

City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript

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[9:33:43 AM]

>> Mayor Adler: I'm going to go ahead and gavel us in on two meetings. We'll run them simultaneously. The first is the city of Austin city council work session and the second meeting is the special called meeting to address the water boil situation we just went through as was requested by council members Ellis and harper-madison, I think on behalf of multiple council members that wanted this, thank you for making that formal request. Today is Tuesday, February 15th, 2022. The time is 9:34. We have a quorum present in this hybrid meeting, one of our members is appearing

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virtually. Eight others of us are on the dais at this point live. We're going to begin as we talked about on the message board with the item that was in the special called meeting and as we laid out we're going to ask councilmember Ellis to open us up. We're going to then give staff and the manager an opportunity to address this issue. We'll come back up to the dais to articulate questions or issues that the council members want to hear. We'll try to do that so we can get kind of the thrust of the questions out. We'll go back to the manager then to respond and then we'll come out for question and answers specifically for however long it's the will of the council to proceed. Also on our agenda in the

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work session today, pulled items, but we have none that were filed ahead of time. We do have go briefings -- two briefings, the smbr briefing and the cadet class briefing. We also have an executive item for us to hit today. I don't know how long it will go this morning. Several of us need to leave the dais momentarily about 11:00. Mayor pro tem, if you will take the -- take the gavel at that point, I think we can go and come back relatively quickly. The hope is maybe we can do this, maybe we can do the smbr presentation this morning, take a break for lunch in the noonish hour, do the executive session item, come back for the cadet class briefing right after lunch generally is a

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way to go. >> Tovo: Sorry, mayor, I'm trying to digest the run of show. Right now we'll go to the special called -- >> Mayor Adler: Correct. We'll do that until people are finished with that. If there's time before lunch we'll tee up the smbr briefing. We'll break for lunch about noonish hour and during the lunch break we will have the executive session on the litigation issue in front of us. We'll come back from lunch at that point and pick up the cadet class briefing. >> Tovo: Thank you. And I think you mentioned several of us are planning to attend black history month celebration? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. I think it's a zoom issue and I think that we'll see where we are, but I told the mayor pro tem that she could perhaps keep running this meeting instead of

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recessing, but let's make sure that we're not in a place that we need everybody here for. All right. So with that, councilmember Ellis, do you want to start off the morning for us? >> Ellis: Yes, thank you, mayor. I wanted to make some brief remarks to open us up. I will be reading. I usually like to be a little more off the cuff with my statements but I know this past week has meant a lot to people and has affected people in different ways and I wanted to make sure my remarks were well thought out previously. I called this special called meeting in collaboration with council member Natasha harper-madison because of the instant feedback we got from the community. Many people were caught off guard because we figured we made it through the freeze, only to be surprised by a boil water notice. Austinites deserve a safe, reliable and resilient water system. They can have confidence in. And I'm hopeful this process will achieve that. The goal of this meeting is to address the recent errors

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that caused this boil notice and to identify what changes need to be implemented so that we are prepared no matter what comes our way. Today is the beginning of many steps the city must take to

rebuild that public trust. We are all aware that this latest crisis was a frustrating and preventable event. This one was due to an employee oversight at the Ullrich plant and I certainly do not want to vilify a handful of employees. We know that our city staff has been through a lot over the past few years, but rather I'd like us to take a step back and look at the big picture here. Is our workforce the best it can possibly be? Are we training and paying staff effectively? Our frontline workers are responsible for the health and safety of our entire community and I want to know that their working conditions are safe and supported because as we've learned, there are so many known and unknown challenges that may arise. Our biggest challenge, climate change, is going to

