



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION

Public Safety Commission Meeting - 3/26/2026

Date: March 26, 2026

Location: Willie L. Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center

Time: 6:00 PM

Quorum: Yes (More than half of the commissioners present)

I. Roll Call

- **Members Present:**
 - Commissioner Burris
 - Commissioner Charles
 - Commissioner Doyle
 - Commissioner Fowler
 - Commissioner Gilbert
 - Commissioner Herts
- **Members Absent:**
 - Commissioner Lopez (resignation accepted this meeting)
 - Commissioner Thompson
- A quorum was confirmed.

II. Opening Comments and Announcements

- The Chair called the meeting to order. The City Attorney's representative, Ms. Perez, requested two modifications to the agenda, which required a motion, second, and vote:
 - Accept the resignation of Commissioner Lopez and allow Commissioner Fowler to read remarks on his behalf.
 - Add discussion of vacancies and automatic removal by operation of law.
- Motion made by Commissioner Burris, seconded by Commissioner Doyle. Both modifications were accepted by voice vote.

A. Summer Public Safety Planning

- Commissioner Herts proposed inviting city representatives to the next meeting to discuss summer 2026 public safety plans, continuing the momentum from the previous

summer's improved outcomes. Suggested invitees: Little Rock Police Department, Parks & Recreation, and Neighborhood Programs. Commissioner Gilbert requested that the Chief or his representative bring specific curfew enforcement data from summer 2025, including the number of violations and ages of violators.

B. Commission Vacancies — Applications Update

- Commissioner noted that at least one individual had indicated submitting an application for a vacant seat. The commission requested an update from staff on the number of applications received. It was noted that two commissioners whose terms had ended were required to reapply.

C. Discussion — Why Commissioners Stay / Retaining Members

- The commission discussed what motivates members to continue serving and how that message could be used in recruiting new applicants. Commissioners shared personal reasons for serving, including commitment to Little Rock, prior service with LRPD, and concern about the public image of local law enforcement. The chair suggested that commissioners reflect on and articulate why they serve, which could inform outreach and vacancy advertising.

D. Community Policing and Erosion of Trust

- Atty. Perez shared findings from a recently released University of California San Diego study on the impact of ICE enforcement activity on community trust in law enforcement. Key findings cited:
- Approximately 57% of survey respondents reported distrust of law enforcement following heightened federal enforcement activity.
- A significant percentage indicated they would not comply with a police command due to that distrust.
- Community members often cannot distinguish between federal, state, and local officers, meaning perceptions of federal actions damage trust in LRPD.
- Discussion followed on how these dynamics are playing out locally and in the commission's ward communities. The commission agreed to place on the next meeting agenda: (1) asking Chief Helton whether community policing efforts have been impacted and (2) brainstorming how the commission can support LRPD in addressing any erosion of trust. Commissioner Gilbert also raised a concern about the optional status of collar brass on officer uniforms, noting that visible identification markers are important to community recognition of officers. The commission agreed to raise this with Chief Helton at the next meeting.

II. Old Business

A. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- A motion was made by Commissioner Fowler and seconded by Commissioner Charles to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting as circulated.
- Vote: All present voted in favor (Aye). Motion carried.

B. Quarterly Meeting Schedule

- The commission confirmed that a prior vote had tabled the shift to quarterly meetings pending the seating of new members. The matter will be revisited in Q3 depending on vacancy status and the progress of subcommittee work.

III. New Business

A. Resignation of Commissioner Lopez

- Commissioner Fowler read a statement on behalf of former Commissioner Alex Lopez. In summary: Commissioner Lopez expressed appreciation for his time on the commission, acknowledged the welcoming environment created by fellow commissioners and staff, and explained that he had accepted a position in Texas requiring him to commute between Little Rock and Houston, making continued service impractical. He wished the commission well and expressed willingness to collaborate in any future capacity.
- Motion: A motion was made to accept Commissioner Lopez's resignation by Commissioner Doyle. Motion seconded by Commissioner Herts.
- Vote: All present voted in favor (Aye). Motion carried.

B. Acknowledgment of Vacancies

- The Atty. Perez outlined the commission's bylaw and municipal code provisions for automatic vacancy due to consecutive absences (more than three consecutive meetings). Commissioner Thompson was identified as having triggered this provision. The commission agreed to notify the Mayor's Office and City Clerk of the vacancy per bylaw requirements. Commissioner Thompson retains the ability to write to the Mayor requesting to continue serving.
- The following vacancies were acknowledged:
 - Ward 1 — 1 vacancy
 - Ward 2 — 1 vacancy
 - At-Large — 4 vacancies (Lopez, Moffitt, Morshedi, Thompson)
- Total: 6 vacancies. The commission noted this brings the body close to quorum threshold and emphasized the urgency of filling seats.
- Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Doyle to acknowledge the vacancies and direct notification to the Mayor's Office and City Clerk per the bylaws. Motion seconded by Commissioner Burris.
- Vote: All present voted in favor (Aye). Motion carried.

