



Public Safety Commission Meeting

December 11, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

5805 North Lamar Blvd, Building A

Austin, TX 78752

Summary

(This report represents a summary of events of the meeting, and is not necessarily complete nor an exact transcript of testimony.)

The Public Safety Commission convened as posted to consider and take formal action, if necessary, on the following agenda items:



I. CALL TO ORDER

9:10 am – Chairman Steven Mach called the meeting to order and apologized for the delayed start due to technical difficulties. In attendance: Chairman Steven Mach, Commissioner Nelda Blair, Commissioner Larry Long, Commissioner Dan Hord III, and Commissioner Steve Stodghill. A quorum of the Public Safety Commission was present. Also present were Director Freeman Martin, Lt. Colonel Jason Taylor and General Counsel Phil Adkins.

II. INVOCATION

Chaplain Ferman Carpenter delivered the invocation.

III. PLEDGES

Trooper Calixto Lopez led the meeting in the Pledge of Alliance and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Blair to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2025, Public Safety Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Long. The motion passed.

Chairman Mach asked Chief Jason Hester to discuss the fantastic transformation of old D P S

cafeteria into Legacy Hall. Chief Hester thanked the Director, and said that the project was a long and complicated one and could not have been accomplished without the help of his Infrastructure and Facilities staff who did an outstanding job, as well as contributions from a number of other DPS staff and departments including: mechanical and plumbing, HVAC, electrical, AV techs, contracting, accounting, locks, signage, mural painting, custodial staff (unsung heroes) and grounds crews who cleaned up the area around the construction and planted to make the entrance nice. I'm sure I may have missed some of the many people who worked to make this space happen.

Chairman Mach thanked Chief Hester for the report and especially for the terrific job the he and his team did.

V. PRESENTATIONS

(The DPS Public Information Office provided the following information from today's meeting.)

August 2025 Public Safety Commission Awards Presentations

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE AWARDS:

The following employees were presented with a certificate in recognition of their **30 years** of service and accomplishment with the Texas Department of Public Safety:



James Blacknell (CI Division)



Johnny Butler, Jr. (THP Division)



Timothy Caradine (THP Division)



Lisa Cargill (Regulatory Services Div.)



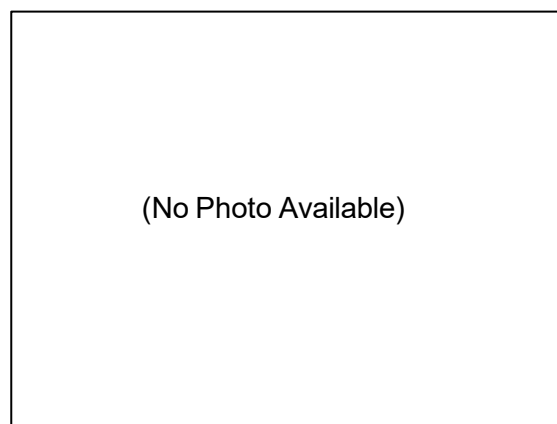
Daniel Conte (IT Division)



James Davidson (THP Division)



James Galyean (THP Division)



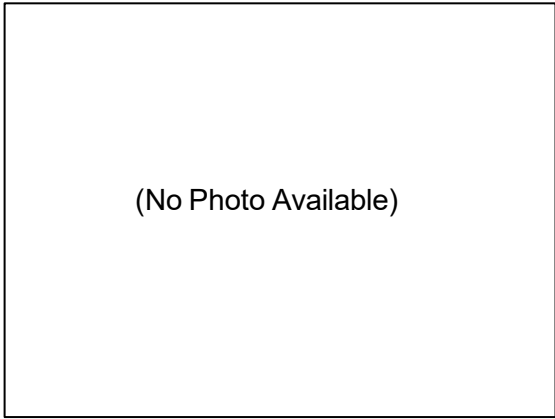
Kevin Gerik (Infrastructure Op. Div.)
(Photo Not Available)



Tyler Harpole (THP Division)