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continue to wreak havoc on our community and we must be prepared for anything. Last year's winter storm taught us that. The Halloween and memorial day floods in the recent past have taught us that. There are any number of catastrophic natural disasters we need to be prepared for which is why this latest event struck a nerve with so many in that it doesn't appear to be related to a weather event. In some ways this past week felt like the last straw for so many people. Our constituents are exhausted, our city staff is exhausted. The last few years have been some of the most trying times in history and our city employees have persevered through it all. We faced so many crisis in the recent past that the terms new normal and unprecedented are now cliché. So knowing that let's get to work on writing the wrongs. Today's meeting is just a first step and then we'll consider mayor pro tem

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Alison Alter's resolution on Thursday and then communes will take up this issue as she chairs the Austin water oversight committee at their meeting next week. My colleagues, our community and I have so many questions and I want to thank city staff for quickly beginning to answer those posted on the message board and through the council q&a process. That will help us to be more efficient in our work here today. So finally, before we get started, I want to acknowledge director Greg Meszaros and the entire Austin water team. I can only imagine what an impossible week and a half this has been for you after managing last year's winter storm and wildfires before that. The city has grown dramatically since you took the helm in 2007, the year I came to Austin. Since then you've overseen the water forward Austin, implemented water conservation strategies that many other big cities look

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to us for guidance from. You have much to be proud of and I wish you nothing but the best. As a personal note, I have received calls and text messages about your leadership throughout the years and we are sad to see you go, but I know this is really a trying time for our community and I appreciate you

being here with us today to help us work through these processes so that we know that Austin water has what it needs from us as council members and that we can make sure that your employees know they are supported and we want to work through these processes together. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. With that, manager, I'm going to turn it over to you. >> Cronk: Thank you, mayor and council, community members, good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to address all of you this morning. As you know, the period beginning late Saturday February 5th and through late evening of Tuesday, February 8th, was a trying time for all of us. It was trying on our community, on our city organization, and in big and small ways it impacted each of us personally.

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During this roughly 72 hour period our community experienced its third citywide boil water notice in four years. And while each of these three event and the circumstances that caused them are unique, we share the community's and the city council's sentiment that this is simply unacceptable. Our community must have the full faith and trust in its public water system and the leaders charged with overseeing it and certainly no community should ever be in the position to doubt the safety and reliability of that system. As leaders in this organization, we are the stewards of this public resource. We recognize that this incident has diminished the public's trust and we take responsibility for that. We also recognize the immense responsibility of restoring that public trust. As I have said earlier, nothing is more important to me and to our organization. As a first step in rebuilding that trust, we have provided to city council and the public important information related to this event.

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This includes a more detailed timeline of event that transpired, ultimately leading to the decision to initiate the boil water notice as well as information and the council's pending questions. It is our hope that this information might help serve as a basis for which we have today as a discussion. But our work is far from over. We still have much to learn from these events both to understand more deeply what occurred and how and how to help mitigate any such future event from occurring. The department is conducting an investigation into this incident, as well as performing an after-action review, the standard practice in the wake of such an event. Today, we are before you to address some of this greater detail, as well as address other questions and concerns you may have. Before I turn this over, I want to briefly acknowledge and thank those employees of Austin water,

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homeland security, emergency management, our communications team, and other departments who directly supported the city's efforts to restore normal operations at ulric and quickly administer the

distribution of potable water and bottled water across our community. I also extend heartfelt thanks to the many community organizations and other partner agencies who assisted in this massive effort. We showed that no matter what we will overcome any challenges before us and we'll do it together, and we could not have done that without you. Lastly, I want to acknowledge Greg mazaros directly. For 15 years, Greg has led an organization with a rich history going back over 100 years. Austin water is a proud and professional organization and among the highest regarded public water utilities in the country. Despite these recent challenges and disappointing setbacks, your Austin water employees work tirelessly each day to ensure all of us enjoy a safe and reliable water and wastewater system, among the most essential

