

RESOLUTION NO. 20201001-061

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is committed to a Zero Waste goal to reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills by 90 percent by the year 2040; and

WHEREAS, Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) is the City department charged with residential curbside collection of trash, recycling, and composting, among other services; and

WHEREAS, Austin Resource Recovery provides collection services for over 200,000 households in the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, a global pandemic caused Austin residents to shelter in place, leading to an increase in generated household waste, and between April 2019 and April 2020, ARR saw a 10 percent increase in solid household waste; and

WHEREAS, solid waste pickup is one of the most dangerous jobs nationwide, with a fatality rate of 33 deaths for every 100,000 workers; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 can travel through biohazardous waste and close contact between individuals; and

WHEREAS, typically, ARR approves 60-90 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requests every calendar year and so far in 2020, ARR has approved a total of 170 FMLA requests; and

WHEREAS, 33 ARR employees resigned between January 2020 and July 2020, which is comparable to annual resignations in past years; and

WHEREAS, the starting hourly rate for an ARR operator is \$16.00, and the same operator could make a higher starting hourly rate in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, ARR requires operators to have at minimum a CDL B license and such training is covered by ARR and typically costs \$1,318 per trainee; and

WHEREAS, Human Resources seeks to engage, attract, develop, support, and retain the best workforce in the country to serve Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain ARR services, such as bulk collection, have been suspended or reduced due to lack of staffing and COVID-19 precautions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

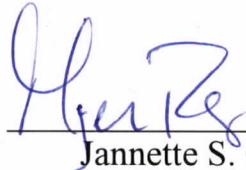
The City Council directs the City Manager to review current compensation and training practices and explore opportunities to improve ARR operator retention, compensation, and satisfaction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council directs the City Manager to determine the feasibility and timeline for resuming regular ARR services that are currently suspended or scaled back. The City Manager should err on the side of employee safety and should not resume such services if it is determined that any services pose a true risk to our employees.

ADOPTED: October 1, 2020

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk