

Attachment A

Phoenix City Council Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee Summary Minutes Wednesday, April 2, 2025

City Council Chambers
200 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ

Subcommittee Members Present
Councilman Kevin Robinson, Chair
Vice Mayor 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 10:00 a.m. with Vice Mayor O'Brien, Councilman Waring present. Councilwoman Guardado attended virtually.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

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 March 5, 2025, Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Waring seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 3-0.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2. UAS (Drone) Program Update

Executive Assistant Fire Chief Tim Kreis, Assistant Fire Chief Daniel Cheatham, Police Commander Christine Calderon, Deputy Parks Director Jarod Rogers, and Deputy Communications Director Ashley Patton presented on this item.

Chief Cheatham shared that several City departments currently have active Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) programs, including the Phoenix Fire Department (PFD), Phoenix Police Department (PPD), Parks and Recreation Department, and the Communications Office. He stated the Public Works Department also has an approved UAS program, though it has not yet launched.

The Phoenix Fire Department launched its UAS program in June 2022. The program provides 360-degree aerial views during operations, enabling the identification of hidden hazards, monitor adjacent occupancies, and use thermal imaging to ensure safe positioning of staff. Currently, PFD has 10 certified pilots and three visual observers operating seven days per week. All pilots are required to obtain their Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 107 certification, complete over 40 hours of training, and successfully pass the PFD UAS Task Book, which includes flight competency evaluations. This training is regularly updated to keep pace with evolving technology. For deployment, PFD maintains an emergency vehicle equipped with three drones of varying sizes to meet different operational needs. UAS cases include fire response, technical rescues, hazardous materials incidents, fire prevention, training, and community engagement. Chief Cheatham also shared several success stories where the UAS provided critical situational awareness to command staff. Looking ahead, the PFD plans to expand the program through enhanced mapping capabilities, the addition of a new response vehicle, and the integration of more tethered drone systems, further solidifying the UAS's role supporting first responders.

Commander Calderon reported that the Police Department's UAS program was launched in November 2022. The Program currently has 28 certified pilots, divided between 16 supporting specialty units and 12 supporting patrol operations. She stated Police UAS activities are focused on four key areas: investigative support, tactical support, event support, and patrol support. Investigative support includes assisting detectives with mapping, grid searches, and search-and-rescue missions. Tactical support involves dynamic incidents that may require coordination among multiple pilots. Patrol support commonly includes responding to burglary alarms and assisting in searches for individuals who have fled from officers. For event support, drones are deployed during pre-planned events to monitor crowd size, movement, and activities, often integrated with traffic planning efforts. Future goals for the Police UAS program include enhancing pilot training, exploring the use of drones as first responders, and identifying new drone models to support a variety of operational needs.

Mr. Rogers outlined the Parks and Recreation Department's UAS program, which launched in September 2024. The Program supports trail inspection and planning, cultural resource management, invasive species identification, revegetation monitoring, and trash and debris mapping. He shared examples of how drones have been used to track revegetation efforts, map debris sites, and monitor project progress. Future goals for the Parks and Recreation Department's UAS program include acquiring additional drones, implementing spectral imaging technology for plant identification and invasive species tracking, and further expanding trail inspection and cultural resource monitoring efforts.

Ms. Patton described the Communications Office's UAS Program, which launched in January 2024. The Program's primary role is to capture drone footage either proactively or at the request of department leadership. Currently, the Communications Office has

four FAA-certified pilots, all of whom are professional photographers. The Communications Office seeks to conduct approximately two flights per month in 2025.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays expressed appreciation for the City Council on approving the UAS program in 2022 as it has improved operations and saved lives.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked staff to provide metrics on the types of calls and the result in using the drone has been.

Chairman Robinson asked if the license obtained for UAS use is the same across departments.

Chief Cheatham confirmed the FAA certification is the same but there is a difference in the training since each Department responds to different situations. Additionally, the drones used across Departments are different.

Chairman Robinson asked what restrictions are in place when Police is operating the drone.

Commander Calderon stated the fourth amendment is followed. She added pilots undergo an additional 40 hour training which provides more training on what the pilots are allowed to use and not use.

Chairman Robinson asked how many drones Police has.

Commander Calderon stated she was not aware of the total at the time of the meeting.

Chairman Robinson asked if a drone was used at an incident over the weekend.

Commander Calderon stated she did not believe it was used at that incident but stated the patrol program is evolving.

Assistant City Manager Bays stated there is a UAS website where information on the UAS policies are posted, as well as an open data portal with information on each flight and mission details.

3. Family Advocacy Center Overview

Human Services Department (HSD) Director Jacqueline Edwards and HSD Assistant Director Tracee Hall presented on this item.

Ms. Edwards stated the Family Advocacy Center (FAC) is operated by the Victim Services Division of the HSD. She stated the FAC also hosts other organizations which have a permanent presence at the Center. At the FAC, services are provided for all ages; children 17 years and younger are assisted by Childhelp, whereas individuals 18 and older are assisted by the Victim Services Division.

Ms. Hall stated Childhelp is co-located with the PPD Crimes Against Children Unit. Childhelp focuses on providing services to minor victims of sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and therapeutic services for family members and caregivers. Ms. Hall provided 2024 statistics which detailed that 4,289 persons were served, 2,399 forensic interviews, 3,554 therapy sessions, 749 medical examinations, 4,137 victim advocacy services, and over 15,000 opportunities for caregivers and professionals to learn about community prevention and education services. On the other hand, the Victim Services Division focuses on providing services to adult victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and person impacted by a fatal police incident. In 2024, there was a total of 3,847 referrals of which 3,424 were from Police. She stated there were 3,009 persons served, 15,783 services provided, 2,210 safety planning, 450 protective court orders, and 842 forensic medical exams.

