

Attachment A

Phoenix City Council Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee Summary Minutes Wednesday, January 8, 2025

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ

Subcommittee Members Present

Councilman Kevin Robinson, Chair
Councilwoman Betty Guardado
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien
Councilman Jim Waring

Subcommittee Members Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee (PSJ) to order at 10:00 a.m. with Councilwoman Guardado, Councilwoman O'Brien, and Councilman Waring present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Tony Harris shared an encounter where individuals claimed Phoenix Police threatened to cite people gathered outside a business.

Elizabeth Veniable expressed concern over an interaction she was made aware of where City staff directed a person experiencing homelessness to loiter on private property, indicating dissatisfaction with the guidance provided.

Orla Bobo commented on the need to increase funding to Police and Fire. She expressed frustration with the City's allocation of funds to programs that do not prioritize public safety.

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 December 4, 2024, Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilwoman Guardado seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2. Zencity Blockwise Overview – Citywide

Communications Director Dan Wilson, Zencity Vice President of Strategic Accounts Eyal Halamish, and Zencity Director of Enterprise and Law Enforcement Bar Asherov, presented on this item.

Mr. Wilson spoke about the several year partnership between the City of Phoenix and Zencity. He stated that the City has used a survey tool that led to notable initiatives like 602 Day.

Mr. Asherov provided an overview of Blockwise and described the platform as a community survey tool used by law enforcement agencies to measure resident perception with procedural justice metrics. He stated that the survey would be distributed equitably throughout the community. Based off the survey responses from the community, a dashboard would be created, and provide actionable insights through precinct level data across demographics and trending topics.

Mr. Halamish presented an example of Blockwise in practice using the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). He explained that the LAPD utilizes data from Blockwise to report on performance management every two weeks during their COMPSTAT meetings, which cover crime statistics as well as perceptions of safety and trust. He emphasized that decisions are based on well-informed, up-to-date data.

Mr. Halamish explained that monthly data pertaining to community trust and feelings of safety would benefit the City by enabling Police staff, City Manager, and City Council to gain valuable insights, monitor trends for informed decision-making, and evaluate plans and policy proposals.

Councilwoman Guardado asked when Blockwise was deployed at the LAPD.

Mr. Halamish explained Zencity has been serving the City of Los Angeles for several years, but the program itself has been in place for over a year.

Councilwoman Guardado asked about the success rate of the program and how access to the data has allowed the LAPD to make changes.

Mr. Halamish responded the data has enabled the Department to be more proactive by tracking data and strategically deploying resources. The Department has observed improvements in satisfaction and trust levels.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked how Zencity is ensuring responses from a diverse group of residents are collected.

Mr. Asherov explained advertisements are being distributed through various online channels and efforts will be made to target demographics that have not yet been represented in the survey results, ensuring equitable participation.

Chairman Robinson acknowledged that some residents might be hesitant to complete the survey due to concerns about being tracked. He inquired whether Blockwise includes any tracking mechanisms.

Mr. Asherov explained that Blockwise is entirely anonymous and based on digital networks; Zencity can determine that the user is located in the City of Phoenix based on zip code. He emphasized Zencity does not have access to identifiable information and does not request it.

Councilwoman Guardado asked how many languages Blockwise is available in.

Mr. Asherov stated that a language is available if it is spoken by at least five percent of the population, and this would be discussed with the City during the onboarding process.

Councilwoman Guardado recognized the possibility of certain areas being inaccessible and asked about the approach Zencity would adopt in such cases to ensure reach.

Mr. Asherov responded that 88-92 percent of individuals across all demographic groups have a smart device, enabling broad reach. He added if a particular group requires additional representation, survey ads would be intentionally targeted toward them.

Chairman Robinson shared he spoke with the Albuquerque Police Department Chief, who noted that his leadership team is able to make more informed decisions regarding staffing and deployment. Chairman Robinson expressed that this tool could serve to enhance the community.

Councilwoman Guardado asked how information reports collected through Blockwise would be shared to the City Council.

Mr. Wilson stated that Zencity would provide a monthly report to the Communications Department, and this would then be shared to Council.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed support for the program, emphasizing its role in bridging gaps and strengthening connections between communities and the Police. She highlighted the importance of focusing on populations that are harder to reach.

3. City of Phoenix 2024 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Report – Citywide

Human Services Director Jacqueline Edwards, Deputy Human Services Director Kevin Mattingly, and Police Assistant Chief Ed DeCastro, presented on this item.

Ms. Edwards stated the role of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) is to identify system gaps and area for improvement for governmental agencies and nonprofits responding domestic violence cases that are fatal or near fatal. She noted that the DVFRT consists of representatives from different City Department and external entities in fields such as criminal justice, advocacy, healthcare, and academia. Ms. Edwards provided an overview of domestic violence statistics in the United States.

Chief DeCastro provided an overview of 2023 domestic violence statistics within the City of Phoenix.