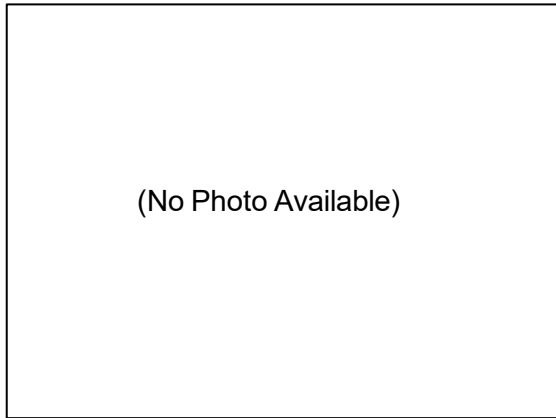
Vincent Luciano (L E Operations)



David Pena (THP Division)



Jodie Tullos (IT Division)



Eisenhower Upshaw, Jr. (Tx. Ranger Division)



Brian Vajdos (Criminal Investigations Division)



Robert Watts (THP Division)

The following employee was presented a certificate in recognition of their **35 years** of service and accomplishment with the Texas Department of Public Safety:



Edwina Brown (Driver License Division)

The following employee was presented a certificate in recognition of his **50 years** of service and accomplishment with the Texas Department of Public Safety:



A.J. Medina (Texas Highway Patrol Division)

PURPLE HEART: **Scott Keane (THP)**

On November 7, 2024, Corporal Scott Keane assisted the North Reagan County Volunteer Fire Department with extricating a trapped subject at a motor vehicle crash. As Corporal Keane held the hydraulic lines of the “jaws of life,” enabling a firefighter to shear off the roof to rescue the trapped subject, the front left side curtain



airbag unexpectedly deployed. The detonation of the curtain airbag caused the inflator tube to become a projectile, striking Keane in his right forearm. Corporal Keane was immediately treated at the scene for his incapacitating injury and then transported to a local hospital, where he underwent surgery to repair separate breaks and several muscle tears.

In recognition of his great personal sacrifice and professional performance of law enforcement duties, during which he sustained serious bodily injuries, **Trooper Scott Keane** is hereby awarded the Purple Heart.

PURPLE HEART:

Derrick Waters (THP)

On September 27, 2024, Trooper Derrick Waters was conducting a traffic stop in Harris County as part of the DWI Task Force aimed at reducing fatality crashes. While outside his patrol unit engaging in a standard seven-step violator contact, a vehicle traveling on the main lanes veered off the roadway striking Trooper Waters' patrol unit, the violator's vehicle and Trooper Waters himself. The driver of the vehicle fled the scene but was later apprehended and charged with multiple counts. The impact of the crash caused Trooper Waters to sustain severe, life-threatening injuries and was transported to a trauma center where he was immediately admitted into the Intensive Care Unit. After remaining hospitalized for several days, Trooper Waters was transferred to a rehabilitation facility to begin an extensive recovery process.



In recognition of his great personal sacrifice and professional performance of law enforcement duties, during which he sustained serious bodily injuries, **Trooper Derrick Waters** is hereby awarded the Purple Heart.

LIFESAVING AWARD:

Justin Derr (THP)

In the early morning hours of October 13, 2022, while on duty near Rocksprings, Texas, Trooper Justin Derr received a BOLO alert for a vehicle suspected of human smuggling. Upon locating the vehicle, Trooper Derr initiated a traffic stop, resulting in a pursuit northbound on US Highway 377, with the suspect vehicle reaching speeds of up to 90 miles per hour. The chase continued for more than 30 minutes until the suspect lost control on a curve, causing the vehicle to overturn upside down in a low water crossing in Kimble County.

Without hesitation and at great personal risk,



Trooper Derr entered the water and began rescue operations. The vehicle's cab was submerged, trapping multiple occupants. Trooper Derr, joined by a US Border Patrol Agent and other responding officers, repeatedly dove beneath the surface to locate and free those trapped inside. Using a hammer provided by a Kimble County Deputy, he broke the driver's window and worked tirelessly to extract victims one by one.

Over the course of approximately twenty-five minutes, Trooper Derr successfully rescued five individuals from the overturned vehicle, four of whom survived the incident. Despite cold, darkness, and dangerous conditions, Trooper Derr continued returning to the submerged truck until every occupant was accounted for.

In recognition of his significant and decisive response to a life-threatening situation resulting in the saving lives,

Trooper Justin Derr is hereby awarded the Lifesaving Award.