Ms. Edwards reported that the Victim Services Division has a total budget of approximately \$3.2 million, funded through a combination of the General Fund, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant, and other grant sources. The General Fund supports 16 full-time employees (FTEs), while the VOCA grant funds an additional eight FTEs. The current VOCA grant is set to expire in September 2025, and the renewal process is currently underway.

Ms. Edwards stated the VSD is currently seeking licensed therapists to assist family advocacy center clients as a part of expanded services pilot program.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked whether the individuals served by Childhelp and the Victim Services Division (VSD) are separate.

Ms. Edwards confirmed.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked if due to the uncertainty of federal grants, if other grant opportunities are being explored with the VOCA grant expiring.

Ms. Edwards stated the HSD is continuing to explore other grant opportunities to supplement the budget to ensure services can continue to be provided.

4. Arizona Task Force One

Fire Assistant Chief Mark Gonzales, Division Fire Chief Jake VanHook, and Deputy Fire Chief Chris Healey presented on this item.

Chief Gonzales stated the Arizona Task Force One (AZ-TF1) team was established in 1994 and operates on a \$1.4 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He expressed concerns over continued funding but stated conversations are undergoing to enlist support from Congressional Representatives.

Chief VanHook explained that AZ-TF1 is one of 28 task forces that make up the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (USR) system which is a part of the Emergency Support Functions that is delineated to support the national response framework.

Chief VanHook stated the PFD serves as the sponsoring agency, although Emergency Room doctors and structural engineers are contracted to assist with the effectiveness of the deployment. The annual \$1.4 million in funding allows AZ-TF1 to train throughout the year to ensure it is ready should any event come up, as well as procure equipment, store and maintain fleet, and fund administration and management. Currently, it is made up of 206 members who are trained and deployable. At a local level, there have been various instances that the City has benefitted from such training with the 2023 flooding in Yuma being the most recent instance of assistance.

Chief VanHook detailed the response and activation process. He stated that when local resources are exhausted, the response then moves to the region and county, followed by the State, up through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and ends with an Emergency Disaster Declaration leading to a Federal response. Typically, the closest teams are deployed followed by a rotation matrix where other task forces will be deployed. When the AZ-TF1 is deployed, FEMA pays for the backfill of the positions that were taken for deployment.

Chief VanHook provided an overview of the deployment to assist with Hurricane Helene, covering the activation process, mobilization, briefing, departure, and establishment of a base of operations. Chief Healey then discussed deployments to North Carolina and Florida, emphasizing the extensive planning and coordination required across multiple Task Forces. He also detailed the Florida mission in response to Hurricane Milton. Overall, the total deployment lasted approximately 20 days.

Vice Mayor O'Brien expressed appreciation for the AZ-TF1 team to address crisis that arise.

Chairman Robinson asked if the equipment provided by the Federal government is limited to use during deployments.

Chief VanHook stated they are allowed to be used in extreme cases at both the local and state levels. The only stipulation is that they must remain available for a federal response.

5. Community Assistance Program (CAP) Expansion Implementation Report

Fire Assistant Chief Ray Ochoa and CAP Administrator DC Ernst presented on this item.

Ms. Ernst began by providing an update on recruitment. She stated recruitment took place for Crisis Intervention Specialist in February 2025 and multiple candidates are

pending background checks. Currently 80 percent of positions are filled, whereas 20 percent are vacant.

Currently, there are six Behavioral Health Units (BHUs) operating seven days a week, providing 23.5 hours of daily coverage. The goal is to eventually expand to nine units. Additionally, there are six Crisis Response Units (CRUs) operating five days a week with full 24-hour coverage, and for the remaining two days, they provide 22 hours of coverage each day.

Ms. Ernst reported that as of March 31, 2025, the CAP achieved its goal of maintaining 24/7 BHU dispatcher coverage within Fire Dispatch. She noted that CAP continues to partner with the Police Department to provide online training, command staff training, and communications training for staff. Specifically, she shared that 234 calls were transferred from Police to BHUs in both January and February.

In terms of service volume, BHUs responded to 517 calls in January and 496 calls in February. Ms. Ernst provided a breakdown of February's BHU responses noting there were 27 joint responses with Police, 83 with Fire, 10 involving both Police and Fire, and 376 handled by a single unit.

Ms. Ernst also provided CRU call data, reporting 481 calls for service in January and 416 in February. In February, CRU responses included 57 with Police, 123 with Fire, 199 involving both Police and Fire, and 36 single-unit responses.

Finally, Ms. Ernst shared that the average response time in February was 24 minutes for BHU and 23 minutes for CRU.

Ms. Ernst noted the CAP Program received congressional recognition for its support of the mental health community from Congressman Greg Stanton.

Next steps include continuing hiring efforts, increase CAP response units, and increase call transfers from Police.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked when BHU were added to the CAP.

Ms. Ernst stated the funding for the BHU began in Fiscal Year 2021-22 and the first BHU was launched in September 2022.

Vice Mayor O'Brien asked data be provided since the inception of the Program to provide better perspective.

Vice Mayor asked when staffing was augmented to support the increase in the Program.

Ms. Ernst stated there was an increase in 2023 and recently, 18 additional staff members were added.

INFORMATION ONLY

6. Phoenix Police Department Recruitment, Hiring and Attrition Update

Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

7. Phoenix Fire Department Staffing and Response Time Update

Information only. No councilmember requested additional information.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Anne Ender asked for additional information regarding Police recruitment be shared. She expressed appreciation to the City Council for approving the TPT increase which will bring additional funding to the Fire Department.

Orla Bobo commented on the need to increase Fire Department resources to address the crisis being experienced now.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilman Waring asked for an update on parks security.

Assistant City Manager Bays indicated an update will be presented in June.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Destiny Dominguez
Management Fellow