Mr. Mattingly explained the DVFRT case selection criteria which involve domestic violence cases that are fatal or near-fatal, have occurred in Phoenix, and have been fully adjudicated. He provided an overview of the 2024 case used in the DVFRT Report and outlined the six recommendations issued, along with an update on the status of the recommendation.

Recommendation one proposes the establishment of protocols for the Crisis Response Team's response to Domestic Violence Calls (Police and Fire).

Chairman Robinson asked what led to the decision to cancel the Crisis Response Team in this specific case.

Mr. Mattingly responded the reason for the cancellation was not clear, but it was speculated that the time of night and travel time required for the Crisis Team's arrival led to this operational decision.

Recommendation two proposes the examination of policies pertaining to Crisis Response Team response and suggests that these considerations should align response protocols with the Behavior Health Team response protocols (Fire Department).

Councilwoman Guardado asked what the standard response time for a Crisis Response Teams is.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays stated that this could be addressed in the subsequent presentation which covers the Community Assistance Program.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed curiosity in understanding why the Crisis Response Team call for service was canceled in this specific case. She noted understanding the Crisis Response Teams standard response times will help understand how to better address domestic violence calls.

Mr. Mattingly continued detailing the remaining recommendations.

Recommendation three proposes providers of forensic medical examinations should consider developing a policy to require medical follow-up in the days and weeks following an examination (contracted provider).

Recommendation four proposes the consideration of in-service training for emergency medical technicians and paramedics on recognizing, responding to, and treating impeded breathing cases, including strangulation (Fire Department).

Recommendation five proposes the consideration of tracking strangulation cases in databases (Police and Human Services).

Recommendation six proposes a change to case management protocols for fatal and near-fatal domestic violence cases (Human Services Department).

Mr. Mattingly concluded the DVFRT Team will produce the 2025 report which will detail progress made on all recommendations.

Councilman Waring commented that implementing stricter penalties for these offenses could help reduce their occurrence.

Chairman Robinson recognized the offender detailed in the Report had been arrested four times prior and asked for history on the arrests.

Mr. Mattingly explained the offender had been arrested and booked into jail multiple times, with one of the incidents leading to his participation in Veteran's Court. He clarified that not all the arrests were related to domestic violence, mentioning that one stemmed from a hit-and-run. The common thread in these situations was substance abuse.

Councilman Waring stated that substance abuse is often used to justify behavior and expressed dissatisfaction with the idea that such crimes are acceptable because the individual was struggling with substance abuse.

Councilwoman Guardado expressed appreciation for the DVFRT and the recommendations detailed in the report. She asked that future recommendations include ways in which children who witness domestic violence can be supported.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if staff tracked whether those individuals who were arrested in 2023 were subsequently prosecuted.

Chief DeCastro explained Police does not routinely track whether individuals who have been arrested as a result of a domestic violence incident are prosecuted unless a follow-up is needed. He noted a majority of individuals are being prosecuted, whether for misdemeanors or felonies.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if Police Department systems do not have this tracking technology integrated.

Chief DeCastro added staff is notified when a case is forwarded to a prosecuting agency, but the system does not retain the outcome for future reference. To obtain that information, staff would need to look up each case individually.

Councilwoman O'Brien expressed her interest in tracking this metric within Police Department systems to monitor how many of these arrests result in prosecution. She

noted that this would help address residents' concerns about arrests not leading to prosecution.

Chief DeCastro added the Police Department is working with PremierOne to incorporate this information, along with metrics on strangulation, will be incorporated into the new system and that it would go into effect later in 2025.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked what would happen to the Crisis Response Teams and Behavioral Health Team as a result of the change of policies.

Assistant City Manager Bays suggested that this question could be further clarified by the Community Assistance Program staff, which would provide more insight into the expectations of the Response Teams and the distinctions between them. She noted that at the time of this case, the resources available to both teams were more limited than they are today.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if the tracking systems used by the Human Services Department (HSD) and the Police Department interface.

Mr. Mattingly explained they are separate systems and added that the information tracked by the Family Advocacy Center and the Victim Services is confidential by State Statute. He added that HSD divisions are focused on the well being of the client and recovery from trauma, not the criminal case.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked how long a case in HSD stays open.

Mr. Mattingly noted that the case remains open until the client indicates they no longer need service or relocates, in which staff connects them with agencies that can assist them.

Ms. Edwards added that as a part of Recommendation six, the HSD has implemented updated protocols to continue follow-up with clients even after they have declined services.

Assistant Chief DeCastro added that the Domestic Violence Unit and Victims Advocates work on the same floor and work together and communicate effectively.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked who would pay for the required medical follow-up referenced in Recommendation three.

Mr. Mattingly stated that the Maricopa County Attorney's Office funds the forensic medical examiners at the Family Advocacy Center and as such, the County would pay the bill.

Councilwoman O'Brien thanked staff for their efforts and suggested data on the individuals assisted by the City could be insightful.