LIFESAVING AWARD:

Craig Henry (THP)

On September 6, 2025, while off duty and traveling with his family in Cedar Park, Texas, Lieutenant Craig Henry encountered a crash involving an unresponsive driver who had suffered a medical emergency, causing the vehicle to strike a bridge pillar. The male driver appeared to have suffered a cardiac event. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, Lieutenant Henry immediately called 911 and, with the assistance of other officers, removed the subject from the vehicle and initiated CPR. Lieutenant Henry continued life-saving measures until Cedar Park Fire Department and Williamson County EMS personnel arrived and assumed care. The subject regained a pulse and was later reported to be in stable condition.



In recognition of his significant and decisive response to a life-threatening situation resulting in the saving of a life, **Lieutenant Craig Henry** is hereby awarded the Lifesaving Award.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

(Members of the public wishing to address the Commission are subject to a time limit of 5 minutes and must complete a Public Comment Registration Card located at the entry. Should a member of the public bring an item to the Commission for which the subject was not posted on the agenda of the meeting, state law provides that the Commission may receive the information but cannot act upon it at the meeting. The Commission may

direct staff to contact the requestor or request that the issue be placed on a future agenda for discussion.)

Chairman Mach asked Sophie Yanez if the one sign up card that he held was the only one submitted and she confirmed that it was.

Hakeem Abdulah, of Austin, thanked the Commission and stated that he came representing himself and his family only. He mentioned that he had once worked for DPS right after many years ago and enjoyed his time there and still has many friends that he met while working there.

He stated that on November 18, 2025, Governor Abbott issued a declaration designating the Muslim Brotherhood and the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) as foreign terrorist organizations and transnational criminal organization under Texas Penal Code §71.01(e), prohibiting land acquisitions via Property Code §5.254 and authorizing Attorney General lawsuits to dismantle operations. Texas is the first state in the U.S. to assign CAIR and the Muslim Brotherhood this designation. The United States has not yet made such a declaration.

I would like to ask DPS if they have any legally sufficient evidence to back up the allegations that these organizations are deserving of these designations.

I appreciate your time and service.

VII. DIRECTORS REPORT

A. Colonel's Update

Colonel Freeman Martin began by agreeing with Chairman Mach that the Awards Presentations are always the highlight of the Public Safety Commission meetings and pointed out the numerous 30-year service awards presented at the meeting, noting this as a strong indicator of organizational health. He emphasized the department's strategic shift over the past decade, focusing on improved training operations, HR practices, and employee retention.

Key initiatives include:

- Conducting recruit surveys to understand motivations for joining DPS*
- Implementing continuous improvement strategies based on feedback from each recruit class*
- Developing career development programs to retain officers through 30+ year careers*
- Recognition of Colonel Goodson and his team for their work in training operations and recruitment*

Colonel stated that he has two areas to report on:

1. Repeat Offenders Program in Houston/Harris County (60-Day Update)

Colonel Martin provided a comprehensive update on the Repeat Offenders Program launched in October 2025, which targets the small population (approximately 1%) responsible for an estimated 63% of violent crime and 90% of repeat offenses. The program is a collaborative effort with:

- Harris County Sheriff's Department*
- Houston Police Department*
- Katy Police Department, Jersey Village, and other local agencies*

Results for October-November 2025 (60-Day Period):

- 193 total arrests (86 criminal arrests + 107 fugitive arrests)
- 135 repeat offenders arrested
- 121 high-threat criminal arrests
- 85 drug seizures
- 3 currency seizures
- 30 weapons seized
- 4 stolen vehicles recovered
- 165 warrants served
- 77 gang member encounters
- 8 robbery suspects apprehended
- 9 aggravated robbery investigations initiated

Colonel Martin highlighted specific high-value arrests, including individuals with active warrants for capital murder, multiple murder charges, sexual assault of minors, and extensive criminal histories spanning 20+ years. These arrests removed dangerous individuals with no likelihood of rehabilitation from the streets.

Unlike temporary initiatives, this program has no set end date. All participating agencies fund their own resources, ensuring buy-in from all partners. The program benefits from recent legislative changes in bail reform that give judges and district attorneys more authority to keep violent offenders in custody.

2. Operation Lone Star and Border Security Update

Colonel Martin addressed what he termed "Operation Lone Star 2.0," explaining the evolution of border security efforts and clarifying common misconceptions about current operations.

