



## **Zero Waste Advisory Commission**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The Special Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Friday, July, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, due to COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all Texas Counties. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/73782>

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 10:06 am

**Board Members in Attendance:** Gerry Acuna, Cathy Gattuso, Ian Steyaert, Kaiba White, Amanda Masino, Jonathan Barona, Melissa Rothrock

**Board Members not in Attendance:** Lisa Barden, Janis Bookout (Membership pending),

**Staff in attendance via WebEx:** Ken Snipes, Jaime Germany Terry, Victoria Rieger, Gena McKinley, Tammie Williamson, Richard McHale, Mike Turner, Dwight Scales, Jason McCombs, Donald Hardee, Amy Slagle, Ron Romero, and Brent Paige

**Staff in attendance over the phone:** None

Speakers: Adam Gregory

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

### **1. APPROVAL OF June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

*Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Ian Steyaert made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Cathy Gattuso.*

*Item passed Unanimously*

### **2. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Speaker Adam Gregory spoke about fielding questions if fellow council members needed any.
  - There were no questions from the council currently
- b. Unanimous vote resulting in Yea

## **2a Discussion and Action – Collection services for City Facilities RCA**

*Victoria Rieger (Financial Division Service Manager ARR) presented a comprehensive update on the Collection services for City Facilities RCA. ARR is seeking a favorable recommendation for two multiterm contracts with Texas Disposal Systems and Balcones Recycling. These contracts are to provide garbage, recycling, and organics collection for the City of Austin Facilities.*

Commissioner Amanda Masino had a question on why two vendors were on one contract?

Response Ron Romero (Division Manager) explained the setup of the solicitation was open to various vendors to provide bids on trash, disposal, and recycling services. Through the process of solicitation, purchasing reviewed the submitted bids. The lowest bidder for recycling services was Balcones Recycling. The lowest bid for trash and organics services was Texas Disposal Systems.

Chair Gerry Acuna had a follow-up question asking if assuming there is a default by either one of the contractors, does having one contract cause and issue or are there two separate agreements based on the respective numbers that were submitted by them?

Response: Brent Paige (Financial Manager ARR) explained that each of the agreements is separate from the individual vendors. If there was a default of one of them, it would not affect the other contract.

Chair Gerry Acuna had a question on the note under Minority participation. Chair Acuna asked does minority participation gets solicited with the contract or does staff request minority participation and if there is no response at that point does the note appear? How does that work?

Response: Brent Paige (Financial Manager ARR) explained the Smaller Minority Business Resources Team is assigned a percentage of potential minority and small business owners to the solicitation. They then reach out to everybody that has been signed up within that code within our system. Solicitation correspondence gets sent out to all vendors. If we do not receive anybody back that is how solicitation goes

Commissioner Kaiba White had a clarification question. Did you say Balcones is doing some of the services and Texas Disposal Systems is doing others or are they both providing all the services such as trash, recycling, and composting? Do these services overlap?

Response: Division Manager Ron Romero clarified Balcones would be responsible for recycling services. Texas Disposal Systems would provide services for trash removal and compost with no overlap of services.

*Chair Gerry Acuna entertained a motion for approval of item 2a. Commissioner Amanda made the first motion for approval. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Jonathan Barona.*

**Item 2a. Collection services for City Facilities RCA passed unanimously on a 6-0-1 vote**

## **Item 2b Discussion and Action – Overpass and under bridge clean-up services RCA**

*Amy Slagle (Division Manager) is requesting a recommendation authorize negotiation and execution of a multi-term contract with Relief Enterprise of Texas, Inc., to provide cleanup services for overpasses, under bridges, and in the transportation right of way, for up to three years for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,725,000.*

(Notes: This procurement was reviewed for subcontracting opportunities by City Code Chapter 2-9C Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program. For the services required for this procurement, there were no subcontracting opportunities; therefore, no subcontracting goals were established).

Commissioner Kaiba White wanted more elaboration on what are these services being provided? She had questions and concerns about how the process is handled?

Amy Slagle (Division Manager) explained its removal of debris and cleanup of big bulk items at the site.

Commissioner Kaiba White asked will that be limited to where things have been collected into bags or piles or will they be doing pick up of loose items on the ground? Does that include the median on Riverside?

Amy Slagle (Division Manager) further explained the Riverside median was cleaned last week or the week before last.

Ken Snipes (ARR Director Ken Snipes) provided more elaboration that the delay was a result of COVID. With the desire to evaluate the COVID virus in the homeless community. We were asked to stand down for a bit on providing some of those services. We resumed services about two weeks ago.

