

**SEATTLE RENTERS' COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Monday, August 3, 2020

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Webex Meeting

Approved September 14, 2020

Commissioners Present: Dinah Braccio, Calvin Jones, Marci Taitt-Lamar, Gina Owens, ChrisTiana Obey Sumner, Jessica Westgren

Commissioners Absent: Laurie Goff (E), Daniela Lopez (E), Mac McGregor (E)

Commission Staff: Shaquan Smith, Department of Neighborhoods

Guests: *Mr. Andres Mantilla, Director, Department of Neighborhoods
Ms. Angela Socci, Budget Director, Seattle Police Department
Ms. Adrienne Thompson, Policy Director, Office of the Mayor
Mr. Sonny Nguyen, Office of the Mayor, External Affairs
Mr. Paul Quinorez, Office of the Mayor, External Affairs*

(Transcriber's Note: Seattle Renter's Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript and represent key points and the basis of discussion. The recording of the minutes is available upon request.)

Welcome & Housekeeping

- Ms. Jessica Westgren opened the meeting. Brief introductions and check-in followed.
- Mr. Andres Mantilla, Director of the Department of Neighborhoods introduced the presenters to present the Seattle Police Department (SPD) budget. Ms. Angela Socci, Budget Director of SPD will walk through the presentation and staff members from the Mayor's Office External Affairs Team will discuss the next steps. Ms. Adrienne Thompson, Policy Director of the Mayor's Office will be available to answer questions that are not related to the budget.
- Mr. Mantilla facilitated the meeting by fielding questions from the Commissioners. He mentioned that the goal is to provide space to ask questions that are related to the budget as well as policy decisions. He added that any questions that were not answered will be noted and forwarded to the appropriate person for follow-up.
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2021 SPD Budget Engagement (11:00)

- Mr. Mantilla commented as they continue to have these conversations with other Commissions and build community engagements, the information from the presentation will be updated.

- Ms. Socci began her presentation by acknowledging the negative experience the Commissioners may have with the SPD. She noted that SPD needs to be better and this presentation in response to a call to divest and increase the investments to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.
- She added that she may not have all the answers related to the organizational structure, accountability, labor contracts, etc. and that all these questions will be noted and forwarded to the appropriate individuals for follow up.
- She commented that this Commission can help provide recommendations on how to divest SPD's funds.
- Ms. Socci briefly explained and summarized the impact of the pandemic on the current and proposed budget.
- She noted that there is a projected shortfall to the general fund budget by \$125 million. She added that by addressing this projected shortfall will provide a roadmap for the reinvestment proposals.
- Ms. Socci summarized the budget process as well as the breakdown of the general fund expenditures.
- A question was asked about judgment claims and Ms. Socci responded that there is a Central Budget account where City departments pay into a claims fund. This fund pays for claims filed against the city, lawsuits, any settlement accounts.
- Ms. Socci presented the budget organized by functions and positions and employees associated with each specific function. She also noted that top eight functions within SPD.
- Ms. Christianna Obey Sumner asked about how officers' training and education around equity are handled as part of the budget, and Ms. Socci noted the question and she will get back with an answer. She mentioned that there was an interest in bringing in external trainers to deliver and facilitate implicit bias training. She commented that she is unable to speak about any specific training programs.
- Ms. Socci mentioned that due to the pandemic, SPD did reductions to the 2020 budget including a hiring freeze, reduced overtime, travel, training, supply purchases as well as delaying any facilities and IT projects. These budget reductions are being reviewed by the City Council.
- Ms. Westgren asked about overtime and she would like to see more overtime reductions. Ms. Socci noted that they are currently reviewing the overtime usage and noted that the City is obligated to pay overtime for a specific type of work. She added that most overtime is due to staff special events and meeting the minimum staff requirements and training.
- Ms. Gina Owens commented about the hiring freeze and asked why it was too low. Ms. Socci responded that SPD committed not to hire a specific amount of people and noted that several vacancies or anticipated vacancies will not be filled. She added that there is a hiring freeze for new police officers in 2020 until SPD gets an input from the community about police revisioning and determining the revenue impact for next year.
- Ms. Westgren commented that any special or sporting events should be paid by the sports franchises by hiring their security. Ms. Socci noted that about \$7-8 million overtime budget is funded through the reimbursements of overtime from these special events. She added that SPD will bring in less money if there are no special or sporting events taken place.
- Ms. Socci commented that they are currently soliciting community input for the proposed SPD 2021 preliminary budget proposal.
- She added that there are potential challenges with the budget proposals. She commented that the City is preparing and researching on how to proceed with these constraints. The potential solutions include rethinking how to deliver community safety services, ask the legislators to rewrite state laws, negotiate contracts with the police unions, and transferring services to external parties.