Statewide Border-Related Enforcement (Sept-Nov 2025):

Border Region Operations (South and West Texas):

- 1,100+ suspected illegal migrants apprehended and turned over to federal partners

Non-Border Region Operations (Rest of State):

- 1,300+ suspected illegal migrants apprehended and referred to federal partners
- 1,842 total criminal migrant enforcement actions

Drug Seizures (3-Month Period):

- 1,700 pounds of cocaine
- 7,000 pounds of methamphetamine
- 200+ pounds of fentanyl

Year-Over-Year Drug Seizure Comparison (2024 vs 2025):

Cocaine:	3,203 lbs (2024) → 6,367 lbs (2025) - nearly doubled
Methamphetamine:	4,600 lbs (2024) → 21,600 lbs (2025) - 369% increase
Fentanyl:	484 lbs (2024) → 1,000+ lbs (2025) - 107% increase

Key Operational Notes:

- DPS enforcement is now truly statewide, not just border-focused
- 144 commercial vehicles smuggling minors have been interdicted
- 600+ interstate trucks put out of service for English proficiency violations
- DPS often leads operations that are publicly credited to federal task forces
- 287(g) agreements now in place for areas where no state charge exists but federal action is warranted
- Priority focus on 6,500 migrants with active felony warrants in Texas

The Commissioners noted the border situation continues to evolve constantly, comparing it to a continuously running faucet rather than an on/off switch. They emphasized that four years of open border policies resulted in significant criminal migration into Texas communities, necessitating internal enforcement operations alongside border security. State and federal leadership are aware of DPS's leadership role in these operations.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on DPS Information Technology Update

Chairman Mach asked Chief Jessica Ballew, Information Technology Division, to provide an update.

Good morning, Chairman and commissioners. Thank you for your ongoing leadership and support and the opportunity to talk to you a little bit about what we have going on in IT this morning. The Information Technology Division plays a critical role in ensuring operational readiness and efficiency. And it's committed to providing innovative, reliable, scalable, and secure technology solutions that enable us to achieve our mission goals, maintain public safety and trust, and give our officers and frontline personnel access to the information they need when they need it.

The slide is titled "INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY" and features a "Via webex" logo in the top left corner. It includes three images: a man in a suit, a server room, and a person at a computer. The text on the slide reads: "Shape the future of public safety operational capability by capitalizing on data and technology." and "Create a safer Texas by providing exceptional service and innovative and reliable solutions that bolster usability, efficiency, and effectiveness for all stakeholders." The Texas Department of Public Safety logo is also visible.

The division manages:

- 6,400 square foot data center housing 1,200+ servers
- Nearly 3 petabytes of data

- 1,900+ network devices
- 500+ applications across the agency
- 30,000 devices supported
- 40,000 endpoints statewide providing law enforcement access to T-LETS and criminal history systems

Annual Performance Metrics:

- 170,000+ support requests addressed
- 600 noteworthy system changes processed
- 500,000+ malicious URLs blocked
- 100+ projects managed

Strategic Goals



1. People Investment:

- Training and development programs to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology
- Career path development similar to commissioned officer progression
- Connecting IT staff to the mission and frontline impact of their work

2. Responsiveness and Agility:

- Meeting divisional needs more efficiently
- Reducing response times for critical requests

3. Infrastructure and Systems Modernization:

- Replacing end-of-life applications and solutions
- Reducing technical debt
- Improving scalability and operational efficiency

4. Data Utilization and Analytics:

- Providing rangers and agents better access to investigative data
- Delivering leadership insights for data-driven decision-making
- Cataloging and sharing data across systems

5. Innovation and Emerging Technology:

- Evaluating business processes before automation
- Balancing risk with opportunity in adopting new technologies

6. Interoperability and Situational Awareness:



Chief Ballew expressed particular passion for this goal, noting critical safety gaps where troopers in remote areas lack both radio and cellular connectivity. Key initiatives include:

- Working with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC)
- Expanding beyond voice-only communications to include data sharing
- Implementing situational awareness tools (shared map views, cross-device messaging)
- Deploying LTE-enabled radios and satellite technology
- Developing the latest Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (completed last month)

Organizational Changes and Risk Management

The past year brought transformative organizational changes:

- New team for client services and Project Management Office (PMO)
- Enterprise Architecture team to establish technology standards
- Public Safety IT Unit dedicated to operational technology for law enforcement
- Enhanced security measures given the sensitivity of data managed
- Strengthened partnerships with Chief Auditor's Office, IOD Procurement, General Counsel, and DIR

