



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 10, 2019**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 10, 2019, at City Hall.

Board Members in Attendance: Acting Chair Alvarez and Members Burson, Conlin, Cortes-Castillo, Hosking Pulido, Huston, McHorse, Paver, Worthington, and Wren

Staff in attendance: Rachel Farley, Donna Sundstrom, Cindy Gamez

Acting Chair Alvarez called the Meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

1. **INTRODUCTIONS-** ECC members, guests, and presenters introduced themselves.
2. **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST-** Member Cortes-Castillo recused herself from item 6bi1 regarding start-up funds for Pre-K classrooms. Member Burson abstained from item 6bi1 regarding Continuity of Care. Member McHorse recused herself from item 6bi4.
3. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL-** None
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Member Huston moved to approve the February 13, 2019, Regular Meeting Minutes with no changes and Member Worthington seconded the motion. Minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0.

5. PRESENTATION

a. Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Process- Katie Stewart, Budget Analyst III, and Charlotte Huskey, Budget Analyst, Budget Office, City of Austin

Budget office staff noted that Council is asking for Board and Commissions input by May 3rd- this year. Budget development will occur through July. City Manager Cronk will deliver his budget to Council on August 5. Two public hearings with comments will then be held before the budget is adopted on September 10. The City Manager's focus is on efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and aligning to The Strategic Direction 2023. The City Manager directed staff to hold the line on new budget items, services or programs for FY2020 based on state level discussions of a 2.5% cap on revenue cities can collect. That cap would cause a \$15 million gap in the City's general fund. The budget office web site has links to the financial services department, the budget engagement site about how residents can provide input, and an open budget portal. ECC members asked about the community input sessions about the budget held by other Boards and Commissions. Those were held and organized by Commissions who have a representative on the City's Joint Inclusion Committee. ECC would like to sit on that Committee. Budget staff noted that Council recently approved the addition of the Human Rights Commission to that Committee. It was asked how often new programs are started despite limits on those in budget development. Budget staff said department directors can reallocate resources within their existing budget. It was noted that a 2.5% revenue cap would be a dramatic drop from the current 8% and that the City would have to get voter approval to collect revenue above the cap the state enacts.

- b. **Dawn Leach, Austin Chapter of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXAEYC)- Update on Week of the Young Child Proclamation, April 11 at City Council meeting (arrive to City Hall by 5:00 p.m.); Video, “Voices from Early Childhood Educators”**

Dawn Leach shared a video about the challenges to providing high-quality child care in Austin that highlights the voices of early education teachers who make low wages and are stretched financially in the Austin area. She noted that quality, accessibility and affordability of child care are important to families; teachers contribute to the quality of care; and compensation is essential to keep teachers in the field. She noted that the first 3 years of a child’s life are a critical period of development, that providing infant and toddler care is the most costly, and that child care subsidy reimbursement rates do not align with real cost of care. She highlighted the importance of changing how the community views child care by shifting from the term day care to child care in order to value the importance of the work. She sees this as an equity issue as most teachers are women, of color, and marginalized by perceptions of their work as babysitters. She noted many families are struggling with the cost of care. Want voices of ECE Ts and Educators to be heard

On April 11, Mayor Pro Tem will read a proclamation pronouncing this as the Week of the Young Child. It was noted that teachers are moving out of Austin, making them ineligible for lower tuition on ACC early childhood education (ECE) classes. Member Paver sees the instability of the ECE workforce as at a crisis point with additional demand for services and a decreasing supply of teachers. Dawn pointed to shared services as one strategy that can be done locally to raise teacher wages. She will share links of examples of strategies being used in other place as well.

6. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

- a. Chair updates, Acting Chair Raul Alvarez- no updates
b. Work group updates
i. Policy work group, Anna Lisa Conlin

1. City of Austin FY2020 budget recommendations- The ECC voted on the following recommendations:

- To maintain or increase funding for Continuity of Care (CoC) that allows children whose families fall out of eligibility for child care subsidies to remain in care while the parent has extended time to do a job search, for example. CoC is local funding from the City and Travis County that allows for more flexibility than federal funding for child care subsidies. CoC is tied to the child care quality rating system. Travis County Commissioners Court has increased CoC funding. Member McHorse moved to approve the recommendation and Member Huston seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 9-0 with Member Burson abstaining.
- To fund an additional Early Childhood staff person. ECC members noted: this was recommended last year but was not funded in the FY2019 budget; historically the City had 3 or 4 Early Childhood positions; and for comparison, the City of Chattanooga has a Director of Early Childhood who oversees 3 full-time staff people. Member Huston motioned to approve the recommendation and Member Paver seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 10-0.
- To fund start-up costs for up to 8 additional Pre-K classrooms in area school district. Member McHorse motioned to approve the recommendation and Member Worthington seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 9-0. Member Huston motioned to amend the recommendation to say that each new classroom could serve “32 additional children per classroom.” Member McHorse seconded the motion and it passed by a vote of 9-0 with Member Cortes-Castillo recusing herself.
- To include in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget any expenditures necessary to support implementation of the remaining recommendations from the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K3 Report, per the report the City Manager provides to Council in response to Item 20 on the 4/11/19 City Council agenda (Council Resolution 20190411-020). Member Huston motioned to approve the

recommendation and Member McHorse seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 10-0.

2. Neighborhood Housing and Community Development recommendation

- The ECC considered a recommendation that Council include in the 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan a strategy for promoting “Family Stability” that includes establishment of a “Family Stability Fund” to provide financial assistance to families at risk of displacement develop and office or program to inform families about programs and resources that can assist with financial stability and economic opportunity. Member Worthington proposed to amend wording from “stabilize” to “stabilized.” Member McHorse motioned to approve the recommendation as amended, Member Worthington seconded the motion, and it passed by a vote of 9-0.

3. State legislative issues recommendation

- The ECC considered a recommendation to encourage Council and the City of Austin Intergovernmental Relations Office to support specific bills pending in the state legislature that would benefit young children and their families. Member Worthington motioned to approve the recommendation with an amendment to add House Bill 3 to list of bills to support. Member McHorse seconded the motion which passed 9-0.

4. Early Matters Greater Austin Family-Friendly Toolkit recommendation

- Member Wren motioned to approve the recommendation regarding the Toolkit. Member Huston seconded the motion which passed by a vote of 9-0 with Member McHorse recusing herself.

5. Parks and Recreation Department planning recommendation- No action

ii. Community Partnership and Engagement work group, Rebecca Harrison- No updates

iii. New member orientation work group, Rachel Farley- New members were sent a packet of information to help orient them to the ECC. New members are being matched with other members as mentors to help orient them.

7. STAFF BRIEFING AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- a. Rachel Farley, Austin Public Health- Prenatal to 3 updates- Rachel informed members that Austin Public Health, the City, and the Austin Chapter of TXAEYC are hosting a screening of the film “No Small Matter” about issues with the child care system for City staff and elected officials, County staff and elected officials, and City Boards and Commissions members. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion/question and answer session with Mayor Pro Tem Garza and Austinites working in the field of child care. Details to be mailed to ECC members.

8. RELATED GROUPS (Only as needed)

- a. Austin Chapter of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
- b. Child Care Licensing
- c. Child Incorporated
- d. E3 Alliance
- e. **Success by 6-** The new strategic plan for 2019-2023 will be launched on April 24. A morning event will include a keynote address by the new chancellor of the UT System.
- f. Workforce Solutions

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Next meeting May 8, 2019, 9 a.m. - City Hall, Room 1101
- b. May 8- ECC officer nominations- It was noted that Member Burson is the chair of the

committee.

c. June 12- Council Member Alison Alter; ECC officer election

d. To schedule:

- i. Presentation on ATX Success By 6 Coalition Action Plan
- ii. ATX 2-Generation Strategic Plan- Family Opportunity Roadmap
- iii. Workforce Solutions Capital Area presentation
- iv. AISD child care and teen parent services presentation
- v. Family Connects presentation

ADJOURNMENT- Acting Chair Alvarez adjourned the meeting at 10:42 without objection.