

CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS  
CITY COUNCIL  
June 22, 2022

A workshop of the City Council of the City of Alamo Heights, Texas was held at the Council Chambers, located at 6116 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas, at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 22, 2022. A teleconference was held via Zoom.

Present and composing a quorum were:

Mayor Bobby Rosenthal  
Mayor Pro-Tempore Lawson Jessee  
Councilmember Wes Sharples  
Councilmember Lynda Billa Burke  
Councilmember John Savage

Also attending were:

City Manager Buddy Kuhn  
Assistant City Manager Phil Laney  
Assistant to City Manager Jennifer Reyna – Via Zoom  
City Secretary Elsa T. Robles  
Director of Finance Robert Galindo  
Human Resources Manager Brenda Jimenez  
Police Chief Rick Pruitt  
Fire Chief Michael Gdovin  
Community Development Services Director Lety Hernandez  
Public Works Director Pat Sullivan  
Deputy Police Chief Cindy Pruitt

Absent was:

Councilmember Blake M. Bonner

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Mayor Bobby Rosenthal opened the meeting 8:34 a.m.

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*Item # 1* Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

**Discuss the Strategic Action Plan for FY 23**

City Manager Buddy Kuhn welcomed Council and stated he and the department directors would provide a summary of FY 2021-2022 accomplishments and Strategic Action Plans for FY 2022-2023.

Mr. Kuhn presented a recap of FY SAP Initiatives for the Austin Hwy/Lower Broadway Project. The \$13.250 million in taxable G.O. Bonds is in the bank pending continued coordination with TxDOT. He stated he and Assistant City Manager Phil Laney had recently attended a meeting with TxDOT to discuss the project status. TxDOT is working on procuring a

new engineer for the project, possibly in July or August. Mr. Kuhn added staff is continuing to work with Overland, TBG, and WGI for the existing 6 lane configuration. The project is currently 1 year behind estimated start time.

Finance Director Robert Galindo provided further information on interest being earned on the \$13.250 million in funds for the project. He stated these funds were in the Lonestar Investment Pool earning a 1.3% interest rate with a current fund balance of \$13.274 million. Mr. Galindo informed Council the City had \$767,259 in American Rescue SLFRF Plan funds earning a 1.4% interest rate. The second half of the proceeds will be received in August 2022. These funds are to be used on eligible projects by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. Mr. Kuhn added the list of criteria for the use of ARPA funds was extended to include additional resources such as generators, fire trucks, police cars, supplement payroll, stormwater management, etc. He asked Council to think about how these funds could be used.

Mr. Kuhn updated Council on FY22 SAP initiatives. General Fund transfers were made for future landscaping. Originally the City's responsibility was for \$978,000 in contingency. He recently met with SARA and Bexar County funding regarding funding for future landscaping. Bexar County has extended a verbal commitment; however, funds have not been deposited yet. Mr. Kuhn advised the City would also need to issue of Certificates of Obligation for water and sewer line replacement and engineering. WGI Engineers identified pipe bursting would be a better option for this project.

Other future costs include \$120,000 estimated for Overland / TBG; however, an additional agreement has not been signed. For WGI Engineers, \$220,000 would come out of the Utility Fund for the design of the water and sewer project and \$80,000 was set aside for other engineering and corresponding fees. Mr. Kuhn stated this was Work Authorization #2 which never moved forward due to the project delay. He added staff was working on cost estimate to better budget in the next fiscal years. The landscaping cost is unknown, but may be less now with less surface to work with. The option of burying utility lines is also being explored.

In reference to SAP initiatives for City employees, Mr. Kuhn stated staff was considering a starting point of 3% for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees, a cost of \$240,000. Staff is studying a higher COLA to assist employees with inflation. Mr. Kuhn asked Human Resource Manager Brenda Jimenez to share her findings.

Ms Jimenez stated she was asked to explore what other surround communities were doing in reference to a COLA. In surveying other cities, she found the COLA range is between 3-5%. Of the 36 cities who responded, 31% is considering a 3% COLA; 19% considering a 5% COLA; 17% are considering higher than 5%, and one city who was considering a 10% COLA. She noted there were five cities who did mid-year COLAs and are also considering COLAs for FY 2022-2023.

Mr. Kuhn advised a 4% COLA could be considered to help employees with inflation. He would work with Councilmember John Savage in the next couple of months to ensure this is doable with next fiscal year's budget. Mr. Kuhn reminded Council they had approved a 3% COLA last year.

Regarding insurance proposals, Mr. Kuhn stated staff would be meeting with the City's insurance broker in the next few weeks to discuss any insurance increases. Last year there was a

3-3.5% increase with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Considering City employees had several claims this year, staff has budgeted a 15% increase for FY 2022-2023 in anticipation of a cost increase.

The Juneteenth Federal Holiday was observed on June 20, 2022. Mr. Kuhn noted Council had approved to adopt and observe Juneteenth as a federal holiday. Staff achieved this by substituting a floating holiday.

For the Centennial Celebration, Council approved the hiring of CE Group, Inc. who specializes in event and production management. Mr. Kuhn stated Assistant to City Manager Jennifer Reyna has been working behind the scenes with CE Group to plan the City's celebration. Staff is meeting weekly to continue planning efforts. The City turned 100 on June 20, 2022; however, due to weather and summer vacations, staff decided it's best to celebrate during a week-long event starting on Saturday, Oct. 1st – Saturday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Kuhn stated the planning is being narrowed down and an additional \$165,000 including 15% contingency fees will be budgeted in FY 2022-2023 to cover costs. Current planning includes: Children's activities – bounce house, face painting, balloon artist, clowns, etc.; Live music on stage, AHISD, possibility of Army Golden Knights, and other activities; Food Trucks, AH business booths; Fireworks or laser show – dependent on drought; Coordination of decor, beverage & bar service, tents, stage, stage preparations, photography, and portable restrooms/handwashing stations.

Mr. Kuhn reviewed FY 2022-2023 initiatives. The City's server needs upgrades due to aging of equipment installed in 2014. The replacement has started this year and will cost \$157,742 over 5 years at a 0.18% interest rate. Funds are available in the Capital Replacement fund. A Microsoft Office Migration is also in the works. The exchange server will be obsolete and no longer supported by 2023. This includes a one-time dual-factor authentication for all city-issued devices to ensure safety from computer hackers, ransomware, etc. Cost for Basic & Standard users is \$770/month and migration cost of one-time fee of \$5,590. It will keep the City on the cutting edge of technology and keep systems safe. Mr. Kuhn thanked Deputy Chief Cindy Pruitt for assisting with the server upgrades and computer issues in Ms. Reyna's absence.

As part of the FY 2022-2023 initiatives, staff is working on ADA Accessibility Website enhancements under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) will be followed and are issued by Department of Justice. This will allow users with disabilities improved user experience and access. The enhancements will work with Internet Direct and accessiBe to provide transcripts/closed captions of videos. The cost for this project is a one-time fee of \$3,500 and \$49/month for accessiBe.

In reference to the City's 5-Year SAP priorities, TxDOT will retain ownership of Broadway and future roadway maintenance costs. Staff has discussed having an inter-local agreement with TxDOT for future landscape maintenance. The Street Maintenance Plan goal is \$1,000,000/yr. The current dedicated sales tax was renewed by voter approval for 4 years. The dedicated ½% Sales Tax is approximately \$800,000 per year with a General Fund transfer goal of approximately \$200,000 per year. Staff will maximize transfers if needed from the General Fund for the Lower Broadway project. He noted there would be limited Council projects in future years; however, some feasible projects ideas for neighborhood project are pocket parks and pedestrian lighting.

Other staff goals are to keep property tax rate as low as possible by reducing debt service rate from 6.8 cents, original voter approved rate 7 cents. Mr. Galindo stated property valuations are up; however, the most we can increase the rates on valuations is 3.5% as capped by the State of Texas. He agreed the debt service can be lowered. Staff will continue with maximum transfers to Capital Replacement Fund for capital equipment and strive to maintain S&P AAA Bond Rating.

Mr. Kuhn announced that was the end of the Administration Presentation and ask Council for comments or questions.

Mayor Rosenthal pointed out the main Centennial celebration is a one night event; however, as Mr. Kuhn stated, other events are being planned for the week. Mayor Rosenthal added the City is coordinating with Alamo Heights ISD for the Howdy Parade. Staff will update Council on the event status in the next few weeks. He thanked Ms. Reyna who has been unbelievable in coordinating the event and keeping everyone informed.

Mayor Rosenthal discussed using the ARPA funds for a additional merit increases for employees along with a lower COLA percentage. Mr. Kuhn stated staff would look into it and discuss these options.

Mayor Pro Tem Lawson Jessee inquired if staff had explored other avenues to invest funds. Mr. Galindo stated the public funds are governed by the Texas Public Funds Investment Act which limits the City to only invest in safe entities such as the U.S. Treasury Bonds, CDs, etc. Mr. Galindo added the City uses investment pool because they are safe and have experience with public funds. The goal is not to lose money and keep it secure.

Councilmember Lynda Billa Burke asked if there was a Plan B for the centennial celebration in case of a rain event. Mr. Kuhn stated staff planned to hold the event the following Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> if needed.

Mr. Kuhn spoke briefly about a fireworks or light show. Staff had discussed these options; however, nothing has been finalized. He explained the centennial events will be free of charge; however, the public would pay for food and drinks. He noted the City is budgeting at 100% with no contributions; however, donations may be forthcoming. Council discussed option to advertise the event. Mr. Kuhn noted staff has put up banners and signs throughout the city. The media has also helped with promoting the event.

Public Works Director Pat Sullivan presented on the Public Works Department including Utilities. He identified the streets that had been completed and are currently in progress within the Street Maintenance Program (SMP). He reviewed FY 2021-2022 initiatives including the addition of other City streets to the maintenance plan and the request to replace two pickups, one in Public Works and one in Utilities. The vehicles were purchased and are on back order. The proposed FY 2022-2023 Capital Replacement includes the purchase of a new chassis and packer for garbage truck not to exceed \$200,000. This will replace a 2000 model garbage truck.

Mr. Sullivan stated the FY 2021-2022 SAP initiative for Utilities was completed. This was the installation of an emergency water supply natural gas back up motor at Well #4 located at Alamo Heights High School. Sewer upgrades by pipe bursting at Ogden and west to Basin are substantially complete. Initial budget for this project was \$535,000, the total cost was \$413,000.

An upgrade to the City's SCADA software system for water utility management is in progress. Staff had budgeted \$35,000; anticipated cost is up to \$60,000.

The proposed FY 2022-2023 Utilities department initiatives are the TCEQ Compliance for 4' X 2' requirement installation of 6 inch water mains along Wildrose, Cloverleaf & Rosemary at the cost of \$450,000. Additionally, the pre-installation upgrades to Well #3 at City Hall are necessary prior to installing a backup natural gas motor anticipated in 2024. The total estimated cost is \$140,000.

Mr. Sullivan stated the upgrades to backup motors ensure water supply will continue during a power outage emergency. The natural gas motors at Well #4 (AH High School) and #6 (City Hall) are able to meet peak demand with additional supply available. He added staff would replace the fencing around Well #4 at the High School.

Other proposed initiatives identified are the Water tank maintenance replacing the telecom screen covers along top of the 600,000 gallon composite water tank. Labor cost is \$50,000, the material cost is pending.

Mr. Sullivan outlined the five-year priorities for the Public Works Department which include extensive alley repairs as needed, pedestrian enhancements such as sidewalk improvement, and the Street Maintenance Program (SMP).

The five-year SAP priorities include the water and sewer lines which must have 4' X 2' minimum distance to comply with TCEQ, a requirement due by January 2030. The estimated cost is \$1.32M. Other priorities include the Lower Broadway Project Utility Identification to investigate customers being impacted by utility improvements, and a Capital Purchase of a Vactor Truck for proactive sewer maintenance.

Council briefly discussed current water restrictions and purchasing more water rights. Mr. Sullivan stated the City is currently in a healthy position, but will evaluate the situation through the remainder of the year.

Community Development Services Department Director Lety Hernandez stated last year staff considered eliminating the use of the GIS database; however, decided to keep and update the program to include recent replat/rezones to include more modification and be more user friendly. She stated eventually, she'd like to make it accessible to the public via the city's website.

In reference to sign regulations, Ms. Hernandez stated the City ended the moratorium on enforcement due to the pandemic. Goals for FY 2022-2023 are to resume enforcement while remaining business friendly and clarify sign vs. public art.

Ms. Hernandez informed Council on the transition to MyPermitsNow (MPN) which will provide customers and City Inspector with necessary information regarding project. The City will eliminate implementation of InCode Community Development Module (procured in FY20). Implementation of this program will allow for Code compliance to transition away from RMS, digitize the plan review process, allow the City Inspector access to complete project and approved plans, and will provide real time results of reviews and/or inspections.

Ms. Hernandez outlined other initiatives including code revisions for zoning, buildings, and signs. Zoning codes need clarity on Residential Design Standards to correct inconsistencies due to previous revisions. The City adopted the 2021 Building codes and is currently aligned with latest industry standards. Sign codes will address curbside pick-up and separate signs from public art.

