

Audit and Finance Committee Meeting Transcript (AFC) – 1/19/2022

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[9:33:58 AM]

>> Are you ready for us? Do you need another minute? >> I do believe we are ready. >> Okay. Good morning. It is Wednesday, January 19th, 2021. I'm Alison alter, mayor pro tem and chair for audit and finance committee and I will call this meeting to order at 9:34. The mayor is not able to join us this morning as he is in Washington today. I'm joined on the actual dais by council member pool and on the virtual dais by council members Kelly and tovo. As I noted on the message board yesterday, we will take up each item in its agenda order, except the disaster preparedness audit, which will be taken up last to allow time for a robust discussion. We expect to begin the disaster preparedness audit no later than 10:30. We have one citizen here to speak. Mr. Robins, please join us at the microphone. >> Tovo: Chair, this is Kathie

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tovo. Sorry, my video is off. Yeah, for some reason, these meetings seem to be overlapping with another commitment I have as a council member, which is to represent the city council on the audit -- I mean, on the Austin police retirement board. And so, I'm going to -- unfortunately, I didn't realize our winter storm briefing is coming up last. I'm going to need to leave this meeting in time to get to my 11:30 Austin police retirement board meeting. So, I will be in transit for some of that time. >> Mayor Adler: What time do you need to leave? >> Tovo: To get there on time, I need to leave at about 10 of 11:00. So I'll just have to continue my participation in the meeting via phone. But perhaps we can look at those dates and see. It doesn't always coincide, but increasingly, it does. So I'm not sure if we're moved our

audit and finance meeting weeks, and that's causing the conflict, but anyway, I'll ask my staff to talk with your staff

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and we'll see if we can figure out what the conflict is, whether it's an ongoing conflict, or just a situational one. But anyway, that's my situation today. I'm going to need to be via phone for those last bit of the meeting, which unfortunately is going to be most of our conversation of the winter storm audit resolution I brought. >> Mayor Adler: I'm sorry, I didn't realize that. I wasn't aware of that. Let me hear what council member Kelly has to say. >> Kelly: I just wanted to let you know that I need to leave at about 11:30 today. >> Alter: I think we'll be done by 11:30. Usually we do two hours. We'll let you know if we're going to be going beyond that, but I appreciate knowing that. Council member tovo, let's get started and see how our timing is, and if we can move up the winter storm a little bit, we will. I think it's possible to get through the other material quickly as well. Mr. Robins, thank you.

[9:37:04 AM]

>> Good morning, council. During the -- >> It's okay, Mr. Robins. You can continue. >> Okay. Please start the clock. Council, during the weather catastrophe that occurred last February, most, if not all retail gas utilities in the state did not possess enough fuel to purchase it and they had to purchase it on the spot market. The price was so outrageous that a comedian could not exaggerate it. Rather than confront the predators, the legislature has institutionalized the piracy in the form of "Securitization" debt. While the Texas railroad commission began deliberations on this last July, I can find no record of it ever coming before council. Curious, I wanted to confirm if the city's regulatory office had informed you.

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After all, council is the primary regulator of gas utilities in the city limits. And securitization will result in an approximate \$60 a year increase for each residential gas customer in the state for a period of about ten years. I sent the information request to the city 29 days ago. I have not received any answers. There is a tiny narrative about this in today's backup material, but it would not surprise MRE if my information request motivated this sliver of public information. After all, it would be embarrassing if I alerted the council before staff did. My own point of view on securitization is mixed. The gas companies do not make a profit on the securitized debt. On the other hand, they were responsible for purchasing

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adequate fuel supplies on behalf of the customers. Should the customers pay pirates because the utilities did not do their job? Will this be levied as a flat fee, which will hurt the poor more severely? And why haven't these gas utilities sued the predators for relief? What concerns me even more is that the Texas gas service franchise will be renewed in 2026 and negotiations will probably start next year. The past record of the regulatory office does not inspire me that negotiations will go well for the city. Further, there is no commission that will review this franchise. In closing, I remind you of a complaint I filed in November with the auditor's office about the regulatory office's failures to properly administer Texas gas

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services conservation programs. >> Alter: Thank you, Mr. Robins. We'll be taking up a briefing on the gas regulatory items, and hopefully our staff can speak to some of the issues that you raise during that briefing or in follow-up to that. One of the reasons we invited them to speak is to make sure that we had greater knowledge about the regulatory process and opportunities. So thank you for being here. >> Thank you. The franchise is coming up real soon. Keep your eye on it. >> Alter: Thank you. >> Tovo: I have a quick question for Mr. Robins. >> Alter: Go ahead, council member tovo. >> Tovo: Mr. Robins, thank you for this. I think this is a real important issue. Many of us wish the legislature had done more to address the situation.

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Nevertheless, we are where we are and I look forward to the presentation today. You said you submitted a request for information from our city. Can you just in sort of one sentence or two, just let us know what kind of information you were requesting so that when we get that briefing, we can determine whether it's provided that information or not? >> I know you're pressed for time. Do you want me to summarize? >> Tovo: Yeah. Summarize. I'm just trying to figure out what sort of information you requested. >> Okay. Well, I asked five detailed questions that could have been quickly dispatched, but for reasons unknown to me, they weren't. Four of these five were about the securitization, and basically, what information had been relayed to council. I don't know what everybody in the world does. I wanted to find out if you all

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had been informed. I also had a question on the center point conservation programs that will come before council next Thursday, and it would have been easy to answer, but it still hasn't been. >> Tovo: I

appreciate that. Thank you. I can give you a quick answer, I think, though my colleagues may be able to fill in. I don't recall having -- you know, receiving much information about this. I know when I was trying to learn more about what it was and what impact it would have, I rely primarily on sources in the media and in other places. That doesn't mean I didn't overlook a memo. But that's kind of my quick answer, and if my colleagues remember receiving information, please let me know because I'd like to see it, too. >> Thank you, council. >> Alter: Thank you, Mr. Robins. So, we are going to adjust a

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little bit to help council member tovo, who led the resolution for some of these audits, be more present. So we are going to do the workforce development follow-up audit at the end of our session, because we can always push that, if we have to. But we will go through the other briefings until we get to the disaster preparedness audit. So the first item of business is to approve the minutes. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? Vice chair pool makes the motion. Council member tovo seconds. All those in favor. Council member tovo. Unanimous on the dais. So we will now move -- if rendella is ready, we will move to item 4. I think she may need to be moved over. >> She's on now, chair. >> Alter: Great, thank you. So, this item is intended to provide council with an overview

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of our private utility franchising. Those that are not Austin water or Austin energy. We have new colleagues on the dais, and this topic can be complicated. We thought it might be a good idea for a refresher on how rate regulation works. Ms. Hawkins? >> Thank you, council member. And good morning, council. Rondella Hawkins, telecommunications with the financial services department. I want to thank you all for this opportunity to give you an overview of the franchise and regulatory framework of our private utilities. And I do have a presentation that can be pulled here. >> Coming right up. >> All right. There we go. All right. If you could just go to the next slide, please.

[9:45:15 AM]

Okay. So, just kind of what are these agreements, the franchise agreement grant private utilities, the use of public rights of way, for distribution and sale of natural gas or electricity in the city. The ordinance that establishes the obligations and rights of each party. The types of agreements, those that are still remaining under the municipal original jurisdiction include electric distribution. We have four. Blue bonnet electric co-op -- excuse me, we have three. We have oncor electric delivery. As far as natural gas distribution, and this is -- they distribute gas to -- you know, to the premise, to properties, Atmos energy, which is a mid Texas division, center point energy, south Texas division, C energy, and Texas gas service. And I wanted to point out the -- these natural gas distributors,

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they really are a system-wide, that's why you've got mid tech, south Texas, and it's a really big consolidation of cities that are in these service areas. And that has been approved by the railroad commission for -- you know, for many years, as far as just more of a service area, multi-jurisdiction, multi-cities, instead of just like city of Austin or west lake hills. And having their own. So, just wanted to kind of give you the framework for -- often we're asked, like, well, why is the city of Austin rate payers paying for X capital that was in the capital investments that was in another community? It's because of the system-wide structure. We also have by the state. This was the legislature over the course of years has moved

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from a municipal franchising framework, where we can negotiate real community benefits and rates and in kind, you know, contributions. It's moved to the state, and it began with our telephone providers. And this was back in '99. I'll go into more detail. We've got cable video service providers, and the statewide framework establishes a franchise fee structure. Next slide, please. I wanted to touch on some of the city charter requirements of our franchises and public utilities. And city council has the power to grant, renew, extend all franchises using the right of way, installing the facilities. And also, city council can amend

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and negotiate amendment with the consent of the franchise holder. Sometimes, not as often as it used to be, cable companies would transfer their franchise agreement. For example, many years ago, you know, we had Time Warner Cable. Not too far long ago. But then it was purchased by charter communications, they do business as spectrum. These franchise agreements will come before city council for approval because we want to ensure that the operator has the financial management and experience. Also the city charter requires three separate readings of a franchise agreement, and the first reading and the third reading, they have to be no less than 30 days apart. And this is an opportunity for input from the public, contemplates input from the community for each reading and careful consideration by council each reading, if there are

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things we need to continue to negotiate for. And the ordinance doesn't become effective until 60 days following the final adoption. And also, our franchise agreements are subject to referendum procedure under state laws. The terms are no more than 25 years. That's the max. And also in our franchise agreements, there's an -- includes a provision for the right to purchase the property, the system, the next, and these are municipal franchises for at any time within five years of the expiration of the term. Each of the agreements has a methodology for determining the price. The city gets an appraiser -- or the gas company or the electric company gets an appraisal. So that's in the city charter. Next slide, please.