Smart Contracting and Enterprise Solutions:

- Establishing enterprise contracts for scalability and cost savings
- Overhauled IT and cyber contract exhibits
- Created new AI-specific contract exhibit to manage emerging risks
- Pursuing shared data services and integrated applications (e.g., Enterprise Case Management System)





Legislative Funding and Investment

The department received approximately \$97 million in exceptional item funding from the legislature for technology initiatives, distributed across:

- *Disaster recovery to maintain operational capability during disruptions*
- *Network, system, and data security enhancements*
- *Data cataloging and cross-system sharing capabilities*
- *System and application modernization*
- *End-of-life hardware and software replacement*

Note: Chief Ballew emphasized that infrastructure replacement and modernization is an ongoing, perpetual need that will require continued legislative support in future session



Current and Pilot Projects

1. Video Management and Real-Time Analytics:

Standing up systems to provide real-time analytical insights from video surveillance.

2. Satellite Connectivity Pilot (Completed):

Successfully tested devices that automatically maintain continuous connectivity by switching between cellular and low-Earth orbit satellite systems. Key findings:

- Officers maintained uninterrupted connectivity regardless of location*
- No manual switching required - automatic failover to satellite*
- Multiple responders successfully networked through a single vehicle*
- Demonstrated capability for software installations over satellite connection*
- Significant implications for DPS and other state first responders*

3. Agentic AI Contact Center Bot:

Implementing with Driver License Division to function as automated contact center representative, with potential for:

- 24/7 contact center availability within 5 years*
- Scalability to other divisions (Regulatory Services, HR, recruiting)*

4. Digital Evidence Management System:

- Secure storage with disaster recovery*
- Real-time access for investigators*
- Cross-file analysis capabilities*
- Significant positive impact on investigative activities*

5. Enterprise Licensing Solution:

Supporting Regulatory Services Division with scalable online licensing system that can accommodate additional services.

6. Mainframe Retirement:

Scheduled for early 2026, eliminating microfilm systems - a major modernization milestone.

7. Tactical Awareness Kit (TAC):

Successfully deployed during the Uvalde response, enabling:

- *Cross-agency situational awareness (including Forest Service)*
- *Real-time location tracking on shared maps*
- *Grid-based search coordination*
- *Recovery location mapping*



Future Challenges and Considerations

Shared State Agency Challenges:

- *Rapid pace of technology evolution makes it difficult to stay current*
- *State government significantly behind private industry in modernization*
- *Many agencies still operating legacy mainframe systems*
- *Rising costs: Some contracts increasing up to 30% year-over-year*
- *Budgetary concerns for maintaining even current technology levels*

Emerging Security Threats:

AI Manipulation: *Recent examples show bad actors successfully manipulating AI systems designed to operate ethically, gaining unauthorized network access and stealing account information.*

Quantum Computing: *Expected capabilities by 2030 will require significant scaling and agility to*

maintain secure network posture. This threat is projected to become extremely significant very rapidly.

Chief Ballew emphasized the need for rapid adaptation and substantial investment in security infrastructure to protect sensitive public information while delivering quality services.

B. Intelligence Threat Briefing (Clearance Required – Executive Session Expected)

This item was handled in Executive Session.

IX. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Report, discussion, and possible adoption of the following previously published rules:

1. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 6.14 and proposed new 37 TAC Section 6.19, concerning Eligibility and Application Procedures for a License to Carry a Handgun
2. Proposed new 37 TAC Section 6.111 and Section 6.112, concerning Tactical Medical Professional Instructor Certification
3. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 10.24 and proposed new 37 TAC Section 10.25, concerning Military Service Members, Veterans, and Spouses – Special Conditions for Vendor Authorizations
4. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 23.25, concerning Vehicle Inspection Fees
5. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 23.93 and proposed new 37 TAC Section 23.95, concerning Military Service Members, Veterans, and Spouses – Special Conditions
6. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 35.183 and proposed new 37 TAC Section 35.186, concerning Military Service Members, Military Veterans, and Military Spouses – Special Conditions
7. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 36.33 and proposed new Section 36.39, concerning Practice by Certificate Holders and Reporting Requirements
8. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 36.43 and proposed new 37 TAC Section 36.45, concerning Military Exemptions
9. Proposed amendments to 37 TAC Section 36.60, concerning Administrative Penalties
10. Proposed new 37 TAC Section 39.1 – 39.3, concerning Automated Motor Vehicles

Chairman Mach asked Chief Wayne Mueller, Regulatory Services Division, to address IX-A, items 1-9. Chief Mueller stated that Items 1&2 related to licensing and received no public comment. Items 3,5,6 & 8 received a comment to change some language to match other states, however we preferred our language and did not make that change. Items 4 & 5 also received no comments. Item 7 received a comment noting that we had referenced a code number incorrectly, so we made that change. Item 9 received no comments regarding metal recycling penalties.