Mayor Pro Tem Jessee noted in light of recent multi-family projects, parking requirements and density requirements need to be reviewed and updated for future project development. Setbacks could also be reviewed to have a 5ft or 8 ft setback to allow for sidewalks, etc.

Council discussed other budgetary initiatives. To help with park beautification, they suggested having a specific fund to help the local parks with beautification projects of \$25,000. Mr. Kuhn stated staff could explore setting funds aside for park beautification. Council agreed to explore purchasing a one-time commemoration not to exceed \$200,000 to mark the City's Centennial Anniversary. Mayor Rosenthal suggested staff research and decide what the item will be before budgeting for it. Mr. Kuhn advised there is an estimated \$900,000 in surplus that could be utilized for this project. Mayor Pro Tem Jessee also suggested the purchase of "firefly lights" to replace the current lights at La Jara. Council agreed and asked staff to check on pricing.

Police Chief Rick Pruitt presented a summary of the Police Department's FY 2021-2022 initiatives. The Police Department developed and implemented a leadership development program for AHPD officers. The Carry Forward Program was developed; however, staffing shortages have delayed the project. AHPD also implemented the Enhanced Officer/Dispatcher Physical and Mental Evaluation and Assistance Program. This added psychological safety evaluations to the existing physical assessment program and now includes dispatchers. Evaluations are performed annually and mental services are provided as needed to a point. If it's determined additional assistance is needed, they may be referred to their insurance or if it is work related, to Workers' Compensation.

Police Chief Pruitt summarized FY 2021-2022 SAP which included the purchase of thirty (30) hand held radios to replace current inventory. The radios are purchased and are currently in use with an added three year extended warranty. The cost savings is \$38,000. AHPD ordered ten (10) replacement mobile radios scheduled for replacement in FY2024 with a cost savings of \$51,600 (50%). The department achieved 75% paperless operation with reduction in new paper records accomplished. The next goal is 85% paperless operation.

Proposed SAP Initiatives for FY 2022-2023 include purchasing an Alarm Permit Software Package to help with permit status and automated billing. Staff will look into Incode billing availability, but will continue to use the City's website for permit applications and to update contact information. Another initiative considered is amending City Code Chapter 10, Section 10-8 Noise Nuisance to establish an appropriate maximum allowed noise decibel level and model it after City of San Antonio's (COSA) city code who allow 63 decibels in residential areas and 70 decibels in business locations.

Police Chief Pruitt reviewed strategies for recruiting Police Officers. AHPD is considering academy sponsorship, including employment during academy. He stated staff was exploring options to retain employees and stated he would be looking at updating the employment contract, modeling it after contracts from Live Oak and Universal City. The City

Labor Attorney will review the agreement for consideration. Police Chief Pruitt noted AHPD loses candidates because other cities recruit them, put them through the academy, and bring them on after graduation. Mayor Pro Tem Jessee asked if new employees were asked to stay for 3 years after being put through the academy and hired. Mr. Kuhn noted it's difficult to get an agreement that is binding. The City can't make an employee stay.

As part of the proposed FY 2022-2023 SAP initiatives, staff desired to update police handguns with optic aiming systems. This allows the officer to keep both eyes open and keep their peripheral vision during an emergency situation. The systems are considered the safest holster options and will have not budget impact.

Police Chief Pruitt due to the recent events in Uvalde and threats against schools, AHISD requested the addition of two SRO officers now and two more in a progressive plan for a total of five SRO officers. This would establish Police presence on selected campuses now and all campuses in future. The campuses include: Alamo Heights High School, Cambridge Elementary, Alamo Heights Junior High, Woodridge Elementary, and Howard Elementary. He stated the City would be doing a drill on July 21, 2022 where PD, Fire & EMS will report and simulate an emergency situation where they will stabilize the threat, evacuate, and treat patients. Council discussed response times for emergency situations and officers knowing the layout of the AH schools. Their concern was, if SAPD responds first, they will not know the layout unless they train at the schools. Police Chief Pruitt noted the SRO would be the first to response after the 911 call.