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Regulation of rates. From time to time, we come before council for rate cases, and there's a public hearing on the proposed rates and it's adopted by ordinance. And also, there's a provision that no franchise holder shall -- any legal action to contest or go to litigation. And this also does include fares, so this contemplates your taxicab franchises. If they can't go forward and contest without having a motion for rehearing with the city council and they have to address each ground of complaint against the council adopted charge. And then the city council shall have acted upon such motion, so that's a provision in our city charter. Next slide, please.

[9:51:26 AM]

Electric distribution rates. Cities have original jurisdiction over the rates within city limits. The public utility commission state agency is -- they have a jurisdiction over the unincorporated areas, those that are outside the city limits and the county. They are also the appellate jurisdiction over rates and they maintain current tariffs, the rate tariffs, for all electric utilities. Next slide, please. Natural gas distribution rates. Again, we do have original jurisdiction. The railroad commission is the appellate jurisdiction over rates in the city. And they are responsible for the pipeline safety and they promulgate rules and enforce safety rules. And again, they do maintain current tariffs for all gas distribution utilities. I just wanted to note here that the city's rates are a part of

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that regional system-wide system and rate, and because of that, we do participate in rate cases with municipal coalitions, of municipalities that are within our service area. It's a system-wide rate proceeding. Next slide, please. As far as the rate-making, the statute under the Texas utilities code, the gas utility regulatory act, bura, it society S -- Gura, it sets out the process for a formal rate case. It's where a company comes in and asks for -- you know, they follow a written statement of intent to increase rates. And that goes into -- it's a much more detailed process for

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reviewing all of the financials, and you can negotiate the base customer rate. The rate design across different customer classes. Residential, commercial, industrial. So it's a longer process. And so the -- it is a longer process. And so the filing is made to municipality. The company has to, you know, provide notice to rate payers. And they cannot put in the rates into effect until 35 days after filing this statement. But of course, we do have some -- you know, we have actions that we can take and we typically -- well, we always suspend the proposed rate for this additional 90 days beyond that 35 days effective date, so it gives us 125 days for a review of -- you know, and we

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participate in a coalition of cities that's hired by outside council, professional rate experts that have worked in reviewing the rate filing, and so we typically -- well, we always do suspend. The company -- I mean, the city has to actually approve or take action before that 125 days, or it's considered -- it will go into effect and considered that we've approved it. Next slide, please. We can deny a rate increase, which we have done in the past, and then that's -- so the current rates, or the existing rate schedule stays into effect, and the company will appeal to the railroad commission, you know, our ordinance denying the

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increase. Or, they -- you know, if we deny, they could file, you know, a new statement of intent with a different rate increase. That's another option, and we have exercised that in the past. Because we want to ensure that the -- if we deny, then it goes to the railroad commission, and that gives us an opportunity to provide more input and have a decision by the railroad commission, so we definitely want to participate in that proceeding. The city may grant a lower than requested rate increase, and again, that is the appeal process to the railroad commission. Or, we can express -- you know, just request a rate increase as failed. Okay, next slide, please. I think most of you now are

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familiar with the grip filings that we come to council and ask for a suspension of the effective date. The gas reliability infrastructure program. Again, it's section 104.301 of the Texas utilities code and allows for the gas utilities to recover the investment's capital on an annual basis, on a calendar year basis. And that's -- that is to I think the intent. I'm not sure, to allow the companies to recover their cost on a more

-- for capital and to make investments in their infrastructure, and this allows a quicker recovery for them rather than having to file a full rate case, and they can file four of these grip filings annually, and then they have to file a full rate case, and that allows us to look at these annual adjustments that have been made, and we always come to

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council and ask for suspension. I shouldn't say always, but we have the ability to come to council for suspension of the rate increase for the grip to allow more time. I know also it is -- I wanted to clarify, it's not a full rate case, subject to full rate review. Cities have, you know, litigated this, that we want to have more input than what the statute allows us. There's certain terms and conditions. The compliance of the statute is all we actually have the ability to ensure, and the Texas supreme court just determined that we just have basically a ministerial review, and so we did not -- that's what the supreme court decided. So we do have the ability in these full rate cases. It's been brought up from time to time that these grip charges

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are applied to the fixed monthly charge, which then you'll sigh that it's crept up. That's the fixed monthly charge regardless of how much gas you consume. But the statute allows the companies to recover these costs through that fixed monthly customer charge. Next slide, please. The natural gas energy efficiency programs. All of our natural gas franchisees are required to have an energy efficiency program. It's a provision that has been included, and it's because these franchise agreements are for services that are provided by the franchisee, natural gas, we want to encourage conservation and energy efficiency. And that has been included for many years in our gas franchise agreements. The gas companies, they manage the programs, and the programs are funded by the rate payer.

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There's a monthly surcharge and each company has its own unique efficiency or conservation program, and they have a tariff, a rate tariff that is adopted by city council, and they -- the program tariff is subject to city staff and resource management review, or changes to the program. And the custom rate increases just are subject to city council approval. I did want to note that any decrease to customer rates is not subject because it's not a rate increase. So that's the framework for natural gas energy efficiency programs. Next slide, please. The state issued certificates of franchise operating authority, which applies to the telecom and video cable providers and small

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cell providers. We don't have a role in setting the fees of the providers. Each of these categories, it was removed by legislative action, and you'll see back in '93 that the legislature moved from a franchising -- we can negotiate franchising and we had a percentage of first revenues for franchising revenue. But there's a statewide compensation now that's on an access fee methodology, and the intent of this back in the day was to promote competition, rather than just having one or two companies. That's what the spirit is, lower rates for customers and promoting competition. Then we went to 2005 and we have the cable TV video providers,

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and the right of way compensation is at 5% of cable service gross revenues and 1% of gross revenues for public education and government access capital equipment. This is the and funds our atxn video production and some of our other access television operators equipment meetings. I did want to note that this legislation passed, that the existing cable franchises were allowed to expire. We had an agreement with time Warner Cable. And in those agreements, we can negotiate benefits. We had customer service standards. We had free cable TV. This is back, you know, free cable television, or discounts. And so -- but now with the statewide scheme, we just -- it's set out by the statute. And more recently, that set the

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statewide right of way compensation and rent for the use of right of way and permitting shop clocks. And this is a reminder, we did join a coalition of cities litigating that statute about the preemption of -- that's still ongoing as far as the litigation. Next slide. In the presentation, the recovery of the gas supply cost, and as Mr. Robins commented, the gas utility providers, they incur and sustain significant costs during the storm and they purchased the gas in the spot market, and it was -- well, you'll see here, I mean, there was \$3.6 billion in costs to these companies requested from

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the railroad commission. And the hb-1520 allowed providers to securitize, set up -- securitize the cost of the financial instrument, which is being provided through the Texas public finance authority. They are working with the railroad commission oncoming up with the process and issuing bonds for recovery. But it was in November that the railroad commission approved the total of \$3.6 billion in costs for these companies to be able to securitize. And pay through bonds to be issued by the Texas public finance

authority. The city of Austin did participate through these coalitions that I referred to earlier. There's the alliance of center point municipalities, the Atmos Texas municipalities and central gulf coast service area of

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coalition of cities. By participating in that proceeding at the railroad completion, there was some reduction in interest calculations, but it's still an enormous amount of money, \$3.6 billion statewide that will be incurred by our rate payers. I did want to highlight the participation in the proceeding at the commission, which the commission endorsed, was an agreement to seek the best financing term possible consistent with the high bond rating up to 30 years. Also the order from the commission imposing on the utilities. An affirmative duty to attempt to recover moneys paid out to gas suppliers that perhaps should not have been paid, or should have been a lower amount. Next slide, please. How will this impact customer rates? And I wanted to note -- yeah,

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the \$3.6 billion was the total cost to be securitized through bonds, and this information came from our -- you know, from the coalition that the attorneys and consultants as far as the rounding of numbers. These are not concrete. They're not approved. But we did want to point out that by securitizing it over a period of time, hopefully -- I know Paul mentioned ten years. We don't know what that term is going to be. Ten to 15 years. It does reduce the impact, although if it's \$5 a month per month statewide for a period of ten years, that is a significant impact to a rate payer, especially low-income. But it is much -- I mean, it's better than the gas companies being able to recover the cost through -- just like a typical gas cost recovery is, they just pass the cost of gas onto the consumer, whatever they paid is correct. It's not like securitized or

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spread out over a long period of time. It could have been like 45 to \$50 per month. So, we are waiting for the condition and the Texas public finance authority to work on the financing order. Hopefully that will be approved by mid February, and then the authority will have to sell bonds. We've heard that it will be sometime this summer, and of course, once the -- until the bonds are issued, we will not know the monthly amount or the effective date for the charges for the rate payers. But we will certainly keep -- once we have more information, a lot of the -- this period of time, there's activity at the railroad commission and participating, and the companies having to pool together the information for the commission as far as their gas costs. There's just been -- you know, I don't know if you call it discovery, that's probably not the right term. But we are now at the point

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where we will have this order and then the bonds, and then we will know what the impact is to rate payers, and certainly keep city council apprised of this process now that we're here. I think that ends my presentation. >> Alter: Thank you. We appreciate you joining us. One really quick question, and I'm going to ask us to be really brief with our questions and invite folks to have more in-depth conversations with you about details on their own. How big is the region, and what portion of that region is Austin? For the gas. >> The region -- yes. The region for Texas gas, which is the largest provider, we have about -- in Austin, about 90% of the gas customers in their

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market. And the central -- our service area includes Austin, it goes up to cedar park, west lake, rolling hills, luling, Lockhart. It goes down to the gulf coast. So it's a very wide, very big region. And like center point energy in south Texas, I mean, Austin, we're just a really small -- you know, couple thousand customers, couple thousand rate payers. So it does vary according to each gas distribution. But they're typically pretty large. They are large. >> Alter: Right, they're a larger area, but if we're 90% of -- part of a regional municipal process. We also have a larger wait within that. Just wanted to point that out, because I don't know if that was clear in the presentation. Colleagues, does anyone have a burning question for Ms. Hawkins

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today? Thank you for your presentation. People very well may have questions. I just want to make sure that we can cover everything today. Appreciate this and for staff of other offices, you know, please keep this information in mind and share with your council member so that we can all have this kind of basic information about how the gas process works. In response to Mr. Robins, I will say that I was aware of the securitization. I don't know whether it was from city -- I don't remember if it was from city staff or from reading about the process or meetings with different folks. We will now move on to item 5, disparities study and inclusive procurement working group. This is part of the department's regular report to the audit and finance committee on their work. Today, we're going to hear about the ongoing disparities study

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and inclusive procurement working group. I'm not sure who needs to be moved over. >> Hello. Can you bring up my presentation, please? >> Alter: I think they're working on it. >> Thank you. >> Alter: Good morning. >> Good morning.

