O'Brien made the motion to approve the recommended grants, including item 26-058 in the amount of \$2,277 for lines 1-13, 22, 24-26, and 28, as well as grant 26-155 for the full amount of \$15,000. Councilman Waring seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **3. Firework Ordinance Recommendations**

Assistant Fire Chief Justin Alexander, Police Lieutenant Brian Rimsza, Deputy Parks Director Jarod Rogers, Deputy Communications Director Ashley Patton presented on the item.

Councilman Waring pointed out much of District 2 appeared restricted on the slides, meaning some residents who could have legally used fireworks would no longer be able to. He asked how this change was being communicated, noting the lookup tool was useful but only if residents knew how to check it.

Mr. Rogers noted the Communications Deputy Director would address the communication and advertising plan during her portion of the presentation.

Councilman Waring asked if enforcement of the ordinance would begin with warnings or if individuals could face arrest on a first offense. He expressed concern that some residents might be unaware they were violating the rules.

Lieutenant Rimsza reported an 18-month education campaign had already taken place, however there are now new elements potentially being added into the Code. He added enforcement would likely begin with civil fines, coordination with the City prosecutor's office, which could identify repeat offenders and escalate penalties as needed. He emphasized the intention was not to arrest individuals for a first offense violation.

Councilman Waring reiterated concerns about repeat offenders, stating escalating penalties were appropriate for individuals who continued unsafe behavior after being warned. He referenced a past presentation showing that fireworks had caused several fires and that some responsible individuals had been identified. Councilman Waring emphasized the goal of the current approach was prevention and reducing the risk of serious incidents.

Lieutenant Rimsza agreed the current approach as prevention and reducing the risk of serious incidents.

Councilman Robinson asked whether holiday-season messaging would begin about two weeks in advance and requested clarification on the exact start date.

Ms. Patton clarified that, if the council approved the changes in the code on May 20, public messaging would begin immediately after that date, with broader communications ramping up as the July 4 holiday approached.

Councilman Robinson inquired whether the City was placing messaging at park locations to remind residents that fireworks are prohibited, noting that some people may ignore or overlook existing rules.

Mr. Rogers clarified additional park messaging had not been planned because fireworks had always been prohibited within City parks. Existing code-of-conduct signage already communicated this, and park rangers continued educating visitors to ensure compliance. He explained the new effort focused on communicating restrictions in the areas surrounding parks, as those changes represented the substantive update.

Ms. Bays added the primary communication focus was the expanded fireworks restrictions in the City code. She noted that, if the subcommittee advanced the recommendation and the full council approved it on May 20, messaging to the public would begin immediately afterward. Because the ordinance would take effect approximately 30 days later, around June 20, staff planned to begin outreach as soon as the approval occurred, emphasizing the new one-mile radius around parks and how residents could use the map tool to determine whether their address fell within a restricted area.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked whether the updated fireworks-restriction information would be distributed to registered neighborhood groups, including block watches and HOAs, to ensure effective communication using existing community networks.

Ms. Bays confirmed the information would be shared widely, including through neighborhood association and block watch lists, social media, council office newsletters, departmental channels, and the media to ensure broad community awareness.

Councilman Waring asked Chief Alexander whether this represented the most stringent action possible within state law.

Chief Alexander confirmed it was the most stringent action available, adding it represented the maximum penalties and enforcement allowed under state law.

Councilman Waring noted if constituents asked why additional actions were not being taken, the reason was that anything outside the allowed parameters could not be done, as it would be illegal.

Chief Alexander affirmed the language used reflected the full extent of authority allowed under state law, specifically statute 36-1606.

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

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **4. Police & Fire Hiring and Recruitment Update**

Assistant Fire Chief Reda Riddle-Bigler, Assistant Police Director Court Hood, and Senior Public Information Officer Stacie Hainke presented on the item.

Councilman Waring asked if the Fire Department strategies were being used by the Police Department and whether the departments were sharing practices or coordinating efforts.

Councilman Robinson noted the second portion of the presentation would provide further details on the shared practices.

Councilman Robinson asked for the results of the joint fire and police recruitment event, specifically whether it led to an increase in applications to both agencies.

Ms. Hainke noted applications rose from 375 in February to 513 by the end of March and stated the event likely encouraged attendees to apply after gaining a closer look at both career paths.

Chief Riddle-Bigler stated the department did not track applicants specifically from the event but did track connections such as the cadet program or affinity groups. Applicants were also asked how they heard about the department, often citing billboards. Attendance from this specific event was not separately tracked.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if the Fire Departments was accepting applications at the event.

Chief Riddle-Bigler noted the department had not been accepting applications at the event, but had advertised its upcoming testing process scheduled for August.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked whether attendee ages were tracked at the event, noting that a waiver was required at sign-in.

