

Attachment A

**Phoenix City Council
Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee
Summary Minutes
Wednesday, April 3, 2024**

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

Subcommittee Members Present
Councilwoman Ann O'Brien, Chair
Councilman Kevin Robinson
Councilman Jim Waring (Virtual)
Councilwoman Guardado

Subcommittee Members Absent

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman O'Brien called the Public Safety and Justice (PSJ) Subcommittee to order at 10:03 a.m. with Councilwoman Guardado, Councilman Kevin Robinson and Councilman Jim Waring present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

1. Minutes of the Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee Meeting

Councilman Waring made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2024, Public Safety and Justice Subcommittee meeting. Councilman Robinson seconded the motion which passed unanimously, 4-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION (ITEM 2)

2. Proposed Amendment to Camping Ordinance

Chairwoman O'Brien introduced Assistant City Attorney Luke Christian to present on this item.

Mr. Christian provided background on the City's camping policies in the current City code and gave a summary of the potential addition to 23-30.

Chairwoman O'Brien opened the floor to public comment.

Cody Brafford stated opposition to the proposal and provided testimony involving people they have worked with experiencing homelessness.

Tony Harris stated opposition to the proposal and concern regarding space in shelters to accommodate those who would be affected by this action.

Elizabeth Venable stated opposition to the proposal due to possible legal issues it could bring up.

Councilman Waring stated this proposal is the beginning of addressing the issue until there is a federal decision that will provide more guidance.

Assistant City Manager Lori Bays stated as the legal landscape changes staff will bring further information to Councilmembers for consideration.

Councilman Waring addressed each of the public comments and recognized their good intentions, but stated it was not fair for residents who feel as if they cannot use city amenities because of people experiencing homelessness camping there. He stated he thought this was a good first step to address this issue. He detailed his experiences seeing people panhandling on 7th Avenue and contacting Phoenix Police.

Councilwoman Guardado asked if the City needs to have enough beds before this ordinance can be enforced.

Mr. Christian recommended providing legal advice on specific circumstances in executive session.

Councilwoman Guardado stated she needs to know this information before she can vote on the item.

Mr. Christian stated the injunction being referenced would require that before the City enforces 23-30, there must be an available space at a shelter or an alternative space for people to camp.

Councilwoman Guardado asked what would happen if there were no beds available.

Mr. Christian stated that would impact the City's ability to enforce, but the injunction states if there is an alternative camping space available then the City could enforce.

Councilwoman Guardado asked how many beds were available today.

Director of the Office of Homeless Solutions Rachel Milne stated the number changes daily, but there are usually a handful available at any given time. She stated there are 790 beds in various stages of construction right now.

Councilwoman Guardado asked if this policy were to pass soon, how many beds would be available at that time.

Ms. Milne stated they do not anticipate bringing any new beds in the next few weeks, so the current count would be the same amount that would be available.

Councilwoman Guardado asked if this policy will be impossible to enforce if there were no beds available.

Mr. Christian stated the injunction allows for other alternative spaces, not just shelters.

Councilwoman Guardado asked if that means someone could just move 500 feet away from a school and then camp.

Mr. Christian stated assuming there were no other violations, that is correct.

Councilwoman Guardado stated this ordinance simply moves people 500 feet. She asked if she was correct in stating there were no shelter beds coming online in the next few months.

Ms. Milne stated that was correct.

Councilwoman Guardado stated she understands the challenges with this issue, and she sympathizes with people who feel they cannot use the parks due to people experiencing homelessness camping there. She stated she does not feel this proposal is the solution. She mentioned the need to add new shelter beds throughout the City, and although she will be supporting this item today, she wants real solutions to this issue. She stated she does not think this is fair for Phoenix Police either, as they will have to enforce this additional camping ban.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked what would happen if the Supreme Court upheld the Grants Pass v. Johnson case and if this ordinance would be in compliance with that decision.

Mr. Christian stated if the Supreme Court upheld Grants Pass, the status quo would remain as it is now.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if the ordinance would be in compliance with the decision if the case was upheld.

Mr. Christian stated recommended discussing these details in executive session.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if the Safe Outdoor Space is fully open.

Ms. Milne stated the Safe Outdoor Space currently has 107 individuals utilizing the space, with a capacity of up to 300 individuals.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if 500 beds were brought online in 2022 and if an additional 480 temporary beds were added in 2023.

Ms. Milne stated that was correct.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if the Safe Outdoor Space is considered a low-barrier entry facility.

Ms. Milne answered yes.

Chairwoman stated her office has been working with Arizona State University (ASU) to help provide legal resources and discussed the recent opening of the Community Court program. She stated the City is leading with services and residents want to feel safe at schools and daycares.

Councilman Waring moved to approve the motion, and Councilman Robinson seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-1.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION (ITEMS 3-4)

3. Opioid Response Planning: Environmental Scan Results

Chairwoman O'Brien introduced Public Health Advisor Nicole Witt and Dr. Michelle Shiota to present on this item.

Ms. Witt provided background on the City's efforts to address opioid use. She summarized the three assessments completed in 2023 including the Opioid and Substance Use Needs Assessment, Service Needs of People Who Use Drugs, and the City of Phoenix Community Opioid and Substance Use Survey. She discussed the Substance Use Needs Assessment and the 30 recommendations created from the survey results including common barriers in accessing services and strategies to fund prevention and treatment.

Dr. Shiota discussed the Phoenix Community Survey and stated it was completed by 765 residents. She stated 31 percent of the sample reported use of opioids in the past five years, and 70 percent of respondents felt this was a serious issue. She stated there was strong support for all areas of intervention included in the survey, and she summarized overall key takeaways.

Councilman Waring left the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

Ms. Witt provided next steps including bringing a five-year plan to Council for approval.

Councilwoman Guardado stated addiction is not a sign of weakness or moral failure, and there is hope for treatment. She asked for a briefing about how different groups can come together to support this effort.

Chairwoman O'Brien stated her interest in assisting with the prevention piece of this strategy. She stated she is looking forward to more data-proven strategies to address opioid use.

4. Community Assistance Program (CAP) Hiring, Recruitment, and Metric Report

Chairwoman O'Brien introduced Assistant Chief Raymond Ochoa and CAP Administrator D.C. Ernst to present on this item.

Recess at 10:54 a.m.

Meeting resumed at 10:55 a.m.

Ms. Ernst provided data on current staffing, recruitment efforts, and current units in-service. She provided a heat map indicating call volume throughout the City and Crisis Response Unit (CRU) locations. She provided data on individuals served, which differs from their number of calls because they often assist multiple people on scene. She presented another heat map with call locations and Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) locations. She summarized next steps including continuous hiring efforts.

Councilman Robinson asked if staff is having a difficult time hiring individuals or if the hiring process is slowing them down.

Ms. Ernst stated staff has had challenges in getting individuals to accept positions, and staff is working with Human Resources to address the issue.

Councilman Robinson thanked staff for the information.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if staff has considered bringing in employees at a level below the position description.

Ms. Bays stated the program utilizes interns and helps train them in the profession.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if ASU is the only higher-education organization the program works with.

Ms. Bays stated yes.

Chairwoman O'Brien asked if any community colleges have students who might be interested in assisting with this program.

Ms. Ernst stated yes, and staff is also looking at other schools to provide more internship opportunities.

INFORMATION ONLY (ITEMS 5-6)

5. Phoenix Police Department Hiring, Recruitment and Attrition Report

This item is for information only.

6. Fire Staffing and Response Time Update

This item is for information only.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chloe Baldwin
Management Fellow