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I think you're set. >> Okay, thank you. I am the assistant director for the small and minority business resources department. I am standing in today for the director. Today we'll be giving an update on the disparities study as well as the inclusive procurement working group activities. Next slide, please. So just a brief overview. Again, we will go through some of the disparity study milestones, discuss some of the activities of the inclusive procurement working group, and provide you with some of the next steps that we are taking as a department, working with our stakeholders in both of those areas. Next slide, please. And you can go on to the next slide. So some of the milestones, as you may recall, in February, we

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embarked on our disparities study. In 2020, we submitted quite a large amount of contract data for the city, procurement data for the city of Austin to our consultant. We have embarked on a robust disparities study focus group, qualitative study as well. And we have been embarking upon several outreach events to educate our stakeholders about the process for the disparities study, and not only that, but also get input about the procurement processes as well. At this time, the study consultant does have the qualitative and quantitative data, and we are just about ready to have the disparities study in hand. And so one of the things that we do want to bring to your attention is that we did plan for about an 18-month process, but we have had some delays.

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Those delays are contributed to the fact that we did ask our disparities study consultant to go back and provide additional opportunities for public engagement. Unlike my other disparities study that we have done in the city, we have both embarked on internal and external stakeholder groups to provide qualitative information about the mwb program and those experiences at the procurement, at the contracting level, at the administrative level for our program. In addition, we did have during our qualitative analysis period, just as we were about to embark on focus groups and structured in-person interviews, a thing called covid happened, and we had to pivot and plan for those particular types of sessions, focus groups, structured interviews using a virtual format. So we did -- I was very proud of

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our staff and our consultants. We were able to regroup and get those done. But that did cost us some additional time, moving us away from the 18-month process. Currently, again, we are just about ready to have the disparities study in hand. We are waiting to receive that, and once received, our internal executive team will be reviewing that with our consultant. Once finalized, we do plan to bring that disparities study result, perhaps in April of 2022, back to council and have -- embark on, again, another robust stakeholder briefing around the city to include the chambers, to include internal staff, to include our minority trade organizations, minority chambers, and other groups who we have engaged in our

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qualitative process. The plan is to have council to bring back recommendations for council, adoption sometimes later in late summer. As you all may recall, we did come back before you in December of 2021 and request an extension to the program ordinance that is scheduled to sunset in December 2022. And again, the plan is to be -- obviously bring the program, bring the disparities study and recommendations back from the disparities study as well as the inclusive procurement working group prior to the program's sunset. Next slide, please. So, next, I would like to talk a little bit about the inclusive procurement working group. As you all may recall, city council directed the city

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manager in March of 2020 to create an inclusive procurement working group made up of industry stakeholders as well as internal city stakeholders to discuss issues related to the mwb program and our ordinance, and to make recommendations on the ways in which the city could improve the program, while also meeting the needs of our community and remaining within the legal boundaries of the disparities study. What staff has done is, we took that resolution and we organized the resolution into four subject -- critical subject areas to include certification issues, best practices, communication, and transparency issues, as well as resources to local businesses. These particular four subject areas were critical in guiding

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the work of the inclusive procurement working group as well as our team -- our department team in laying out the foundation in which we would go about working with the inclusive procurement working group. As you can see, in each of those areas, taking the resolution that was brought forth by council, we carefully laid out all of the key critical components from the resolution to tackle our meetings. Next slide, please. The inclusive procurement group, we have been very excited and been working very hard

with our industry partners. This is an impressive group of industry leaders, both internal and external. They are made up of members of the chambers, minority chambers, minority trade organizations, professional organizations that we work with, as well as our

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prime contractor community, our subcontracting community, and also our internal stakeholders' departments that we work with, capital contracting purchasing, as well as public works that we work intensively with on a day-to-day basis, and we have worked with this group since 2021 and have had a series of meetings in which I will lay out in our next slides. Next slide, please. So I talked a little bit earlier about the four subject areas in which we -- that guided our methodology, our meeting methodology. Very early on, one of the things that we wanted to assure is that we had meetings designed to maximize input from our stakeholders. We sought out the assistance of our corporate Pio, and they assisted us with developing a

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meeting design, and also, they are continuously assisting us with meeting facilitation. In our biweekly meetings -- and again, I might add that initially, we had planned for these meetings to be in-person meetings, and that would have offered a different -- certainly a different dynamic in engaging our stakeholders and getting input, and what was important for us was that we did not let the virtual environment dismay our -- take away from the robust input that was needed as a part of this process. So, although the meetings are virtual, we did do a series of meetings, one, to make sure our audience and our stakeholders were familiar with the virtual environment, so that that did not impact communication and recommendations and feedback. We also have a meeting design in which each staff, each of the

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four subject areas are presented by our subject matter experts who provide us a briefing of sorts to educate the procurement working group about all of the details of each of those subject matters in terms of what we're engaging as a department and what our activities have been in each of those areas. We then follow up with several opportunity meetings where the procurement group provides input and provides recommendations, asks questions, and then we present to them in a meeting follow-up what we heard session. This is an opportunity for us to show and make sure we have captured their recommendations, their concerns, their issues, their questions, and be able to follow up and provide direct follow-up with them. We then have a formal session with them where they are able to -- after taking in all of that

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information to come back and provide specific recommendations on those particular topics that we are discussing. So our goal was to maximize each opportunity with them in our meeting design to provide them the opportunity to give us as much feedback as possible, making sure that the virtual environment did not provide barriers to their input and their participation. Next slide, please. This is just a general kind of overview of what we've been doing to include the four subject areas. We have been moving through our meetings very well, working with the procurement working group. Again, we started the process with a meet and greet in August. And first topic, which has been one of the most active topics is the area of certification

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program that we have. And so we have presented a series of presentations on our certification to include our certification process, eligibility, requirements. We also gave them a briefing on our new system, our certification compliance system that we have seen significant improvements in the number of applications that we are receiving from interested businesses who are seeking to be certified. So, for the first month, August through September, October, you see a large number of meetings with regards to our certification process that we received a lot of comments, feedback, and recommendations in that area. Next slide, please. As you can see, as we move into the month of November, the next process we discussed as directed by council were issues involving around payment processes.

[10:24:06 AM]

We did a presentation and delivered a presentation working with internal staff, our financial services division, our contract -- our capital contracting, as well as purchasing to provide -->> Alter: Excuse me, would you mind jumping to the disparity study? I think we can get the details from the calendar off of here. We're just worried a little bit about our timing this morning. This is really helpful information, but I think the details are on the slides. So if you wouldn't mind skipping to disparities study. Which I think is the next slide, that would be great. >> Okay. And so, again, the timeline for upcoming -- the upcoming proposed meetings for the procurement working group includes the remaining topics for communications and transparency and best practices. Council member, if you go back to the disparities study timeline, again, with regards to the disparities study, and you can go to the next slide,

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please. Next slide. Thank you. And there is the last slide. We, again, have not received the disparities study. We are planning -- from my understanding from my consultant is we should have that disparities study sometime in February. As a reminder, we will have an internal review with an executive staff of that disparities study, and then sometime in the spring of this year, perhaps in April, we will begin a robust public engagement period providing briefings to our stakeholders, and as you can see, those will be the individuals that we are planning to for sure schedule briefing sessions about the findings of the disparities study. Again, next step will be to bring forth the recommendations and have the council to adopt the disparities study late early summer of 2022. And then finally, council consideration and adoption of our program in the fall of 2022.