Ms. Hainke shared attendee ages were not tracked but stated it could be considered for future events to better understand the audience.

Councilman Waring sought clarification on page six, chart 11, asking whether the yellow bar labeled "hired" referred to recruits entering the Phoenix Police Academy rather than fully sworn officers already serving in the field.

Mr. Hood explained the yellow bar represented the 26 recruits who started the academy, while the blue bar reflected the 19 retained from that group. The remaining seven had left the organization.

Councilman Waring asked whether, based on the chart, 234 recruits entered the academy in 2025, 200 graduated and became officers, and 34 did not complete the academy.

Mr. Hood confirmed Councilman Waring's interpretation was correct and added that academy training lasted about six months, followed by the field training officer program. The chart reflected hires by year and whether those individuals were retained or had separated from the organization.

Councilman Waring noted the chart showing 2,460 total officers included recruits who had not yet completed training. He emphasized that, based on the academy data, a portion of recruits typically did not finish the program, meaning those individuals could not be counted as officers.

Mr. Hood acknowledged there was some attrition reflected in the overall number.

Councilman Waring noted the department's reported staffing level of 2,460 sworn positions likely reflected staffing levels comparable to the mid-1990s and represented a significant decline. He stated the previously referenced staffing target of 3,125 officers was based on an outdated budget and no longer aligned with the City's growth. Councilman Waring expressed concern about the number continued to decrease and emphasized recruit counts could not be fully relied upon due to expected attrition. He asked for comments on how staffing conditions might improve given the ongoing downward trend.

Mr. Hood explained that early-year staffing numbers often appeared low because many retirements occurred late in the year. He noted the department continued active hiring, planned seven academy classes, and was expanding processing capacity to bring in more qualified applicants. The department goal was to reduce the staffing gap and build on last year's small surplus of officers.

Councilman Waring inquired whether the term "surplus" indicated the presence of ten more officers than anticipated.

Mr. Hood clarified that "ten more" referred to a net gain of officers from the previous year.

Councilman Waring emphasized the need for a candid discussion about staffing trends, noting that single-month improvements could be misleading. Drawing on long-term committee experience, he noted sustained progress had not occurred, reflecting broader challenges in major city policing rather than staff performance. Councilman Waring encouraged continued creative efforts to improve recruitment, particularly among younger candidates.

Councilwoman O'Brien highlighted the years between 2007 and 2012 where the City had halted officer hiring. She expressed concern about the number of sworn positions remaining lower than when she joined the council, attributing the ongoing staffing challenges partly to the prolonged hiring freeze. She asked whether the applicant figures shown on slide nine represented completed applications or all applications received.

Mr. Hood clarified the figures represented initial applications submitted to express interest in the position through Human Resources.

Councilwoman O'Brien requested follow-up information comparing initial and completed applications and encouraged improved tracking to understand applicant drop-off. She also praised the annual recruitment event and recommended collecting more detailed attendee data to strengthen future outreach.

Councilman Robinson asked for clarification on how much of the testing and hiring process out-of-state applicants could complete remotely.

Chief Riddle-Bigler explained online testing allowed out-of-state applicants to complete the initial two-week testing period remotely, though both required interviews still occurred in person. She added the Fire Department was exploring moving the first interview online and streamlining onboarding to reduce the number of required trips to Phoenix.

Mr. Hood noted the Police Department's background investigators and recruiters worked with out-of-state applicants to complete their background packets up to the psychological, medical, and polygraph examinations. He added staff coordinated these steps to ensure they could be completed during the applicant's limited time in Arizona.

Councilman Robinson noted current employees remained the most effective recruiters and referenced recent academy graduates who had been referred by friends or family. He requested future data on the frequency of referral-bonus payouts to assess the effectiveness of the \$2,500 incentive program.

Ms. Bays confirmed staff would provide the requested referral-bonus data to the chair and the subcommittee.

Councilman Robinson expressed the urgency of closing the staffing gap in public safety and encouraged both departments to accelerate hiring once strong candidates were identified. He stressed the importance of keeping applicants engaged to prevent losing them to competing agencies.

Councilman Waring emphasized the significant share of the City budget devoted to public safety and highlighted long-term declines in police staffing levels, requesting historical charts and data on applications, retention, and officer counts over the past decade.

Councilman Robinson asked for attrition information for the first year after academy graduation to better understand ongoing staffing challenges.

## **INFORMATION ONLY**

### **5. Social Determinants of Health Study Report**

Information only. No Councilmember requested additional information.

### **6. Community Assistance Program (CAP) Expansion Implementation Report**

Information only. No Councilmember requested additional information.

**7. Fire Staffing and Response Time Report**

Information only. No Councilmember requested additional information.

**8. Police Hiring, Recruitment, and Attrition Monthly Report**

Information only. No Councilmember requested additional information

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayana Rosas  
Management Fellow