



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Wednesday, April 14th, 2021, 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/118681>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:08 pm

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

Board Members not in Attendance: Lisa Barden, Janis Bookout

Staff in attendance via WebEx: Ken Snipes, Richard McHale, Tammie Williamson, Donald Hardee, Amy Slagle, Victoria Rieger, Ron Romero, Bill Huck, Brent Paige, Marcus Gonzalez, Amy Schillerstrom, Young Park, Scales, and Jaime Germany Terry

Chair Acuna opened with comments.

1. APPROVAL of the March 11, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the March 11th Special Called Meeting minutes. Commissioner Jonathan Barona made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Cathy Gattuso.

Item passed Unanimously

a. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the January 13th Regular Meeting minutes.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Jonathan Barona.

Item passed Unanimously

2. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion and Action: Safe Right-of-Way Clearance/Accessibility for Weekly Vehicle Servicing Collection of Garbage, Recycling, and Composting containers from City of Austin Routes—Ron Romero and Bill Huck

Ron Romero Division Manager of Collection Services states we wanted to spend time to get more detailed information and pull accurate up-to-date numbers from our safety office and legal department. Our department safety manager Bill Huck will discuss our processes.

Bill Huck Safety Manager: There are two ways we notify low tree limbs through observation of the drivers, supervisors, or safety personnel, and when we strike a low hanging limb. The actual code that requires property owners to keep their height vegetation above a certain point. The code requires trees to be 14 feet above the right of way from the road and eight feet above the sidewalk. If we make contact with a tree, the process is that we notify Public Works. We send in either a phone call or an email with a photo of the tree. Public Works will dispatch one of their technicians out to come cut or remove the tree and then make corrections. We stay on the scene until Public Works arrives and clears the scene. If a driver notices a low tree limb on route, they will call it in to dispatch. Our dispatcher will enter a 311 request that will go to Public Works. We have a mutual agreement with Public Works, all our 311 requests for low vegetation or low tree limbs are escalated. Public Works assigns a work order. They assign an estimated time and then notify ARR of the work order that was created. When we receive the work order we run a monthly report in which we audit the orders to see if the trees are trimmed and the work order is completed. If they have not been completed, then we notify Public Works and ask them for to provide an estimated time to completion. We currently have 14 low tree limb incidents where we made contact with low limbs. These number do not reflect the actual numbers called in for previous years. Last year we had 55 low tree limbs that were identified, work orders were created, and addressed. Currently we have 5 works orders submitted.

Ron Romero: We receive several service orders regarding tree limbs from concerned citizens. As a team, we discussed things we can do to be proactive in how to approach tree limbs. We began to work with our fleet department to spec our trucks to be a little lower than the 14-foot canopy. The residents of Austin love trees. They are not in favor of trimming their trees back or raising the canopy. The forestry division provides the tree trimming service. We are proactive and when we see issues, we report them. There's actually a process to notify the homeowner to be in compliance. Our team is great at communicating with the customers when trees are an issue. We've established a positive approach to communicating with our customers.

Commissioner Amanda Massino asks: have there been any injuries to personnel associated with these incidents?

Ron Romer responds: No. If there's a situation where we strike a tree limb and it has not been disconnected from the tree, or it's hanging down over the sidewalk, we will call out for APD Traffic Control until Public Works can get there and remove the tree limb. Our trucks will stay on site with

all their hazard identification equipment, triangles, and hybrid lights until the scene remains secure and the hazard is removed.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and Action Officer Elections

Chair of Commission

Commissioner Amanda Massino: I move to nominate Gerry as our chair. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Jonathan Barona.

Item passed unanimously

Vice Chair of Commission

Chair Acuna nominates Cathy Gattuso. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Ian Steyaert

Item passed unanimously

b. Discussion and Action: ARR Forecast

Victoria Rieger Austin Resource Recovery Finance Division Manager: Thank you for the opportunity to present the departments five-year financial forecast. Last year, the commission expressed an interest in getting a copy of the budget prior to this meeting. It's very similar to last year in terms of format that we'll discuss tonight. Brent Paige Budget and Contract Development Manager joined us for the presentation tonight. I'm presenting to the commission the city's overall budget process. We'll talk briefly about our performance through the departments performance overview because of our key performance indicators, and we'll talk about the five-year financial forecast. As part of that forecast, I will present a summary of our residential rates, and highlight our Capital Improvement Projects.