[10:26:15 AM]

So, if you have no further questions -- again, we will continue working with our inclusive procurement working group. They will be also sharing a report of their recommendations and findings as well with council. >> Alter: Thank you, Ms. Saldana. We want to express our appreciation for these reports and the work that you're doing. I did check with several of the folks that I have talked to in the past about the disparities study and this program and the response I got was, well, you know, we're involved on the team and we think there's great ideas moving forward. So, clearly, you are doing a lot with respect to engagement. I want to thank members of the inclusive procurement working group for helping us to improve this process in as well informed manner as we can. Thank you for being with us this morning. Does anyone have any questions? Seeing none, we'll thank you very much and we'll move on to item 2, which is the follow-up

[10:27:16 AM]

to our discussion of the disaster preparedness audit. >> Thank you. >> Alter: So we're going to move now to the disaster preparedness audit discussion, and really, this is a discussion of disaster preparedness, but the questions that were posed to staff follow directly from the audit. I worked with staff -- I shared with them several questions that really focus us on sort of why weren't we prepared. You know, we had a lot of past reports that recommended various things. Sometimes over and over again. And those recommendations were not implemented. Trying to understand why that is, so that when we take the recommendations that we've worked so hard to get from this

[10:28:16 AM]

report, moving forward, we don't sort of repeat that mistake. And I've worked closely with council member tovo on these. So the first part is why weren't we prepared in the first place in terms of some of these recommendations from the past and then really trying to understand, you know, how is this

resourced? What requests have been made in the past to staff or to provide resources and what have been granted and what have not been granted? We can't expect our staff to do work if they don't have the resources to do it and then hooking, you know, what have we done since the November reports? This is an ongoing process to try to return that. We are going to ask that staff come back in a quarterly basis to audit and finance to update us on these recommendations because given the audit we have there is a real concern that I imagine all of us share to make

[10:29:20 AM]

sure that we don't repeat mistake of the past and that recommendations that can be put forward do get implemented. We also need to make sure that we are prioritizing, because we now probably have close to 1,000 different recommendations related to disaster preparedness, between different reports and I say that number loosely but it is well over, it is certainly well over 500, I can't count them all, so we do have to figure out the prioritization, which is another piece of the puzzle. And it is the role of the finance committee to make sure that we are doing this kind of thing as well as the whole council. I just want to say before we open it up for presentation for -- I don't know if? Se on the line yet, but councilmember Ellis indicated that she wanted to join us. She may need to be moved over.

[10:30:22 AM]

I don't know if she is -- I don't know if she is -- >> I actually don't see councilmember Ellis on here. I will look out for her. >> If you could look out for her that would be great. >> You got it. >> Alter: We are joining B's Ms. Arrelano and it looks like Jessica King and I think this is another staff that, with a mask I can't recognize but I am sure they will introduce themselves. Ms. Ariana. >> Did you have your hand up? Kathie your hand is out of your door. I can't see it. >> I know. I was trying to move it to an area where it might pop up more but -- >> You know, I just -- thank you, chair and I appreciate the priority that is being placed on this and I appreciate it coming back today. What I would like to do outside perhaps of this conversation is think about whether quarterly is huff oversight and whether there should be perhaps a subcommittee of the audit and finance or something, some other grouping

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to really monitor this as we move forward, because for example, we got -- and then I also wanted to ask staff, at some point during today's conversation to address whether or not they have set up a portal, question and answer portal we received I think a nine page memo this morning which is the super helpful and has great information in it. Almost all of the passages lead to additional questions for me and a, you know, there are never any really good -- we never set aside blocks of time that allow for that level of detailed questions and a question and answer portal is probably the most efficient way to deal

with questions about the audit and the action report and about the memo today and some of the other communications we have gotten and I believe I have asked in a couple of public settings for that question in the question and answer portal so maybe that is answered and I missed where that is but if the staff could address that I think it is important if that is not set up. I would regard that as a Pryor

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at this. I am certainly happy to do so but I think that is an opportunity for us to really understand the scale of some of the work that has been done. I will give one example in today's memo there is a conversation about training. This links to the audit because there have been past recommendations to make sure that we are doing cross training and having staff in perhaps unrelated departments prepared to step in in times of emergency and I would like -- I see some information about training in here and it is useful information but it is not clear to me how much of that training includes staff outside of ordinary emergency operations. That is kind of a separate question just to be handled in a Q & a staying with tire chains, there is some information in here about tire chains that have been purchased for city vehicles moving forward to help us, our departments be better equipped in ice. Great information. I am super happy that happened.

[10:33:30 AM]

>> Tovo: I have no sense of scale from the memo of how widespread that is and how those decisions were made about how much investment to make in that area. That would be a very simple matter to handle in a Q and a. So again just two things, two main points, one, do we have a Q & a portal? If not how soon can we get one? And, two councilmember alter perhaps you and I can talk about this outside of the meeting how, whether quarterly is enough, is enough conversation about it and whether, whether and how to involve the full council in some of those updates. But right now, it feels like we naah meet, need pretty regular visits on this topic. So I appreciate the quarterly. Might need to be more often. That's just something I am mulling over. >> Alter: Thank you, councilmember tovo and we will let staff begin in just a second. I did want to alert those who with are watching there was a memo released this morning.

[10:34:31 AM]

I have been running the meeting so I haven't had a chance to read it yet and will ask that that memo and the presentation, if there is one, if it is not already in the memo, that be attached as well as the original audit, so folks can follow along and then all of this should be placed on the after action website. Ms. Arrelano, thank you. >> Thank you, mayor pro tem and committee members, again, thank you for this opportunity to come before you today to provide an update and thank you for your forecast arcing

comments as we are ready to provide a presentation. If I can ask that bit brought up. The goal of our presentation is to provide information requested starting first with a bit of history and context which I think will be helpful in understanding the why of the information, the information provided by audit committee in

[10:35:31 AM]

terms of the audit report that provided that some items weren't completed to this date. Now, we believe this context will be helpful in providing that insight. Then I will hand it over to homeland security and emergency management director Juan Ortiz, who will introduce his team members that will be covering the rest of the presentation to address your questions and if I could go to the next slide. We will be addressing your questions related to department's budget requests, the response efforts, our tracking mechanisms and how we are prioritizing the recommendations and finally an overview of the emergency alert system. Specifically to councilmember tovo's question about the Q & a portal staff is working on providing that kind of a capability moving forward. Next slide, please. >> So in terms of context, disasters and emergency situations have changed dramatically over the past 20

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years. Historically as a community we have fortunately not had many emergency events that directly impacted our community and in most cases we have been a sanctuary for people experiencing disasters, such as hurricanes between 2003 we had the bastrop fire emergency, but usually we provide safety for people fleeing hurricanes. While our emergency response to sheltering other communities still requires a heavy lift by the small 13 member homeland security and emergency management or hsem team .. This is different than a disaster in our own community. Also a demand for many response are quite different these days. Between 2013 and today we have experienced 10 emergency response situations, including eight local disasters and two situations where we sheltered other communities seeking safety from hurricane Harvey I have and

[10:37:33 AM]

Laura. Additionally with that ten year time frame on two separate occasions our staff responded to two local disasters within the same year. >> Next slide, please. This slide portrays the major emergencies since 2013. Since then, there were only three years when there wasn't a major emergency and in the past two years we know we experienced multiple emergencies at the same time. In all but one of these emergency activations that being hurricane Harvey I have, we are still working to recover costs from FEMA. The last ten years are quite open, eye opening. In the past we often had time between emergencies to perform after action reports, implement and document appropriately a. However, over

the last few years we have had emergency after emergency with little time inbetween to assess and implement improvements. In most cases, staff completed an after action report only to

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turn around and face another disaster .. What makes this more challenging is that starting in 2020 of course we begin experiencing emergencies layered on top of the other, most notably again the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 through 2021 and even now, as well as hurricane Laura in 2020 and winter storm just this last year. Please keep in mind that that many operations plan, staffing plans, nonprofit coordination and many additional plans were originally created, however had not been updated to include in consideration of a global pandemic occurring at the same time as any particular emergency. So in response to questions about why implementation from a reef emergencies have not been complete, this historical context hopefully provides some insight. Additionally while the auditors report indicates many after action reports recommendations have not been completed, we are finding that some recommendations have been

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completed, but the necessary documentation to close them out have not been done. We have engaged consulting services to help us with appropriate documentation and for the items that have not been completed again we are utilizing consulting services to help prioritize those items for the future. Next slide. So in addition to the tempo of emergencies that we saw in the last several years, resourcing has been a challenge. This slide covers grants and in a moment we will cover our internal budget development. But grants that previously have funded strategic planning partnerships and personnel drive up in 2012 and certainly the city's budget has gotten tighter year after year. Hsmem's capacity for the full cycle of preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation diminished over the years because of the loss of grant funds and hears of constrained budgets as well as the tempo of

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emergencies, at the same time the demand has grown. Disasters in the last ten years have been much more frequent and have had more local impact. Cost recovery through the public assistance, through FEMA is complex and takes many years leaving the office of hsem to continue managing a growing number of disaster recoveries. This combination of increased needs and diminished capacity leads to a sign that prioritizing response and recovery overpreparedness and mitigation. And mayor pro tem as you mentioned this morning earlier this morning, I released that memo that provides greater detail on staff actions addressing corrective actions to -- in response to winter storm after action reporting so

with that I would like to turn it over the homeland security and Juan Ortiz to introduce his team who will be covering the rest of our presentation. >> Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Ortiz.

[10:41:37 AM]

>> Alter: Good morning. >> Good morning, madam chair and councilmembers. Thank you, Mr. Arrelano for the information. First I want to introduce the team that will be from presenting here with me today. Virtually we have chief finance officer for hsem, and here present with me as well we will have Linda Adams that will be talking about the after action review process and the documentation as we move forward and then also we will have Bryce that will be giving us an update on the preparedness in how we move forward and the communications components as we continue to present. So with that, I would like to again introduce Eva Moore, our hsem finance chief who will share information about our budget and future budget requests. Eva. >> Good morning, councilmembers.