Police Chief Pruitt reviewed the SRO Program Funding Considerations. The percentage of cost share for FY 2022-2023 salary including benefits is \$90,348 per SRO. The current agreement with AHISD is 75%, \$67,761 and COAH is 25%, \$22,587. Budgeting three SROs at the current share equals to AHISD - \$203,283 and COAH - \$67,761. The pay rate options for SRO officers is campus only vs. PD ready. The cost of equipment is \$10,000 each and vehicles are currently in AHPD inventory. There will be a shared cost of SRO Program supervisory/administrative officer. A FY22 budget amendment may be necessary to fund two additional officers by mid-August. Some challenges identified include finding two SRO qualified officers before school is in session in the Fall, budget impact for COAH and AHISD, and ISD Board President inquired about TH and OP contribution. Some alternatives for AHISD are to license their own law enforcement agency, or contract with another law enforcement agency. Mayor Pro Tem Jessee stated he wanted to be a good partner with the ISD and wanted to keep the children as safe as possible. After some discussion, Council asked staff to renegotiate with AHISD on the SRO program terms.

Additional 5-year priorities include an ongoing study on police reforms; adjusting operations/ policies/training as mandated and maintaining accreditation standards. AHPD will study on-street parking to find progressive approach to resolving current and anticipated parking issues. Police Chief Pruitt noted staff will expand non-enforcement driver safety awareness efforts with electronic awareness signs and improve police preparedness for response to critical, life-threatening situations.

Mayor Rosenthal inquired if the July 21<sup>st</sup> training will include emergency sirens, etc. Police Chief Pruitt stated it will be more of a staging and procedure simulation. Staff will work on community awareness to avoid creating public panic. Mayor Rosenthal stated he agreed with

Mayor Pro Tem Jessee and added it would be beneficial for police departments to know the layout of the schools when responding to emergency situations.

Fire Chief Michael Gdovin reported on the Fire Department's FY 2021-2022 SAP summary. He stated the department continued tree trimming in right-of-way, continued progress with Texas Fire Chief's Association Best Practices recognition program, engaged with Insurance Services Office Audit for assessment and rating. AHFD posted safety videos to Fire Department website and resumed live fire training in April 2022.

Other FY 2021-2022 initiatives included programs for "Geriatric Emergency Management", "Stop the Bleed", and "Civilian Response to Active Shooter/Active Attack Events". Additional pharmaceuticals were added: Tranexamic Acid which is a whole blood substitute and the antibiotic Cefepime.

Fire Chief Gdovin shared FY2022-2023 Fire Department initiatives. Staff will continue working with code enforcement for on-going tree trimming. There will be continued progress with Texas Fire Chief's Association Best Practices recognition program. Public education will focus on smoke detector awareness, "Civilian Response to Active Shooter/Active Attack Events", and CPR training. The department will upgrade fire data software, update Emergency Management Annexes (7 of 23) in Texas All Hazards Planning Systems Program, update Bexar County Office of Emergency Management Hazard Plan and work to develop Benevolence Committee.

Other FY 2022-2023 initiatives are the renewal of the Texas Department of State Health Services Continuing Education Program, renewal of Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) Program to add blood draws for septic patients, develop an Emergency Medical Services Standard Medical Operations Protocols Application for cell phone access, and develop personnel wills for staff. Additionally, the department will work to integrate Emergency Medical Services with Alamo Area Metro Special Weapons and Tactics Rescue Task Force, integrate Bexar County Mental Health with Emergency Medical Services system, obtain ultrasound technology, and draft a new Emergency Medical Services Billing contract for Tri-Cities.

Fire Chief Gdovin reviewed the five-year Fire Capital Replacement plan to fund the purchase of an F250 crew cab 4x4, 2 desktop radios, 2 mobile truck radios, and 10 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). The five-year EMS Capital Replacement plan includes funding for 1 medic unit stretcher, 2 stretchers, 4 cardiac monitors, and 9 Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Fire Chief Gdovin shared he and his department participate in assisting other departments anywhere in Texas if they call for emergency assistance. He stated they had assisted with emergency efforts in during the Uvalde school shooting. Council thanked them for helping these communities.

In closing, Mr. Kuhn reviewed budgetary initiatives Council asked staff to work on. He listed "firefly" light upgrade on La Jara, \$200,000 public art for Centennial commemoration, Overland, TBG, and WGI to be determined, \$165,000 for the Centennial Celebration, consultant to help with TxDOT funding of \$90,000, \$25,000 for park improvements, SRO cost of \$22,000



for next fiscal year, and \$80,000 for a possible 4% COLA for employees. Mr. Kuhn stated the approximate cost for these initiatives is \$610,000 without the use of ARPA funds.

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With no further business to consider, Mayor Rosenthal adjourned the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2022.**

  
Elsa T. Robles, TRMC  
City Secretary

  
Bobby Rosenthal  
Mayor