Commissioner Amanda Masino asked How does this interface with the purple bag system? Just to understand how the two services are going to be handled differently. How does the vendor make sure they are not taking people's belongings?

Amy Slagle (Division Manager ARR) stated the process that they post a three-day notice ahead of scheduled time collections to notify that crews will be coming out to clean encampments as well ask residents if they would like to participate. She all explained if it's abandoned Public Works will provide collection. The violet bag project provides daily services to 16 different sites varied by months depending on how many they can get to.

*Chair Gerry Acuna entertained a motion for approval of item 2a. Commissioner Kaiba White made the first motion for approval. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Ian Steyaert.*

**Item 2b. Overpass and under bridge clean-up services RCA passed unanimously on a 6-0-1 vote**

**Item 2c. Update on the FY 21 Proposed Budget Presentation**

*Victoria Rieger (Financial Division Service Manager ARR) is seeking a recommendation from the council on FY21 Proposed Budget for ARR. Victoria's presentation included:*

- Clean Community Fee Overview
- Clean Community Fee FY20 Budget Amendment
- Curbside Collection Services Overview
- Curbside Services Cost of Service
- Curbside Collection Customers
- Trash Cart Distribution
- FY21 Proposed Budget
- Budget by Strategic Outcome
- Proposed Rate Changes
- Fund Summary
- Top 10 Budgeted Expense Categories
- Capital Improvement Plan

Commissioner Ian Steyaert stated we spend about 1.6 million on replacement carts? How many carts is that and is it typical?

Response: Brent Paige (Financial Manager ARR) Explained that's about 35,000 carts. There are roughly 600,000 carts so it comes out to around 5% of carts.

Commissioner Kaiba had a question regarding the extra trash fee. She wanted to know the current situation and if that is the plan for it to be implemented in the upcoming budget?

Response: Victoria Rieger (ARR Finance Manager) explained extra garbage fees were suspended due to pandemic and that there might be a plan once we get approval or plan from City Hall about when those fees come back.

Commissioner Kaiba asked can you please clarify how that came about since that didn't come before the commission? The amount of revenue that is being forgone as well as any information on kind of how that is spread amongst different customers?

Response: Brent Paige (ARR Financial Manager ARR) We had budgeted about half a million in revenue our fiscal year. We are projecting slightly below that of roughly \$150,000. The next fiscal year will have a similar projection. This year we have been receiving less extra garbage fees.

Chair Gerry Acuna wanted clarification on slide 14. (Top 10 FY21 Proposed Expense Categories). Should we consider a slight budget adjustment for employee salary increases? Due to the aggressive private sector recruitment of ARR collection personnel?

Response: Ken Snipes (ARR Director) I think it's certainly something that we would like to entertain.

Chair Gerry Acuna recommended we consider aggressively looking into this matter for 2021 and 2022

Response: Ken Snipes (ARR Director) In general right now the logistics industry is strong and recruiting in support of eCommerce. This is a nationwide issue with recruitment for all CDL drivers to drive for them. We are in the same boat and we're seeing a loss of staff as people chase higher salaries and bonuses that other companies are offering that we cannot offer, and we don't pay as well as they do. It's a real concern and it's one that a lot of municipalities are wrestling with right now.

Commissioner Kaiba proposed the commission be consulted a bit more on proposals that could potentially affect revenue be it large or small. Especially on waiving fees for additional trash. Commissioner Cathy Gattuso second that request.

Response: Ken Snipes (ARR Director) That resulted from a request to try to pull together a caveat of opportunities across the city to create relief for residence from all the departments. It happened quickly, and the

intent was to squeeze it in the upcoming COA council session at that time. We had about a week to pull that together but, the idea was to not overly penalize those that were at home suddenly because of the virus. One of the things we knew is that the trash that would have been ordinarily apart of the commercial base was shifting to homes. So, we knew that suddenly people were going to have many bags at their home that normally would have been handled through the commercial stream. The idea was to provide an opportunity for relief for folks at that time that might have been out of work uncertain about their work status might be going forward. At that time not knowing the virus would continue for as long as it has or not knowing the future for that path. So now we're looking at reinstituting that and it still must go back to council.

Chair Amanda Masino expressed that she would like to receive meeting documents earlier and have more time to review upcoming items and documents. Chair Gerry Acuna seconded that concern.