[10:42:39 AM]

So included in your backup today there is a summary of hsem's budget request starting as far back as 2015. But for the purpose of this presentation, I will focus on our more recent years. So in 2019 we had the following unmet needs that did not fit within cancel priorities. It was disaster response and recovery resources, warehouse and shelter space. Community preparedness campaign, continuity of operations and it disaster recovery promise twa is actually on the next slide, thank you. This sem did receive in 20201 20201 the all time member however due

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to the covid pandemic they were diverted to focus full time on emergency response in fy-21 there was no procedure to update those needs and it was certainly a challenging budget year for the city. So then upcoming we are current assessing needs for the current fy-20 three budget, possibly a midyear addition in fy-22 the and I will turn it back. >> Thank you, aofe. >> Next slide, please. 0. >> Now let's talk about the hsem response efforts. We have been responding to covid-19, hsem has 13 full time ftes which spend approximately 20,000 hours responding to to two disasters in 2020. Leaving little time for planning

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disaster preparedness, tracking costs, recovery and calling up on after action tasks. As noted 13 ftes without vacation or sick leave would equate to around 27,000 hours. So the 20,000 hours is approximately 74 percent of the time. Given the fact that the pandemic started in March 1st, you see very quickly that the majority of the capability of the staff with hsem is consumed in prior activities conducted in the first quarter, in the first couple of, two first two months of 2020, excuse me of the calendar year of 2020 as well as the response for the rest of the year. As an organization, for example, the city employees work more than 1.1 request million dollars, responding to covid-19 and the equivalent to 530 full time employees. To be clear this does not

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include responding to hurricane Laura. Lsem supported multiple covid related needs, including six protective lodges that were established in supported throughout the city. Seven isolation facilities that were put up to take care of citizens that needed to be isolated during can exposures to covid as well as being positive, not being able to isolate in order to ensure that public health needs were being taken into account. We also had support and alternate care site hospital at the convention center and actually at the beginning of calendar year 2020 we were moving into full activation of that facility to support the medical needs of the community. We also established regional infusion centers and distributed more than 25 million items from a logistical operations that had to be expanded as part of the covid response and quickly put in place establishing policies

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and procedures in order to support those critical community needs. And also mass vaccination distribution as we were rolling out and positioning to the early activities of 2021. Next slide. >> As winter storm Yuri approaches it is important to remember that we were entering our second year in responding to the pandemic. The city of Austin was experiencing another surge of covid-19 cases that necessitated us opening a supplemental hospital at the convention center, Austin public health had recently been identified by the state as a hub distribution point for vaccinations. The vaccines scheduling system had just London and experienced some serious challenges that had to be worked through. People across Austin and Travis county and even other regions

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were scheduling appointments to get the vaccine, which was in short supply but very high demand. Staff were learning new vaccine distribution protocols along with finding ways to meet state data entry requirements and continue to support covid-19 festing operating at different locations in Austin and Travis county. >> Next slide. Now I want to talk a little bit about what have we done since winter storm

Yuri. First let me tell you a lot of these efforts began immediately after the storm ended. We started updating our emergency plans, procedures and protocols, we established new guidelines for the emergency operations center and these activities did not wait for the after action report or the city audit to be finalized. So these are activities we initiated immediately after the

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event and are continuing as we continue to prepare community and make sure we are the safest community in the world. We continued monthly, we are continuing to conduct monthly emergency management meetings with our single points of contact. In fact at this point in time right now there is a meeting taking place for this month with all of the departmental emergency management single points of contact as we speak. We launch a new -- earlier this year, excuse me. Earlier this fiscal year on October 1st, we launched a new alert system for people who are hard of hearing, deaf, blind of, or deaf blind. We updated a cold weather shelter plan for people experiencing homelessness and and this plan has been activated several times this winter weather season already. We have conducted a seminars and tabletop exercise with over 150 people from city and county and other governmental agencies

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including private sector as well. We scheduled additional training for executives on responding to disasters with the naval postgraduate school. We have acquired low power radio capabilities to broadcast emergency messages and specific areas during disasters and we have continued to work, continue making progress to complete the corrective actions for winter storm after action report, including placing supplies at city facilities that can be utilized at shelters if needed during winter weather. And this is something that gets me really excited is the prestaging of these resources so that we are able to respond very quickly in the event of an emergency. Part of making continuing progress on implementing after action report recommendations is to track and prioritize them. Next slide. With just over 10030 recommended

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tasks we needed we needed to prioritize and track the progress of each task. We developed an after action recommendation tracker, which is being, which is currently being tested. Each recommendation underwent a detailed analysis including benefit of risk mitigation, confidence in the ability to implement the risk mitigation solution, ease of mitigation solution implementation, capabilities and types of resources required. Implement time frame .. Cost, funding source, and priority for implementation is as immediate as long-term or is it a future -- is it a future item? .. >> Next slide. Of the 130 after action

recommendations, 32 recommendations or approximately 24 percent are identified as priority recommendations because they rated as both high

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mitigation value, meaning that the recommendation offers a high benefit to the city for the lowest cost, and having little or no direct costs and/or could be funded under existing budget or be a part of an existing ongoing program. The 32 recommendations are organized either by three capabilities or in seven focus areas. To provide a more detailed explanation I am going to turn it over to Linda Adams who has been helping with us this effort. Linda. .. Thank you. Good morning, councilmember. Next slide, please. >> So when we look at the recommendations, 132. They are divided the same by capability and also by focus area. This deals with can capability and when we talk about

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capability, if you look at the legend at the bottom it talks about logistics and supply chain management planning and preparedness, communication and coordination. So when we prioritize those, when those are prioritized, nine of those dealt with logistics and supply chain, which -- which represents 20 percent. 15, planning and preparedness. And eight were communication and coordination. On the nine that dealt with logistics and supply chain, those things such as system that would allow for pre-staging resources at a smaller -- at smaller hubs in strategic areas throughout the city and county with the 15 with planning and preparedness that would be something like identifying, identifying partner with transportation alternatives that increase and assess the life

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sustaining services such as food, pharmacy, shelter and support. And communication and coordination, that would be something like identify actions to improve the monitoring and social media and respond to unmet needs during a disaster. Next slide, please. This slide deals with the focus areas. There were 13 leadership in coordination, and that would be something like using an equity lens in distribution of water, food and wrap-around services, five of them dealt with medical, that would be something like develop and implement a communications plan for medical shelter operations to release string on hospitals and direct residents to the appropriate shelters -- shelter facilities,

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seven of those dealt with sheltering, an example would be to revise the shelter plan with preidentified sites for future disaster responses. And three is transportation, reevaluating the list of priority roadways, sidewalks and other critical infrastructure to be treated and cleared in winter weather planning and one of those deals with food, such as establishing a process to better incorporate food, access and mask care services for the public to joint information centers. Next slide, please. So this current status of where we are with those 132. There is five that have been cleared, two dealt with communication, one planning and preparedness, one with transportation, one with logistics and supply, chain management. There are 12 in progress and there are 15 that we are waiting

[10:55:53 AM]

on response that dealt with another department that we have contacted to ask for an update on those items. With that, I will turn it over to Bryce to go over the emergency notification system. And I will just add this as another question I didn't mention earlier. >> Alter: Was also asked about the alert system as we were hearing conflicting information from our counterparts at the county from what we thought we heard so we wanted to get an update on that. >> Yes. Absolutely. Thank you. Good morning, committee, councilmembers, thank you for giving me an opportunity to talk about our emergency notification systems here in the region. Again my name is Bryce, I am the communication manager for the office of homeland security and emergency management. I want to talk about our two primary means of emergency notification systems because I think there is some confusion and I want to make sure we are

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talking about the right system for the right incident. So the first thing that I want to talk about is integrated public alert and warning system, which traditionally is used in our amber alert type situation. I think that is what the public is most familiar with, that is what is called a wea alert, wireless perform alert, comes up as a notification on your phone, most often attributed to amber alerts. This opens up a whole suite of other items that can be sent so we will see that on the next slide and then the other one is warn central Texas sway regional notification system that sends phone calls, text messages, e-mails, pages, if we still have people signed on pagers. You know, our emergency response folks do have those. So those are sent via our warn central Texas system which is administered by cap cog, the capital area council of governments here for a 10 county region. So we will go to the next slide.

[10:57:55 AM]

So first ipaws, so a variety of organizations can come into "Paws. And provide messages, emergency alerts. So what you are most familiar with on, you know, television or radio when you get that tone on the television or radio and it says this is a test of the emergency alert system, we have the ability to send

a message through that. I circled wea. Wea there, which we are most familiar with on your cell device. Again those are only sent to cellular devices that have those push notification, push notification capabilities and are opted in. You can turn those off. Another avenue is for weather radios. And then in other communities you may be familiar without door sirens, those can be activated like we have this Dallas and

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Fort Worth. We do not have a system like that here locally. Next slide, please. >> This is an image of what it looks like to me when I begin sending a warn central Texas message and I thought this would be interesting just to see this kind of connotation looking map, even dot there is a contact, is a household that we can reach. This is only people that we are reaching right now. This is e-mail is what you are looking at. We have also alerts that can be sent to e-mail, text, phone, this is just showing e-mail if the it is all of them are on it is just a blur of color so I brought it down just so you could see what it looks like to me inside the city boundaries. Again, warn central Texas is administered across 10 counties, so you see that there are contacts outside of our city of Austin boundaries. For me I am able to send to a variety of different maps and I am going to explain how these tools are different and why we use this in one space and one maybe or both depending on the

[10:59:59 AM]

disaster. So what you are seeing here, this is the city of Austin boundaries and I can specifically target in north central Texas the boundaries and do the county boundaries, I can do Austin energy service area, I can do Austin water service area and go all the way down to a neighborhood size and do zip code and a variety of different slicing and dicing of the people that we contact through warn central Texas, it is it is a very powerful tool and it allows for specific and targeted messages to neighbors, the entire city with no lead. When we use "Pause, "Pause, "Pause, you don't "Pause, when we use zoo if you are in south

[11:00:59 AM]

Austin at the time, you may get that notification, if I live in south Austin and I am here, I will now get that notification. However, if we are signed up through warn central Texas and we utilize that tool, that will only alert people who are located in south Austin and have identified their address, even if they are out of the area, out of the city, out of the state, they will still get that notification. So we utilize different tools for different emergencies. If you have something that is immediate and everyone in that area needs to shelter in place, ipaws is a very powerful tool. If we are talking about a boil water notice or something that affect as specific area, utilizing ipaws is not very helpful because you are going to get bleed into areas that are not impacted so it may not be the right tool to utilize when we send these

emergency alerts. The other thing I wanted to point out. We can get to the next slide, is the number that is in the bottom there. So that is important to note, so

