



**AUSTIN WATER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
5th of March 2020**

The Austin Water Oversight Committee convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at City Hall, Boards and Commission Room, 301 West 2nd Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair Paige Ellis called the committee meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Council Member Paige Ellis, Chair, Council Member Leslie Pool, Vice Chair, Council Member Ann Kitchen and Council Member Alison Alter.

Committee Members Absent:

None

Staff in Attendance:

Matthew Duree, David Anders, Justin Licke, Dan Strub, James McClanahan, Anna Bryan-Borja, Chris Stewart, Heather Cooke, Bill Strauber, Dan Layton, Ginny Guerrero, Teresa Lutes, Greg Meszaros, Denise Avery, and Blanca Madriz.

Citizen Communication: General

Craig Nazir, Lone Star Chapter of The Sierra Club, shared concerns about the health of the creek and plant life downstream from the Dessau Wastewater Treatment Plant. He presented photos of the treatment plant and the creek. Council Member Pool requested the map of Austin Water wastewater treatment plants to review and to make sure there is no unintentional pollution in northeast and northern sections of the city.

Approval of Minutes:

Council Member Pool motioned to approve the Minutes for November 7, 2019. Council Member Alter seconded the motion. The item was approved on a 4-0-0-0 vote.

Discussion and Possible Action:

1. Discussion and approval of the 2020 Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting schedule

Council Member Alter motioned to approve the schedule for May 13, 2020, 1pm – 3pm; August 20, 2020, 10am – noon and October 28, 2020, 2pm – 4pm. She noted November 4th was election day and staff should consider another date. Council Member Kitchen seconded the motion. The item was approved on a 4-0-0-0 vote.

2. Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Grant Fisher, Water and Wastewater Commissioner appointee by Council Member Tovo, shared his concerns about using the selected vendor in the Recommended Council Action (RCA) for advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) contract. He is concerned that the selected vendor uses a proprietary

system that will cause a potential vendor lock for the City. He provided the following recommendations to add to the AMI contract:

1. City of Austin should acquire the FCC license.
2. City of Austin should be able to reprogram systems in the ground to utilize other existing vendor systems.
3. City of Austin needs access to the protocol or the data encryption for the devices to be able to use another vendor in the future.

He discussed that none of the other vendors considered proposed a proprietary FCC licensed event and wanted to raise caution to protect City of Austin.

Council Member Pool asked if his questions were addressed by Austin Water staff. Austin Water Director, Greg Meszaros and Assistant Director, Rick Coronado were recognized and presented an overview of Austin Water's recommended AMI implementation approach and addressed questions on FCC licensing and protocols by Grant Fisher.

Possible Action: Submit a committee report for the full Council to authorize execution of negotiated contract.

Briefing:

3. Director's Report

Director Greg Meszaros presented highlights on upcoming Brushy Creek Transaction, and the status of approved loans with Texas Water Development Board. He also recognized the professional achievements of Austin Water staff.

Possible Action: Present on Brushy Creek expansion and financing agreements in advance of going to full Council,

4. Information Submittal: Wastewater Plant Map

Greg Meszaros, Director provided a response to Craig Nazor's comments from Citizen Communication. Discussion included information on Austin Water owned wastewater systems and private owned wastewater systems. In addition, he responded to Mr. Nazor's questions over Dessau treatment plant. Director Meszaros mentioned that since 2018 through 2020, there have been no permit excursions with the plant operating at or above its permit limits. He shared corrective actions to address two events in 2017. In February 2017 Dessau had a chlorine residual higher than the limit that was corrected, and an E-Coli issue due to a power outage that was also corrected. He shared that in October 2019 a field investigation was done and there were no findings of any compliance issues at that time nor following subsequent routine monitoring.

Possible Action: (1) Austin Water talk with Craig Nazor and provide a follow up report at the request of CM Pool (May 13th); (2) Include private owned wastewater treatment plants to existing Austin Water map; (3) Submit follow-up memo on conditions on the ground and what efforts are being done to clean it up prior to the May AWOC meeting.

5. Update on Planned Infrastructure Improvements and Infrastructure Leaks:

Kevin Critendon, Assistant Director of Water Resources Management provided the briefing. Discussion included capital planning process and water loss management.

6. Water Quality Report:

Rick Coronado, Assistant Director of Operations provided a summary of the water quality incident at Tanglewood Square on January 22, 2020. Discussion included actions taken regarding public outreach, investigating, clearing of a foaming agent found in the water, and lessons learned. The incident occurred because of a back-flow event during a firefighting activity with Austin Fire Department.

7. Presentation and Discussion by Great Springs Project representative regarding source water protection and regional collaboration.

Bobby Levinski, SOS Alliance and Great Springs Project presented a report with recommendations to protect springs between Austin and San Antonio. Mr. Levinski recommends that Austin Water acquire more water quality protection land and financing land acquisition measures.

Possible Action: Austin Water staff to meet with Mr. Levinski for further discussion.

Future Items

8. Identify Items to Discuss at Future Meetings

- Brushy Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion – financing agreement amendment
- Water Forward implementation (quarterly update, and include updates in Performance Dashboard)

Adjourn

Chair Paige Ellis adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m. without objection.

These minutes were approved at the May 13, 2020 Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting on Council Member Pool's motion, Council Member Kitchen's second on a 3-0 vote with Council Member Alter off the dais.