## **Item 2d. Update on the Universal Recycling Ordinance Multi-Family Recycling Capacity Increase**

*Jason McCombs (ARR Program Manager) Provided an update specific to the Universal Recycling Ordinance Multi-Family Recycling Capacity Increase. Last year ZWAC and City Council approved amendments to department administrative rules in September and October 2019. This amendment is scheduled to come into place on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The implementation process was delayed due to allowing outreach, rebate opportunities but also time for multi-family properties to review existing recycling contracts.*

Solid Waste Services Administrative Rules 8.5 - Capacity and Diversion Performance Standards 8.5.1.1.2 Multifamily properties—Beginning on October 1, 2020, Responsible Parties shall ensure that onsite recycling services are sufficient to accommodate the regular accumulation of recyclables and avoid overflowing containers by having, at a minimum, one of the following: 8.5.1.1.2.1 Twenty-four gallons of recycling capacity per dwelling unit per week; or 8.5.1.1.2.2 An equal 1:1 ratio of landfill trash to recycling capacity.

### Multifamily Capacity Increase Amendment Key components:

- Onsite recycling sufficient to avoid overflowing
- Recycling container size increase to 24 gal/unit or 1:1 ratio with trash

### Planned Multi-family Outreach Pre-Pandemic:

- Direct mailers to multifamily properties across the city
- Print advertisement in Windows Magazine (a trade publication)
- Social media outreach targeting multifamily properties and residents
- Rebate to assist early adopters of the requirements
- Collaborative meetings with trade associations and property owners
- Outreach scheduled to peak in spring 2020 and maintain through summer 2020

### City Guidance on Communications:

- In March 2020, City Communications asked all departments delay communications not directly related to or able to support successful communication about COVID-19

### City and Department Pandemic Outreach

### Multi-family Outreach Moving Forward:

- Pandemic sensitive messaging
- Direct mailers to multifamily properties across the city before October 2020
- Print and social media outreach targeting multifamily properties and residents before October 2020
- Virtual site assessments options and technical assistance for property managers
- New staff focused on multifamily community engagement

- Provide messaging with a focus on providing resources to reach compliance

#### Next Steps:

- Staff is actively moving forward with developing education and outreach aligned with an implementation date of October 1, 2020. City staff will observe administrative rule 8.12.3, which states: In the twelve months following the commencement of effective dates, City staff will not enforce fines, unless the property fails to make a good faith effort, as determined by the Director, to comply.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asked due to the pandemic does this change anything in particular?

Response: Jason McCombs (ARR Program Manager) explained yes, we are actively working on what that looks like. We're currently in the process of making it. The big thing is looking at ways we can meet people in a virtual scenario rather than on-site. As the reporting comes in, we will be actively tracking that for the URO. If we are noticing certain properties are not meeting that we will be reaching out to them and try to provide educational opportunities to get those families in compliance?

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asked what education are you going to be giving to the residence?

Response: Jason McCombs (ARR Program Manager) Right now we are focusing on the compliance component like the increase in dumpster size which will be property manager focused. We will continue direct mail and direct contacts with clear instructions and what they need to do. We will also supplement that with multi-families specific direct outreach and contact. Example: emails, letters, and potentially phone contact initially. As well as Collab with trade associations to reach constituents.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asked is the enforcement different now due to the pandemic?

Response: Jason McCombs (ARR Program Manager) For the URO we do anticipate some kind of Code Compliance unit coming into place later this year but, I'm not clear what that will look like in the pandemic. I will say for this multi-family component we will be focusing on education.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asked let's think about the worst scenario for a minute, not that it's going to happen. Let's say someone is determined to not do what they can do? What is the team inclined to do on that?

Response: Jason McCombs (ARR Program Manager) That's called when someone is not making a good-faith effort. If they are not doing that, we can move them along through a compliance process.

### **3. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

*Ken Snipes (ARR Director) Provided the ARR Director's Report and opened the platform to address questions and concerns.*

Chair Gerry Acuna wanted to know if it was possible by the next meeting to provide what the Recycle Residual rate is?

Response: Ken Snipes (ARR Director) Yes, we can provide this.