[11:02:02 AM]

I blew it thereupon at the bottom of the slide. If we select the city of Austin in our warn central Texas database and we send a message to all contact types and all methods, phone, e-mail, text message, we are contacting 1.2 million individual contact types, so that may mean we are contacting somebody on their home phone and their cellphone so it may be the same person, however, it is going to send a message to 1.2 million unique devices. So that may be a home phone. That may be an e-mail, that may be a cellular device but that is the kind of reach that we have with this deal in the Austin area. But I want to also share with you that using this tool as we have throughout covid-19 and then having a couple of different city wide disasters, we have learned a lot of best practices about what goes in to sending a warn central Texas message, what goes into sending an ipaws message. So there are some limitations on the software that we utilize to

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send messages, and so it requires that we send the mental multiple times in our system, so if we are sending it in English we want to make sure there is a character limitation and we have to make sure after it goes over that character limit it goes off and links off to the full message which may work for smart phone users but for those who don't have smart enabled devices that sat channel so we try to limit it always to that character occupy county if we send it in Spanish we also have to send it separately and when we do send the mental, we are inundated with calls coming back towards us and get thousands of call to 311 and get calls to 911, we get thousands, tens of thousands of calls back to the number that called the individual when we utilize warn central Texas so we have to set up a system for them to relay and have a message relayed back to them again when they call that phone number back. And also have our media partners that receive calls about this

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system. So as we begin thinking about utilizing this tool we start with, what is our mental going to be and for me the most important thing is that it is accurate and actionable, utilizing the system is a very powerful tool, it is one thing to tell the public that something is happening but also have to be sure the message is clear and that we direct the public what we want them to do to stay safe. So these are just some of the things that we look at before we send a message the. Not on this slide I also just wanted to give a quick update as we talk about preparedness. For me my responsibility is not just notifying the public about emergencies that happen in the community and my responsibility is also to share with the

public how they can be better prepared themselves. As the city undertakes preparedness effort to make sure that we have, are more prepared for next disaster we also ask the public to do the same. So we launched a new website which is ready central texas.org that should help folks guide

[11:05:05 AM]

them through our four steps of disaster preparedness, which is for us very simple, make a plan, build a kit, know your neighbors and stay informed, I did want to talk about that. We also just deployed our annual calendar which we do an art contest for elementary school students to talk about disaster, disaster preparedness and we partner with local schools to encourage disaster preparedness at the youngest ages we can, and so copies of those are at our branch libraries and rec centers as well. At this point I am going to hand it back to director Ortiz to conclude our portion of the briefing. Thank you all so much. >> Thank you, Bryce, and thank you, Linda and Aoife, for the update, great job. I want to take this moment right now to kind of give you an example of the things that we are doing. The weather forecast called for potential winter weather I am

[11:06:06 AM]

.. Mix tomorrow so right now our teams have been meeting with the national weather service to discuss this, we are participating in the state conference call. They are disseminating information to our departments, our community partners and we are getting information out to the public. Now before this meeting last update I had was that the ground is a little warmer, and the weather-y mix will come back late after the evening commute tomorrow so it looks like it will not be a winter storm Yuri conditions, but I think it is important that we take tomorrow as a, consider it a drill. We should all take this point in time as an opportunity to review those power steps that Bryce just talked about, make a plan, check, sit down with your family members and go over your

[11:07:07 AM]

personal safety plan, right? Are there any changes you need to make to that plan? Look at your kid, you are building a kit, what relation you missing? There are plenty of supplies at the store right now. There are no long lines so take this moment in time to go out and finish up your kit if that is what you require, go out, download, if you haven't done so already, download on your smart device the ready central Texas app. Look at our winter weather brochure that we provided, and look at those winter weather preparation steps. Look at the city website. Look at the information that Austin energy has provided that Austin water utility has provided, to help you prepare your home in the event of winter weather situations. Go outside and visit with your neighbors wearing a mask, we are still in a pandemic environment,

[11:08:08 AM]

maybe get in a conference call with your neighbors, go on, go meet or whatever other social platform you have, but engage with your neighbors to find out how prepared you all are as a neighborhood. Then make sure you go to ready central Texas and look at your registration. We have done efforts to get the information out to you in an emergency but the best utilization of warn central Texas is if everybody were to go in and customize and make use of all of the capabilities of warn central Texas and select the weather advisories that can be September to you directly from the one central Texas to your devices, if you have not gone into warn central Texas and completed the registration process, it will be challenging for us to be able to get the word out to you quickly. We will still get the word out to you and do the best we can to do so, but the system works best

[11:09:09 AM]

if not only are you getting the message via phone call, but also if you complete the text component and also complete the e-mail component, if you are able to do so. So this is really an opportunity to prepare and I want to not to lose that opportunity, given the forecast, but we will be monitoring those conditions and we will be following plans on our procedures to make sure we build muscle memories. Before I pass the presentation to Mr. Mr. Arrelano, I want to tell you that preparedness is not a one-time deal, prepared seasons a year-round process, 365 days a year. And I want to encourage all of us to do that, thank you. Ly just quickly say again, thank you for this opportunity to bring this presentation and certainly we are willing to come back at the committees request

[11:10:10 AM]

to provide updates. I did want to provide one clarification with regard to the tracking device or tracking system that we are putting together and that it will include all of the other after action reports and so forth, so we can have a comprehensive view of all of these items, corrective actions, recommendations going into the future. And with that, I am happy to answer any questions you may have. >> Thank you. >> Alter: Will that system also include the many other after action reports from other disasters, not just from this one? Yes. >> Alter: Okay. Thank you. And it looks like councilmember tovo is now on the phone and may not be able to ask questions, if you do have questions, Kathie, if you want to text me so I can know to call you, that would be great. Thank you for the presentation -- >> Tovo: I am actually -- I do have some questions when it is an appropriate time. >> Alter: Okay.

[11:11:11 AM]

Please go ahead, if you can. >> Tovo: I think maybe if I could go a second, that would be great. >> Alter: Okay. That's fine. I didn't see you on there. That's fine. I am happy to do that. I just want to point out that what was in the presentation followed through a lot of the questions we have. There may be some pieces we want to go deeper in. I am going to defer to the rest of the dais first, since I laid out my questions which is what the presentation was largely focused on, but I will have some other follow-up things. Councilmember Kelly. >> I just wanted to thank our city staff for the incredible amount of work they did putting into this effort. I know that one of the questions that councilmember tovo had asked me to ask was if we could get an update on when the Q & a portal would be complete.

[11:12:13 AM]

>> We are having somebody come up right now to answer that question. >> I am not sure what time it is. Hello, councilmembers. I need to check with the team to see where we are on that. There is a very small team that is also working. It would be vara much akin can to the covid-19 portal and other Q & a portals. The last I had spoken with them, there had been a general system that they set up that makes it easier to establish one, and so I am hopeful we can get one up and running pretty quickly but I but I will work to provide you an update by the end of the day today. >> Thank you. I am not sure that gave councilmember tovo enough time so I will call on councilmember Ellis and then go to councilmember tovo. >> Thank you, mayor pro tem, I appreciate you inviting me and letting me sit in on your committee meeting. >> Ellis: There is a lot of good work going into this and also curious about the Q & a portal as well. I know we have been asking staff

[11:13:14 AM]

internally about things that, you know, we experienced in southwest Austin but I know there may be other aspects of this that other districts experience and it would be really advantageous for us all to be able to have that in information, since we may not all be asking the same questions. I also appreciate the history of the emergency preparedness, because I know that a lot of assisting hurricane evacuees in those acute situations. As we speak, bastrop is experiencing another spread of wildfire that started from a controlled burn and so I know that there are folks here locally trying to assist with that measure, for extinguishing those. But it just shows how important it is for us to be prepared for all types of disasters at all times. I also would like to know a little bit more about some portions of the community that don't have a lot of rec centers

[11:14:14 AM]

or community centers. My district only has one Austin public library that the constituents really love and then we have a county precinct office that we utilize often, but portions of my community that are south of there won't have the roads cleared and, you know, may -- maybe the folks that run out of water first and are last to get it back on, as we saw a year ago. So I would like to know more about how to spread community resiliency further and if there are any expectations for how that approach is being tackled right now. >> Councilmember Ellis, excellent question. First, before I answer that I just want to let you know that we have been in contact with the Bastrop County EMC and we have a conference call that was with the Bastrop Council EMC and EMC itself to look at what is going on in Bastrop County and what

[11:15:15 AM]

assistance they may require from us and we are in close contact with them as well. We need to monitor with the Austin, American Red Cross, Austin and Travis County and the grant they received from FEMA conducted a shelter assessment a county wide, potential shelter locations which we also identified some city facilities, so staff right now, we prioritized those city owned facilities, where we can prestage locations and staff is looking at other facilities whether there be other community organizations that may own them or school districts or other locations where we can stage additional shelter supplies in those areas where there is not a city facility close by.