Councilman Waring emphasized the importance of intervening with offenders before domestic violence escalates into tragedy. He cited a case where an offender committed multiple crimes prior to being arrested for a domestic violence incident.

Chairman Robinson expressed appreciation for the work of the Human Services Department. He asked Deputy City Manager Ginger Spencer address some of the questions posed during the presentation.

Ms. Spencer emphasized the importance of balancing offender accountability with providing resources to protect victims and witnesses, including victims' children. She also explained plans to develop protocols for handling canceled Crisis Response Unit calls for service, specifying who can cancel them and why, as well as clarifying when a CRT or Behavioral Health Unit calls for service should respond. Finally, she noted that a multidisciplinary team, involving multiple City departments, is in place to coordinate mental health call responses.

Councilwoman Guardado emphasized the importance of conducting wellness checks callers who may be reporting a domestic violence incident even if a call has been canceled.

4. Community Assistance Program (CAP) Expansion Implementation Update – Citywide

Fire Assistant Chief Raymond Ochoa and Community Assistance Program (CAP) Administrator Dolores Ernst presented on this item.

Ms. Ernst provided an update on the CAP staffing expansion implementation, providing detail on recruitment, staffing, calls transferred from Police communications, and Units in Service.

Regarding staffing, 83.5 positions (65 percent) are currently filled, while 44.5 positions (35 percent) remain vacant. As for units in service, there are 5 Behavioral Health Units operating seven days a week, providing 23.5 hours of daily coverage. Additionally, there are 6 Crisis Response Units, some operating five days a week with 24-hour coverage and others operating two days a week with 22-hour coverage. Ms. Ernst highlighted a 172 percent increase in calls transferred from Police to the Behavioral Health Unit in the first 11 months when comparing 2023 to 2024. Lastly, Ms. Ernst noted that there have been increases in calls for service for both Behavioral Health Units and Crisis Response Units.

Councilwoman O'Brien advocated for CAP supervisors in Police Communications 24/7 and asked how this coverage could be achieved.

Ms. Ernst stated that hiring efforts are underway to ensure there is coverage 24/7 and that an update would be shared in the next presentation.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if there would be an update on 24/7 coverage at the next CAP Expansion Implementation Update.

Ms. Ernst confirmed yes.

Councilwoman Guardado asked what initiatives the City is taking to retain staff, especially as they frequently undergo high-stress calls.

Ms. Ernst explained that a committee has been established to generate ideas for supporting staff, while existing protocols, such as supervisor debriefings and the Employee Assistance Program, are already in place. She added a Curriculum Coordinator has been hired to develop new initiatives and support growth within the Program.

INFORMATION ONLY

5. Fire Department Staffing and Response Times Update – Citywide

Information only.

Councilman Waring asked if the travel distance to calls is contributing to the response times in District 2.

Assistant Chief Kreis confirmed yes.

Councilman Waring asked what is attributed to the discrepancies in calls for service in District 2, noting other Districts have a substantial amount more calls for service.

Assistant Chief Tim Kries recognized that District 2 is larger in terms of land area and explained Fire plans to collaborate with a research institution to investigate why calls are higher in other districts, despite the fact that the population is evenly distributed across all districts.

Councilman Waring expressed concern regarding response times, emphasizing that residents in District 2 are not receiving the level of service that all Phoenix residents are entitled to.

Councilwoman Guardado asked if District 8 hosts the most homeless facilities in District throughout the City and requested a report on service calls originating from these locations.

Assistant City Manager Bays indicated that such an analysis could be completed and would include both City-funded facilities and those independently operated.

Councilwoman Guardado further advocated on determining the why on why the calls for service are higher in District 8. She referenced a study that life expectancy in District 8 is a lot shorter due to several factors.

Assistant City Manager Bays noted Staff is preparing a comprehensive response to several questions asked regarding Fire response times, incident and call types, fire station placement, and other topics. They will be included in the February 5, 2025 agenda packet. Further, she added research is being undertaken that would help Staff understand what social determinants lead to the discrepancies in call volumes.

Councilwoman O'Brien asked if Fire staff could elaborate on the fire stations approved to be built in the General Obligation (GO) Bond. She recognized that this would provide more resources to the communities and assist with call volumes.

Fire Chief Michael Duran noted that 4 fire stations are included in the GO Bond from 2024-2029. He detailed the enhanced resources the new Fire Stations 7,13,15, and 51 would provide to the communities they surround.

Councilman Waring continued to express discontent with the discrepancies with the calls for services across Council Districts.

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

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Anne Ender expressed appreciation for the updated report but expressed discontent with hiring.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilwoman O'Brien asked the Phoenix Police Report include the following information: response times by district, dropped calls, average call hold time, retention rate for new hires from 2020-23, and projected sworn numbers through June 30, 2027.

Chairman Robinson requested that the Prosecutor's Office provide an overview of how domestic violence cases progress through their system.

Chairman Robinson also asked for progress on the DVFRT recommendations to be shared by June 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Destiny Dominguez
Management Fellow