Chairman Mach asked to adopt items 1-6 and 8-9 as posted and to adopt item 7 as amended.

A motion was made by Commissioner Blair and seconded by Commissioner Hord to adopt items 1, 2,

3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 as posted and item 7 as amended.

The motion passed.

- B.** Report, discussion, and possible action regarding the modification of the DPS organizational structure and the appointment, promotion, ratification, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a member of the department management team.

Colonel Freeman Marten stated that he had no changes to the organizational chart to request approval for at this time but would have requests at the next PSC Meeting.

- C.** Report, discussion, and possible action regarding ongoing criminal investigations pursuant to Government Code § 411.0041 (Executive Session anticipated)

This item was handled in Executive Session.

X. REPORTS

- A.** Commission member reports and discussion
- B.** Finance Report
- C.** Chief Auditors Office
- D.** Division status reports on activities and action

No additional reports were offered.

XI. CONSENT ITEMS

All of the following items may be enacted with one motion. These items are typically self-explanatory or have been previously considered by the Commission. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a commissioner so requests.

- A.** Advice and consent regarding Colonel's determination that certain probationary employees were found unsuitable for work during October and November 2025
- B.** Discussion and possible action on appointments of Special Rangers and Special Texas Rangers pursuant to Government Code Chapter 411, Secs. 411.023 and 411.024: Special Rangers: Reymundo Alcantar, John Edward Buesing, Garry Alan Bullard, Carl Dean Davis, Alfred Eason, James Timothy Ferguson, Robert Earl Germany, Jr., Ronald Alan Gumm, Jimmy Lee Holmes, Mitchel Jehu Jones, Ronald James Slay; Justin Moss Stanley, and Special Texas Ranger: Grover Franklin Huff
- C.** Donations:
 - 1. Additional donation items, as needed

Chairman Mach asked Lt. Colonel Jason Taylor if there were any concerns with the Consent Items and Lt. Colonel Taylor said that there were none.

XII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Chairman Mach asked the Board to send any agenda requests to General Counsel Phil Adkins or to Sophie Yanez. He also mentioned that Commissioner Long would like to provide a training facility update at the next PSC Meeting.

XIII. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETING

The regular Public Safety Commission meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2026, and no discharge hearing is scheduled.

The next PSC Meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2026.

XIV. ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

(If required) to consult with legal counsel regarding pending or contemplated litigation or settlement offers or to receive legal advice on items posted on this agenda; deliberation regarding real estate matters; consideration of any other items authorized by law, including personnel matters, the director's action of discharging employees as identified in this agenda; ongoing criminal investigations

Chairman Mach adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

XV. ADJOURN

The Commission may take items out of the order in which they are posted on this agenda. Also, an item that has been adopted, passed upon, delayed or tabled for a later meeting may be considered or reconsidered at the same meeting.

The Public Safety Commission may meet and discuss in Executive Session and have action taken in an Open Meeting where required on the following items:

Government Code Sec. 551.071 Consultation and deliberation with legal counsel about pending or contemplated litigation or a settlement offer, or on a matter where the Commissioners seek the advice of their attorney as privileged communications under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas, and to discuss the Open Meetings Act and the Administrative Procedures Act with their attorney

Government Code Sec. 551.074 Appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of director, assistant director, and persons appointed to management team positions pursuant to Govt. Code Sec. 411.0071

Government Code Sec. 551.076 Deliberations about security audits, security devices, including deployment and implementation of security personnel and devices Government

Code Chapter 411, Sec. 411.0041 Ongoing criminal investigations Government Code Sec. 551.072

Deliberation of the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the government body in negotiations with a third person

Government Code Sec. 551.073 Deliberation of a negotiated contract for a prospective gift or donation to the state or the governmental body if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person