[11:16:17 AM]

So the process would be utilizing that shelter assessment connected with the Red Cross and working with the partners to see what are the best locations where we can accomplish that. Thank you. >> That would be very helpful and this may already be on your radar, it likely is, but I know in the winter storm there were folks who stepped up and said, I have church space to offer or I have four by four vehicle. So I know that was being tracked last February so I would just like to kind of point out and say like it may be helpful to revisit those offers again just to know that there may be some places that come up that like in my district or close to my district and District 5, South Austin there may be folks close between our district boundaries that say I have a church available or this school is a good place to be able to do distribution and thanks like that, I am sure that is on your radar. >> If I could also make one more note. >> Austin disaster relief

[11:17:19 AM]

network is also helping us communicate with those church facilities to help us identify potential locations and seeing whether they already have their shelter supplies or whether they need shelter supplies and try to extend the level of support that they require in order to carry that out. But if you

have specific areas that you are aware of let me reach out to you after this meeting and we can see how -- I am always trying to find other locations where we can do this. >> I have a. >> Ellis: I have a short list I can send to you right away. I appreciate that. We had a network with a church in my community to provide shower and laundry services so Austin water stepped up and was at least able to step up and make sure that was possible F I very much appreciate that. I am out of questions and hopefully that gave councilmember tovo a time to get to a quieter place. >> Tovo: It did, thank you. Chair, shall I move forward? >> Alter: Sure. Go ahead, thank you. >> Tovo: Thank you. I have probably 90 questions.

[11:18:22 AM]

I limit it to just a couple here today. Thank you, councilmember Kelly for asking yours, for asking mine for me. I really appreciate it, I would like to request and thank you, director king for commit fog getting us an answer by the end of the day. I would request the portal be one that the public can see too the same way our councilmember questions are. This work has to happen alongside our community and just as we saw the communities really critical role in helping us respond to winter storm Yuri, we really need, we need their help in understanding and working through this information as well. So I would strongly ask and again if it needs to be -- if this is too direct and it needs to be an IFS I would but I would ask that portal be very similar to what we do for our council agenda so we cannot just see our council's questions but the public questions and responses too so that information can help

[11:19:22 AM]

generate additional questions as appropriate. Secondly, I wanted to just say, director Ortiz in your response to questions from my colleague you talked about the importance of identifying, most you and director Ortiz you highlighted the importance of really working in our planning up front those -- facilities within different areas that may not be situate facilities but considering, you know, how to shore them up and how to make that part of our network and this is exactly the work that was directed in the resolution that I brought forward at resilience hubs and that work that is going on, way. To make sure that the work you described is happening alongside the work that our sustainability office is doing with regard to resilience hubs. >> >> Tovo: If you have time to respond to that, that would be great. But at the momently just leave it at that point that.

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>> -- [Indiscernible] But again I want it to all be under the same umbrella. >> Councilmember tovo, it seems like he is ready to respond, if you would like him to. >> Councilmember -- >> Tovo: As long as I can kind of get to my main few questions after that, that is great, thank you. >> Counsels toe, a really good question, and we are working very closely with the resiliency had you been hub we are a member

of that effort so while there is a difference between a shelter and resilience hub, my office is working hand in hand with, to make sure we share information and leverage those efforts and completely support the resiliency hub efforts and as well as we are ready to support shelter operations as needed. If needed. >> Tovo: Great. Thank you. What we have urged and I know when our first memo came back about the resilience hubs it was a very different model, you know, we had [indiscernible] Various committee means and I know my staff and I have had

[11:21:30 AM]

conversations with, conversations with the city staff that are working on this and leading the effort to make sure our resiliency hub work is not dealing with just kind of the Cadillac metal of resilience hubs because we can just afford a couple of those but that resilience hub is also embracing within its network just what you are describing, those churches or community facilities that are ready to step forward and be warping centers or shelters or other kind of facilities in a time of crisis but also serve as a community gathering spot at other times as well if they are not already serving that function. So I just want to be careful as we are talking about this to make sure that we are not just thinking about those -- you know, going forward is a definition of resilience in the first memo because it is a great deal. We also encourages the staffed -- to focus the direction they may be going. It is unclear whether there needs to be another ifc to direct this work, but to really

[11:22:31 AM]

help create kind of resilience hub in a box materials so that different community groups can kind of take the lead on identifying pats working in coordination with city staff but also setting up those places. I don't want to get too down in the weeds today because that is not the purpose here today but kind of leads into one of my main questions here today. Before dwi photo that I do want to say, had a really good conversation last night about a resilience hub and the way in which never really helping support a system that includes block captains and a very well organized coordinated system. The question came up and this leads to something you said director Ortiz about whether the city could help supply emergency preparedness kits and you mentioned emergency preparedness kits today. I did, my staff have been working with our city staff to see whether we can distribute some of those free and I know that question has gone out from

[11:23:33 AM]

my staff a few weeks ago and we are waiting for that back, but, you know, as we are continuing to encourage people to purchase the items they need for an emergency kit I also want to see an understanding for some families, you know, that would compete with their weekly food budget, so

having those emergency preparedness kits potentially free, we also asked them to consider whether the city's purchasing abilities, both purchasing, bulk purchasing abilities would allow us to secure supplies, some of those supplies so cheaply that we could also offer them for people who could afford to pay for some kind of fee so that, you know, you could purchase, you could purchase an emergency preparedness kit from the city, potentially at a discount from what you might buy on your own as well as making some families that need that additional support. Okay. My last question which is related to the topics I just addressed. The audit and various other

[11:24:34 AM]

audits in the past talked about the need for dicialg staff training across different departments and also more coordination with community groups. There have been references here today to training, if you could follow up on what training is being provided to staff in other departments, what the plans are for that. And how are you coordinating -- what are the plans moving forward potentially director Ortiz, this is a question for you, on how you are going to coordinate with different community groups? How do you task some of your staff members with that role? You have mentioned the red cross and Austin disaster relief network, but we had so many smaller groups and I think again and again what I heard from the community task force and others is that, you know, there was a need for coordination within the eoc with those smaller community groups. So if you could address that question, please.

[11:25:34 AM]

>> Yes. It is a good question. We are working are in a couple of different areas. One is to ensure that we have a consistent public education message and that is what our ready central Texas campaign is going to be about. We are going to be forming an advisory group that will include members of the community to help us through, and make sure we have a way of disseminahague that information and looking at how, what is that message that we all want to distribute on. We are working very specifically very closely with gave and we want to use it as a pilot project that can be replicated with other neighborhoods .. And other associations that we identify as we move forward. It also will come together as we do these individual efforts with communities groups and our resiliency hub efforts because there also will be a preparedness component within the resiliency hub and we want to make sure we are not do you mean can indicating those effort, but make sure we are leveraging those as we move

[11:26:35 AM]

forward. We focus on those agencies that have work in the, worked in the disaster space in prior years and we wanted to kind of get a better idea of what the capabilities are and seeing what they can leverage as far as preparedness standpoint, because we have those collaborations already established,

but we are also hoping and seeking ways to establish a process to identify the other community imowps and invite them to a process where we can all work together. Had a meeting yesterday with the Texas division of emergency management that the, that they are offering assistance on how we can collaborate and look at establishing a community -- coalition of community agencies to focus on kistssters, disasters and recover efforts from disasters so there is a lot of .. Different work that is on the way right now. I can summarize it in this. We are going to be establishing

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a process that allows for a community groups to engage in disaster preparedness and recovery and we will be able to try to create that clearinghouse of information, this platform that will allow us to coordinate with all of the different community groups. We are taking our cert program and trying to marry it or tie it with a neighborhood associations. We want to have those community emergency responsibility teams at the local grass roots effort, because in a disaster, it is those local neighborhoods, the better prepared they are the better prepared the community is going to be, the more resilient the entire city will be. As far as training, part of the question regarding training we are conducting for staff, we wehave communicated with the department it is required training that is required at the federal heavily that consists of incident management training for

[11:28:38 AM]

coordination, response and recovery, independent study courses, but each department has identified specific training that they require for their personnel in order to carry out those emergency actions and emergency activities in the event of a winter storm or any other future disaster. I can maybe provide you some information of examples of what those different departmental training efforts that have been taken, but in essence, if there are agencies out there that want to be, that want to step forward and engage, there are throw basic courses that I would recommend and you can go to the -- fit study course and look for independent study course 100, 200 and 700. Those are the three basic courses that we would want them to complete so that we can ensure that we are all speaking off the same sheet of music of common language and be able to ensure that we can marry up together, make those connections

[11:29:39 AM]

and be able to collaborate as our community moves forward after winter storm Yuri. Oh, thank you, assistant manager arrelano. We also conducted a search advice of tabletop exercises. We did a winter weather seminar November. We followed it up with a community tabletop exercise in December that consisted of city, county departments, some of our community partners, some 0 of our private sector

partners, like HEB and Samsung and other major corporations to talk about winter weather response and activities and we also are working with the naval postgraduate to look at, putting the -- their executive level self seminar focusing on aha started with high impact. So we want to make sure we are

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taking advantage of all those federal programs that can help us, help our communities, our city, county governments get organized but as well as we need to be conducting other departmental tabletop exercises which are going on, like for example public works conducted a tabletop exercise on how they prioritize and engage in standing operations during winter weather and there are lots of different activities that departments are doing as they got the message we need to make sure we are prepared. We want to make sure we are doing that and also hearing reports of different school districts doing the same thing, bringing their folks together, having that discussion about preparedness, about how they would respond as well as hospitals and so port. So there is a lot of different levels of activity, probably more than I am actually fully aware of, but it is activity that is going to help our community and ensure we are prepared in the future.

