

OSCAR LEESER
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3
JOE MOLINAR, DISTRICT 4
ISABEL SALCIDO, DISTRICT 5
CLAUDIA L. RODRIGUEZ, DISTRICT 6
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
December 13, 2021
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL AND VIRTUALLY
9:05 AM

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The City Council of the City of El Paso met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. Mayor Oscar Leeser was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Peter Svarzbein, Casandra Hernandez, Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Claudia Rodriguez, Henry Rivera, and Cissy Lizarraga. Aleksandra Annello requested to be excused.
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AGENDA

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1. Presentation and discussion by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Cross-Functional Team providing information on key activities, efforts and processes.

1. Overview (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, began the presentation by saying that the number of positive cases continued to rise with a positivity rate of 21% which was causing an impact to hospital capacity. Mr. Gonzalez added that a third of new cases were breakthrough cases and stated that among youths, a total of 59% were partially vaccinated while 33% were fully vaccinated. Mr. Gonzalez continued the overview by saying that the City was leading the State in the number of vaccinations and the positivity rate. He highlighted that vaccination boosters were available at City sites for those age 18 and older.

2. City Attorney Overview (Karla Nieman)

- a) Greg Abbott, in his official capacity as Governor of Texas, v. City of El Paso & Statewide Mask Mandate Litigation
- b) Additional Updates

Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney, continued the presentation by explaining that the case filed by parents of disabled children related to the mask mandate was on hold and said the Federal Transportation Mask Mandate had been extended through March 18, 2022. She closed her briefing by stating that the Federal Contractor Vaccine Mandate required vaccination of federal contractors by January 4, 2022.

3. Team Lead Report:

- a) Health Focus (Hector Ocaranza, M.D.)
- b) Data Analysis (David Coronado)

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, continued the presentation by highlighting

the sharp upward trend in community transmission and explaining the importance of vaccinations, boosters, and therapeutic measures such as infusions.

Mr. David Coronado, Managing Director for International Bridges and Economic Development, provided information related to southbound bridge crossings by highlighting the upward trend in vehicle and pedestrian traffic. He added that the City would provide support at the Stanton and Bridge of the Americas in an effort to mitigate traffic and long wait times. Mr. Coronado also explained that El Paso International Airport traffic was similar to pre-pandemic levels and said the value of the peso was gradually recovering.

The following City staff members responded to questions posed by Members of the City Council:

- Ms. Laura Cruz- Acosta, Strategic Communications Director
- Fire Chief Mario D'Agostino
- Ms. Angela Mora, Public Health Director

4. City Manager Wrap-up (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, closed the presentation by encouraging the public to practice prevention methods and seek free testing available while providing the vaccination and testing locations available throughout the City.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

2. **Presentation and discussion by the Medical Center of the Americas "MCA" on their annual report on status of activities during the fiscal year, use of grant funds, and progress in the performance measures required under the agreement with the City of El Paso.**

Ms. Denisse Carter, Contract Compliance Coordinator, Economic and International Development, introduced the item.

The following representatives from the Medical Center of the Americas presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office) and responded to questions from Members of the City Council:

- Ms. Emma Schwartz, President
- Ms. Michaela Linden-Johnson, Director of Clinical Trials and Business Development

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Salcido, and Rivera commented.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

3. **Presentation and update from the El Paso Electric Company on its application with the Public Utility Commission of Texas to approve its Advanced Metering System ("AMS") deployment plan, AMS surcharge, and Non-Standard (non-AMS) metering**

service fees.

The following representatives from El Paso Electric, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office) and responded to questions from Members of the City Council:

- Ms. Cynthia Pina, Regional Vice President
- Mr. James "Jim" Schichtl, Vice President of Regulatory and Government Affairs

Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney, commented.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, and Rivera commented.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

4. City Attorney Office End of Year Report.

The following City staff members presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office)

- Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney
- Ms. Nicole Anchondo, Assistant City Attorney, Litigation Division
- Mr. Juan Gonzalez, Senior Assistant City Attorney, Transactional Division
- Ms. Rebecca Quinn, Assistant City Attorney, Open Records Division
- Eric Gutierrez, Prosecution Division

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Molinar and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representatives Svarzbein

ABSENT: Representative Anello

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Laura D. Prine, City Clerk