Commissioner Amanda Masino had a question about the solicitation for education clean up and beautification services located under development. So that is the current contract with keep Austin beautiful. One thing that I have been concerned about the program is how equitable their programs are? How much effort goes into the Spanish language? Reaching out to communities that normally don't participate in these city programs. Some elements they seem to do very well when they interface with schools and there are some elements where I don't see the diversity and inclusion provided to families. she has a request to as we develop this request about solicitation please add language about education specifically. Please provide more guidance on developing an equitable policy on how these things are handled. The pressure needs to be there a bit in terms of the language of solicitation to make sure that they step up and invest time in that aspect of the work. Commissioner Kaiba White added that if there needs to be perhaps a higher amount to be authorized to achieve some of those goals, I think that's well worth it.

Chair Gerry Acuna wanted to know when this goes out on the streets.

Response: Brent Paige (ARR Finance Manager) This is in its final review process. There has been a little back in forth with the Watershed Protection Department that we had to make sure and get everything included. It should be out there we are hoping by sometime next month.

Commissioner Amanda Masino asked does that mean there is no opportunity for revised language at this point?

Response: Brent Paige (ARR Finance Manager) We have not finalized solicitation at this point. We will have to look at it and see what we can do. I haven't reviewed it yet so it might have gotten some of that language included already. I will check and talk with the staff and get back with you.

Commissioner Kaiba White had a follow-up question on the contract. Is there some sort of minimum level of service Number(s) of cleanups that are required during this solicitation. I did notice additional clean up services are being provided through the clean community fee but, I did notice cleanup of water waste and whatnot tend to not be included and that is something that happens through the Keep Austin Beautiful program at least to a certain extent. If it's not being provided directly through city services and it is more through these other volunteer clean-ups than I think it's important that there be clear minimum standards on how much different areas are being cleaned up. Making sure that the distribution of which areas get cleaned up is done equitably.

Response: Amy Slagle (ARR Division Manager) provided some insight into the scope of work that's been under development for this. There are some minimums and they are for cleaning and Watershed as well as what ARR is looking for.

Chair Gerry Acuna asked ken about the status of the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) situation.

Response: Ken Snipes (Division Manager) We are closing the site, but we are still providing the service through the On-Call Bulk Program. What that means is that we maintain a list a people call in and we build a route from that list of call-ins and we provide an at-home no contact service. Where the resident sets out the material out at a designated location. The folks from our staff go to the home, collect them, and bring them back to our facility. This is how we are providing this service through and at-home collection. Right now, because of the uptick in COVID for staff and the public, we have decided to close HHW.

Chair Gerry Acuna asked there is no fee for this collection is there?

Response: Ken Snipes (Director ARR) replied no.

Chair Gerry Acuna asked the commission if there were questions or concerns on the Director's report?

Commissioner Amanda Masino asked how are people learning about the call in the HHW program? Is that shared on the website? Or how do we know that this is now available?

Response: Ken Snipes (Director ARR) Yes, we're in the works of adding it to the website. Gena McKinley (ARR Division Manager) if we are trying to keep the website updated, Austin 311, ARR Customer Service Division, digital meeting outlets, notifications customers sign up for, and the recollect app.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso had a question about the collection routes established for the On-Call Health and Hazardous pickup. What happens to the people out of Travis county jurisdiction?

Response: Donald Hardee (Division Manager ARR) provided info about yet there has not been any request outside of Austin but as of now, we are focusing on our routes.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asked are these services being utilized?

Response: Donald Hardee (Division Manager ARR) Yes customers are using our services. We have done 7 ½ tons so far since we started doing it.

Commissioner Kaiba White had a question about other services being suspended at the Todd Lane facility. She realizes it's not a high priority as HHW but, given that this COVID situation we have no idea how long it may continue for a while. We have no idea or consideration to divert materials and frankly, it's worth considering anyway. I brought up in the past looking at how much it would cost or options on people picking up other materials. I'm just wondering if any future work has been done on that matter or is that something folks would be willing to look at ARR?

Response: Donald Hardee (Division Manager ARR) D Hardee provided some insight. Our original thought is to at least initially concentrate on the materials that could be hazardous especially if it could go into the waste stream and those appose some concerns. We don't any of those employees getting potentially hurt with that material in their trash. There has been a little discussion but to be honest we haven't taken it to anyone hire to discuss what our possibilities might be for the other materials. Once again most of the resources are being used for the routes as well as using the downtime to get the necessary maintenance done on our equipment here.

#### **4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- ❖ Office of Sustainability Austin Community Climate Plan
- ❖ Recycle Residual Rate

*Chair Gerry Acuna entertained a motion for adjournment Commissioner Cathy Gattuso made the first motion for approval. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Ian Steyaert*

This meeting was adjourned @ 11:20 am July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020