[11:31:42 AM]

>> Alter: Great, thank you, director Ortiz, I will follow up in the question and answer portal just to get clarity. It is a great idea to have working with neighborhood associations I think that is one of the ways, one of the strategies that was used in the past when cert was a little more popular among our community, and so I think that is great. Let us know as councilmembers how we can help promote that work and, you know, in epiyou get the word out about that. I would be interested in some more details about time frame and when some of these things are rolling out. >> Tovo: So thank you. Thanksery much. >> Alter: Thank you. I have a couple of questions if anybody else has any questions? So thank you for being here. I really appreciate it. As we are sit hearing there is a wildfire southeast in bass envelop sat burning, unfortunately. It could have been avoided, as far as we know at this point in time. One of the things I am concerned

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about is that what happened in February with winter storm Yuri and whereas before we were not super focused on cold weather, now we are hyperfocused on cold weather and there are a lot of other kistssters, discansters, the 132 recommendations there are clearly many of those that extend over to other disasters, but it is our responsibility as a city to be able to pivot and to prepare. So help me understand how this works, this work with help with these other disaster situations and what we are doing, you know, we have ortt reports that have recommendations that are from other things. I am

obviously particularly focused and concerned about wildfire, as you know. This is going to be a really risky year if we don't get water. It is going to be a potential risky month in January of all months, you know, not the summer, January, February if we don't get precipitation for a wildfire here in Austin.

[11:33:47 AM]

So can you speak to that sort of how this work is fitting into the broader preparedness, not just preparedness for cold weather? >> That is a really good question. Disasters, hazards are year-round, the potential disaster can happen any time of the year. In fact, we were working, we are working with a postgraduate and scheduled an executive level stem far on a checks response to a disaster involving wildfire cascaded into other disasters, impacting power, impacting water, utilities and transportation. Unfortunately, that was rescheduled due to the omicron impact in our community .. The

[11:34:47 AM]

instructors got sick and they could not come in to conduct the course. We are going to reschedule that here real soon. But I use as an example we can't focus on just one hazard. In the emergency management business, we talk about that from an all hazards approach. As we prepare for winter storm, there are some of those activities that are transferable to other kinds of response, like wild land fire or even helping us prepare for a hurricane season or a flooding situation. And so we want to make sure that as we engage and we prepare and we conduct training and exercise the drills, we are also keeping in mind how those are going to be transferable to, they all have this approach we are talking about, making sure our

[11:35:47 AM]

communication strategies and plans can be successful and not just the winter storm but also available to us and helpful in a flooding situation, in a wild land fire, any type of event. That is how we are going to do that. It is not the sexy part of the preparedness efforts. But the more we can engage in these types of activities the better community muscle memory we are going to generate that will help not only our first responders and our our our other critical city and county -- the right type of action depending what type of disaster is taking place. If we focus on those from a community standpoint and we focus on those four preparedness messages of building a kit, excuse me, make a plan, build a kit, know your neighbor and

[11:36:52 AM]

getting informed, those can be transferable to really any kind of a hazard, that whatever comes in our future. The main thing to do is to engage and start that process and not stop it. >> Thank you. I think -- I would love to talk to you more about that exercise, the fires that recently happened near the Boulder area, within three hours 1,000 homes were burned. >> Alter: And my understanding is the marshal fire is a key example of what can happen in west Austin and south Austin, and so .. None of what we are talking about is a situation, is a situation that can happen quickly and so I think we have further work to do a that is not really covered by this, and, you know, obviously we incited -- invited you to talk about the after action but the point of the questions and the framing of

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how we did it is to make sure we are prepared for whatever the disasters are, you know, making sure we understand why we are haven't necessarily been able to act on all of the recommendations we have had in the past, what are our plans to implement them in the future? What are the resources you need? And we have this backup that you gave us on that. I want to dive into that more. I haven't read that. I am not going to do that here, but I do want to open the budget part, point out to Mr. Arrelano, it says in here, well this didn't fit with council priorities, I never knew hs -- this sem was asking for those things. We don't actually see your unmet need request, so how do you know that is not a priority of council when I don't even know that you have requested that? .. And in this particular case, you know, with certain departments I don't think you can get what our priorities

[11:38:54 AM]

would be over those if we don't even know that we are not pend/pepped, because we are not doing X. You know, we might have made choices of doing that over something else if we had known, you know, that choice was even an option, and so I think we need to talk a little bit about the budget process and sort of, when with have those unmet needs and to say well we didn't even do an unmet need process in fiscal year '22, '20, '21 so how would we know what you need to be able to be prepared? You know, keeping 13 people while you are doing covid and still have these other disasters and obviously there are many, many other department that used are engaged, it is hard to fathom. So I think we need to have a further conversation about that process and if you want to speak to that. >> Thank you, mayor pro tem for

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those comments and clearly we want to be able to meet council's goals and intentions and provide you with the information that is important clearly disaster prepared seasons high on the list, just like illnesses. >> Alter: You need to get a little closer. >> And so again thank you for those remarks and

clearly for me and I think the rest of the executive team we understand the disaster prepared seasons going to be high on the list of priorities for council for a attention in this coming fy-20 three budget development as well as .. For us to explore whether the midyear budget amendments we might propose and again the budget team as always, we try to, or they try to, I have not been personally involved, go to each of the council office to understand your priorities and certainly we as executives and the executive team try to marry up what we see as heeds and so port so disaster preparedness is clearly on testimony top of my mind and open on top of the process going forward in the

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fy-20 three .. >> And since you mentioned the borne for a midyear budgetly just again underscore what I said before, I don't think we should be waiting for the fiscal year '23 process, we know we have, even though we have all of the reports and we can prioritize and invest in the right places, and given how Channing it is to hire right now I think that we should be moving forward with midyear budget amendments if we can identify clearly what those investments need to be and we don't have those resources already coming in from other sources. I think one of the -- you mentioned on slide 10 there was -- the list of priorities and all of that kind of stuff, when will we be able to see that? >> Can you repeat the question and make sure I understood it in so. >> So the prioritization that Linda went through, when can we

[11:42:00 AM]

like actually see that prioritization and how that was focused? >> It should be available to -- we are going to have an internal portal and external facing portal. The internal portal the one that is being worked on now which has most of the detail and that should be available -- we actually had a meeting along the same -- there was a spot meeting today to introduce it, and we are going to continue to test it out within the next couple of weeks. That should be available. And then the external one will take -- it will be less time than that where it can be available so you will be able to see the recommendations along with the descriptions. >> Alter: Okay. >> So within the next month it should be available. >> Alter: Okay. And I appreciate you focusing on the one that would have the big impact that department cost a lot of money but willing to send money on stuff if they are going to have a high impact so I also want to see, you know, I want to see those things if we can't expect to be ready for these disasters if we are not making the investment Wes need. My last question is with respect

[11:43:02 AM]

to councilmember training, we have been acting, asking for councilmember training for a long time. What is the plan forgetting us councilmember training? I am starting my sixth year, kind of never been

offered a single wit of emergency training. >> I believe we are scheduled at your, at your council work session on the 15th to conduct that training. >> Alter: Okay. Great. >> 13th of February, excuse me. >> Alter: Great. Looking forward to it. Thank you. So councilmember pool, did you have anything you wanted to ask? If there are no other questions I want to thank you all for being here. We look forward to continuing the conversations, if we can make sure that anything that was presented to us on the dais gets posted in the backup so our colleagues in the public, and the public can see that and as appropriate on the after action team that will be great and we will be in touch about the appropriate Kay can dense for coming back to speak with us.

[11:44:07 AM]

Councilmember Ellis. >> Thank you, mayor pro tem and I think I see councilmember tovo's hand up too. I just wanted to say thank you again for the invitation to join your committee. I was able to listen in on the disparity study, even though I wasn't logged into the meeting I watched it on a. The xn but I very much look forward to the further information that will be coming out about that report as well. >> Alter: Thank you, councilmember Ellis for your leadership in watching that. With us. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Super quickly I want to follow up on a point you raised councilmember alter regarding unmet needs. So there used to be a document that, and a presentation that we would receive as part of the budget called horizon document and I think over the time it changed to an unmet need document. And I believe as some of the budget format has changed, that is not necessarily included as part of the budget, at least I don't recall it and I think that is part of what is happening here. So I would like to suggest globally, you know, a global change there.

[11:45:08 AM]

I think that is very important. I think it helps us do exactly what you suggested really to understand, you know, that the department is coming forward and they don't have the resources that help us really understand and measure it against our other a tick made priorities so that we make sure that our city manager can make sure that the priorities they are, you know, that we are moving forward and funding the things in different areas of our budget that need attention and as priorities shift that our budget is aligned with that. To assistant city manager arrelano I would ask you carry that suggestion back to the, back to the manager and if we need more time we schedule time in the work session to look at that but I believe that is really critical part of our budget and I would like to see it returned. >> I can do that, councilmember. >> Alter: Thank you, and I will just add I ask the office to be prepared to speak if they have other things. I think we covered a lot of things that you had at least

[11:46:08 AM]

raised with me and if you want to speak at a future audit and finance if there is additional information. I feel like we covered the topics that you raised as to why things may not have been done, so think we will save the time there. We don't have to take any action on this item. The other items that are on the agenda, I think if there are not objections we will postpone the workforce -- let me get my numbers right here. We will postpone a item 3 to hopefully our next meeting when we have some other follow-up audits that will be coming back and then we have our -- if I can find my notes on it, we have our upcoming meeting and we are anticipating a discussion of the

[11:47:09 AM]

capital improvement process and the bonding at a future meeting. There will be a traffic safety follow-up audit, a joint sustainability has bylaws. There is a street cut follow-up audit and then there is going to be an ems briefing on the budget rider. We will look into whether we moo Ed to extend that meeting to be beyond the two hours just to give us a little bit more breathing room. I think today was a really important discussion. Ms. Stokes, do you want to add anything? We covered everything. >> I was going to add a couple of those and you already captured them. >> Alter: Great. >> I think it is helpful to help people to know where we are going. Thank you for staying extra today, I think this ask an important conversation that really matters to the public that we continue to be pushing forward. So with that, I will adjourn this meeting at 1148 and the audit and finance committee meeting is adjourned.