C. Bylaw Amendment — Attendance Provision

- Commissioner Doyle raised the possibility of amending Section 4 of the bylaws to remove the 25%-of-meetings provision, retaining only the three-consecutive-absences standard as the operative removal trigger. Atty. Perez advised that any amendment must be placed on a future agenda with proposed language circulated in advance. This item will be added to the next meeting agenda.

D. Election of Officers

- Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Burris to retain all current commission officers in their existing positions. Motion seconded by Commissioner Fowler.
- Vote: All present voted in favor (Aye). Motion carried. Current officers remain in place.

IV. Guest Presentation

- **MEMS MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH / COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE PROGRAM**
Amber Rosette, newly appointed EMS Social Worker at MEMS (the first in Arkansas and among approximately 30-40 nationwide), presented on MEMS's Mobile Integrated Health Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) program and related initiatives. The commission had previously engaged with her work through the Crisis Collaborative. Key highlights:

A. High Utilization Program

- In 2024, MEMS conducted over 105,000 runs across Pulaski, Grant, and portions of Lonoke counties.
- 52% of runs involved individuals with more than one call; 5% involved individuals with 40+ calls.
- After excluding known medical transports, 29 individuals averaged over 70 MEMS runs each in 2024, along with an average of 9+ days in behavioral health admissions, 5+ days in medical admissions, and 300+ hours in emergency room time.
- The High Utilization Group (HUG) program targets these individuals, providing case management and coordinated care across hospital systems under a shared HIPAA authorization.
- Within the first six weeks of 2026, four of the top 29 high utilizers were placed in nursing homes, projecting a significant reduction in emergency resource utilization.

B. Direct Admission to Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities

- MEMS has operated a direct admission protocol since 2020, allowing field crews to medically clear patients and transport directly to inpatient psychiatric units — bypassing the emergency room.
- From Q1 to Q4 of the prior year, direct admissions increased 264.5%.
- Nearly 600 direct psychiatric admissions were completed in 2025.
- New direct admit pathways added in 2026 include detox for opiates and alcohol, and a rehab partner for substance use treatment.

- This model is seen as a partial substitute for the closed Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), connecting individuals to appropriate care without emergency room stigma or extended wait times.

C. Community Paramedicine / Stroke Follow-Up Program

- MEMS is operating a community paramedicine program through a Department of Health grant, focusing on pre- and post-stroke patients.
- Field teams conduct home visits to ensure medication understanding, safety, and access to needed equipment (e.g., mobility aids, pill cutters).
- Community paramedicine is currently not independently funded; conversations are ongoing with insurance providers regarding value-based payment models for high utilizer management.

D. Quick Response Vehicle

- MEMS has deployed a Quick Response Vehicle (Ford Explorer, ALS-equipped) specifically for psychiatric calls, which represent the second-highest call volume for MEMS.
- The QRV evaluates patients on scene, arranges direct admissions, and releases law enforcement from scene earlier — a model that LRPD has responded to positively.

E. First Responder Well-Being

- A research study is underway with UALR to measure whether reductions in high utilization correlate with decreased burnout and improved job satisfaction among first responders.
- MEMS is actively involved with LRPD's peer support training (Power and Peer) and a regional first responder wellness group including LRFD.
- The presenter described the goal as reducing the volume of non-emergency calls handled by police and fire so that first responders are more focused on calls that match their training.

F. Funding and Legislative Needs

- The MIH-CP program is largely grant-funded (notably the Coverdell grant) and is working to build a sustainable funding model. Potential pathways discussed include insurance provider contracts, hospice agency contracts (e.g., for in-home IV therapy to avoid unnecessary ER transport), and state legislative advocacy. MEMS has trained six paramedics and two EMDs through a 160-hour community paramedicine curriculum. The presenter indicated that lobbying for legislative funding may be needed in an upcoming session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

- Following the MEMS presentation, the commission discussed how to formally support the MIH-CP program.
- Motion: A motion was made by Commissioner Fowler to empower the Youth Violence Reduction and Prevention Subcommittee to draft a letter of support for MEMS's Mobile Integrated Health Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) program, to be submitted to the City Board of Directors, and returned to the full commission for review at the next meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Doyle.
- Vote: All present voted in favor (Aye). Motion carried.
- Note: Commissioner Fowler also suggested the subcommittee name may warrant revisiting at a future meeting given the breadth of its current work.

V. Citizen Communications

- There were none.

VI. Adjournment

- Commissioner Burriss made the motion to adjourn at 7:14pm. Commissioner Charles seconded.
- All votes in favor. The meeting was adjourned.