Discussions:

- Mr. Mantilla introduced Sunny from the Mayor's Office External Affairs and Ms. Adrienne Thompson, Policy Director for the Mayor's Office to answer questions about policies and listen to ideas and suggestions.
- He asked the Commission if there are any other information or data they would like to see from the presentation and how they see advocating for community safety.

- Ms. Westgren commented about focusing on resources and advocating social services and social workers who work with the vulnerable communities.
- Mr. Calvin Jones asked if there any measurements or outcomes regarding SPD's impact on the community. Ms. Thompson mentioned that there are several accountability measures in place that investigate different measures of effectiveness including the Office of Police Accountability (OPA), Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and the Community Police Commission (CPC).
- Ms. Obey-Sumner asked about the major pain points about reducing the budget by 50%, and Ms. Socci noted that they considered hearing from the community about reimagining and budget reductions the communities would like to see. She added that they are doing several community engagements and talking with different community groups to solicit feedback.
- Ms. Socci acknowledged that impacts on layoffs are challenging due to the collective bargaining agreement with the police union.
- Ms. Thompson commented that the City was looking at other cities about shifting functions to the County and have King County run the police department. She noted that due to the current labor laws, it is up to the State Legislature to make changes.
- Ms. Owens commented that the \$20 million reductions are too low, and Ms. Socci noted that SPD is still exploring other reduction areas and there will be more information available for the 2021 budget proposal.
- Ms. Dinah Braccio commented about the police union contract and how does it play with the budget reduction, and Ms. Thompson mentioned that there is no layoff language in the contract. Any potential layoffs require collective bargaining with the union that both parties agree before issuing any layoffs.
- Ms. Westgren commented about reimagining public safety and the importance of language. She noted that there are very educated and passionate people in the community that offers suggestions on how to improve public safety and she wants the City to focus on that.
- Ms. Marci Taitt-Lamar commented about arrest policies especially to the LGBTQ communities and instances on domestic violence survivors get arrested and embolden abusers. She noted that diverting funds to help these victims are important.
- Ms. Braccio commented about the transfer of police functions to the County will make it even worse because it does not change how law enforcement is handled. Ms. Thompson mentioned that this example was presented because of what they learned and researched what other cities are doing.
- Ms. Owens shared her experience with the use of tear gas and flash bombs while the SPD was dispersing the protestors. She was concerned about the number of chemicals in the air that personally affected her health. She expressed her concern about how the money is being spent on crowd control. Ms. Thompson commented that several people are looking at these events and OPA is currently doing their report about crowd control measures. She added to write and express their concerns about SPD's behavior.
- Ms. Owens added that she wrote a letter to the Mayor's Office and the City Council and she has not heard any response back. Ms. Thompson noted that she will track the letter and she will get back to her.
- Ms. Westgren also suggested diverting resources to safe housing as well as community support services that handle domestic violence, immigrant communities, etc.
- Ms. Owens agreed that funding homelessness is very important. She noted that social workers should be assisting the homeless instead of having the Navigation Team and officers clearing the homeless camps.
- Ms. Braccio suggested more funding on mental health issues and having a dedicated resource to help the community that is experiencing mental health problems.
- Mr. Quinorez and Mr. Nguen commented that they are taking notes from this meeting and they will be sending Mr. Smith about what they heard from the Commission as well as provide any additional information for follow-up.
- Mr. Nguyen mentioned that they are currently working on an informational tool for the community to look at the different functions and budget line items as well as a survey to share.

- Ms. Westgren also suggested not to spend SPD's budget on special and sporting events.

Commissioner Opportunity to Share

- There were no opportunities to share from the Commissioners.

Adjourn

- No further business being held before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.