

**Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting
22 January/5 February 2024
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All nine councilors were present at both the January 22 and February 5 meetings: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – **District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.**

Albuquerque Police Department (APD) DWI Unit

At the January 22 meeting Councilors expressed frustration about the lack of communication from the city administration and APD leadership about a federal investigation into APD's DWI unit. Councilors wondered why they did not receive information from City admin or APD leadership prior to hearing about it on the news. Councilors also expressed concern about a lack of communication with the public and urged that the mayor use a public forum to provide greater transparency into the issue. Councilors expressed concern about low morale in the department and urged the leadership to speak out in support of officers who do the right thing. Police Chief Medina was not present at the meeting, but the Deputy Chief assured councilors that APD was taking the situation seriously and cooperating with the FBI.

Police Chief Medina was in attendance at the February 5 meeting. (Some councilors had sent him a letter requesting his attendance at the meeting.) Councilors asked him about department processes relating to DWI unit court appearances by officers. Councilor Sanchez called the Chief's previous response that the District Attorney's office was responsible for notifying APD of missed court appearances "deflection" and "absurd". Later in the meeting Councilor Sanchez moved to place a resolution on the next meeting's agenda to remove Chief Media for failed leadership. The motion received no second and the resolution will not appear on the next agenda.

Communication and Boundaries Between Equal Government Branches

Councilors expressed concern about a member of the administration entering the Council offices after hours. Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Sengel used her access badge to enter the Council office to deliver a notification about Air Quality Board appointees after the office was closed for the day. Discussion ensued, including a request from Councilor Bassan that the Council receive keys to the Mayor's office, "what's good for the goose is good for the gander.". The Council will draft and pass a set of processes to follow in the future.

Hospitality Renewal Initiative Working Group

Councilors Grout and Rogers teamed up to sponsor R-24-5, a resolution creating a The Hospitality Renewal Initiative Working Group to make recommendations for the motel voucher program within the city. The working group includes members from city departments: Health Housing and Homelessness, Code Enforcement, Community Safety, Fire, and Police departments, Mayor's office, two community members knowledgeable about hotel operation, and two community members familiar with the voucher program. The City Council unanimously passed the resolution. [R-24-5](#)

General Comments

January 22nd general comments from the public:

- One comment requesting that the Council send a message to Washington D.C. urging action to end the genocide in Gaza and call for a cease-fire.

- One comment calling for APD to take action into excessive use of force and corruption.
- One comment citing concerns about conditions at the Juvenile Detention Center and calling for better leadership there.

February 5th general comments from the public:

- One comment suggesting an alternative solution to homelessness crisis that is being used in Houston: using small group homes of 4-6 individuals with an on-site counselor.
- One comment calling for improved education. This speaker had recently been to another state and seen an education system with smaller class sizes and increased resources, which could help the education system in Albuquerque.
- One speaker from the Police Athletic League (PAL) spoke of frustrations in dealing with the city about the facility it has used. (According to its website and statements by Councilor Sanchez, PAL provides mentorship and support to at-risk youth through athletic.) The city has given a vacate notice to PAL and the speaker felt not enough has been done to find alternate site. City administration officials and Councilor Bassan also spoke about their knowledge of the issue which implied there is more to the story than the facility issues.