This year in the beginning of January, ARR held retreats to begin high-level discussions to help guide the budget development process. We discussed potential programs, expansions, and staffing needs. The second retreat was held with a targeted group with all the divisions to discuss current operating needs as well as potential on the current forecast. The numbers that you see tonight has been submitted to the city's budget office. The overall city budget process is compressed. It's fast and furious for all. The budget is due on May 7th. It will be presented to council in June. Hopefully we will be back in front of you to present our proposed budget in July. The budgetary reading and budgetary adoption occur in August.

Here's a view of the departments Key Performance Indicators. We reached a milestone in Diversion. In our financial forecast, our current budget for fiscal year 21 is 106.8 million. We are projecting 45 new full-time employees. We are asking for 13 new positions, many of which are support services. Every year we tend to add operational staff. Our goal is to add support services to ensure we can maintain services. We are recommending increasing our rates. Last year we asked to increase the base rate to by \$4.00.

We spread the increase over two years. Last year we increased the base rate by \$2.60. This year we are asking to increase the base rate by \$1.50. We are also projecting to increase the per gallon cost for various cart sizes. We're taking a staggered approach to rate increases to help minimize the rate impact for the taxpayer. You will find that our rates and forecast remain unchanged.

In Capital Improvement for fiscal year 22 we are forecasting 14million in spending. ARR's 5-year CIP plan is largely devoted to purchasing equipment, replacing vehicles, and replacing our aging fleet. We think this will have the added benefit of reducing our maintenance costs. Some other projects being worked on include safety improvements and various security enhancements that should be wrapping up in a couple of our facilities.

Commissioner Kaiba White asks: Can you speak to the projected FTE increases? What are those positions for?

Brent Paige Financial Manager responds: We have 13 new FTEs being requested going to administrative and support services functions. Victoria mentioned during the presentation that we have been adding operations, and we need to catch up with administrative staff. So, over the next five years we have 45 new positions across the 5-year forecast. That will add various positions throughout the department from operations, to finance, admin, strategic initiatives etc.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asks: As the population increase in Austin are, we keeping pace with it paying for the services or how is that looking now?

Brent Paige responds: As far as our rates go, we have seen a significant increase in our customer count over the past 10 years. We are continuing to add fte's to the operators to get the routes collected. Some of the fte's we're requesting is to add support staff because with all the additional operators we have a need to process transactions, account for storm debris, etc. We have been able to keep up with the growth.

Commissioner Ian Steyaert: This isn't necessarily budget related, but in the department, summary slide the lost time injury rate seems to be remaining somewhat high and the estimated numbers and percent of the URO properties seems to be going down in some cases. Could we explain those numbers?

Bill Huck responds: The 6.32 is strictly due to the number of employees put on light duty or restricted duty because we could not accommodate them here at work. Due to the closure of the RRDOC during the onset of the pandemic we could not accommodate them here at work. We hope that once we reopened, we're going to be able to accommodate those employees.

Gena McKinley Strategic Initiatives Division Manger responds: What we're seeing with the URO is that the numbers are a little better than what we're currently reporting. Due to the ongoing pandemic and further stress to businesses from Winter Storm URI, there are many properties that are facing financial distress that have either become vacant or closed. With the ongoing impact the denominator is shifting. It's something we're working on actively. We are hopeful that as things move into a more stable environment and with the addition of our Commercial Compliance team, where we have more enforcement and more boots on the ground out in businesses seeing what's happening that we will see numbers bounce back and move higher than what we've seen in the past.

4. STAFF BRIEFINGS

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ken Snipes Director Austin Resource Recovery: Congratulations to the chair and vice-chair. During the recent retreat one of the things that we heard was the desire to get a little more information and to help make the information understandable. So, we're starting out by having Deputy Director Richard McHale highlight some of the things that you'll see from our recent solicitations report. It will give you an understanding of what we've been dealing with in terms of Winter Storm Uri.

Richard McHale Deputy Director Austin Resource Recovery: In the Director's Report we have pending projects and pending solicitations that are about to go out, but I just want to highlight one that staff worked on. Staff did a great job in creating emergency solicitations to deal with storm damage. We had three different contracts that they were able to work. The three solicitations were for hauling, regular curbside operations and a storm contractor for some of the larger areas in Northwest Austin where there was a considerable amount of damage. Victoria and her team Sydney Richardson did a great job of putting those things together. You will see one of the solicitations is for storm debris collection and monitoring. These are the types of contracts we would like to have in place before a storm hits. Our team was able to work on the fly and get some emergency contracts to tie us over.

Chair Acuna responds: You guys did a wonderful job. This was all done while still working on the COVID response, for all the financials that goes along with that with winter storm response. It's really been helpful.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Homelessness challenges
2. C&D Committee Meeting Review
3. Resilience Office

Chair Acuna: I'll entertain a motion for Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Approved by ZNAC