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of any city infrastructure. And they will continue to deliver on that expectation and carry out this very critical service, no matter what. With that, I'll turn it over to director mazaros. Greg? >> Thank you, city manager, and thank you, council member Ellis for your thoughtful words. I want to frame up today and have some opening statements to go over the event and some of our experiences and observations. Any time we issue a boil water notice, it's because of a heightened risk of safety in the drinking water, and as a water professional representing over 1,300 Austin water employees, that's unacceptable to us. We never want to be in a position where we're issuing boil water notices and having heightened risk, and we're going to work tirelessly to get us back on a better track. As the city manager and council member Ellis described, sometimes boil water notices are

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because of catastrophic weather events. That was what happened in 2018 with the Colorado river flood, winter storm uri. Sometimes they're caused by infrastructure failures, transmission main failure or something of that sort. But in this particular case, as I've described earlier, this was really about our operations of the plant, how we communicate, how we make decisions, how we respond to alarms, how we escalate. Those are all within our control and as council member Ellis said, ultimately, preventable with this boil water notice. And so that's what's so difficult here, and I am just profoundly sorry that we had this event. I know it was painful and difficult coming on top of all the other events that not only we've had, but the pandemic and everything else that the community has been struggling with. I'm sorry the community suffered. I know this is scary and disruptive and frustrating and tiresome.

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I'm sorry that my colleagues, all those that pitched in to help launch water distribution and came back to the eoc, I'm sorry for all of that and we're going to work at Austin water to do the best we can to see

that what is preventable is truly prevented. On Friday, we issued a memo that summarized various q&a responses that we've received, that we've received from council members that were on message boards, and so hopefully that's a resource for you. We're continuing our review of this incident. The review of this is the highest priority. We're going through a thorough and thoughtful process. But there isn't just a review of infrastructure. This is a review of people and decisions and interviews and there are certain processes that we need to follow. Council member Ellis, I appreciate you speaking about not vilifies

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employees. I want to make statements with regards to the operations side. I want to say first that everything that I've seen and read and everyone I've talked to, that there is no evidence of what I would describe gross negligence by our employees. And what I mean by that is nothing where employees were sleeping on duty, where they left the plant, where they were fabricating data. I have seen no evidence of those kind of gross negligent behaviors. Our interview processes are not complete, but in terms of my understanding of all of that and what I've heard and how I've asked people, that is not something that I am seeing or believe happened. There's also a lot of speculation and rumors and gossip when something like this happens, and I want to try to put some of that to bed. There's been several radio callers that have been purpose portedly Austin water employees calling in to radio stations and giving their opinion of the events. urportedly Austin water employees calling in to radio

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stations and giving their opinion of the events. First, do your best to ignore those. People can call in and say what they want and represent what they want. I think it's important to let a formal interview and review process move forward. I will say here recently, I listened to one of the radio callers and nay made an assertion that this was because of a freeze event and failed valves that froze during the winter storm. I want to say I have no evidence that that's what caused this whatsoever. We maintain significant data on our plants in terms of logs and alarms and calls and inquiries and bench dogs and tests and samples. None of that has suggested that this was because of an infrastructure freeze event. I've also reached out immediately during the event, I talked to Rick Coronado, the head of our operations. Rick's been here over 25 years. I talked to Brian hawes, the head of our process engineering and labs and other parts. Brian's been here for well over

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20 years. Was the process engineer at ulric earlier in his career. I spoke to you Lee Hollinsworth, Julie started as an entry level operator, became a supervisor, a superintendent of a plant, and now our

division manager. I also spoke to Stephanie sue, our overall water treatment operations manager. Stephanie is with us today. I spoke to the superintendent of the plant on operations. All of those folks did not in any way indicate that this was a frozen infrastructure problem. So I want to disabuse that that that's a belief. I have, again, seen no evidence of that. And we're working this process to document what truly happened. All the data continues to point, as we've communicated in our memo, that this all originated with the starting of what we call basin 6, one of our treatment basins that we started out at the plant. It's very common for us to start up treatment basins. This is not a new process.

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It spilled over into the filters and ultimately into the finished water. We'll elaborate that a little bit more, but that is the path that the data continues to suggest that was the root cause of this event. How we started up and managed basin 6 and the impacts it had downstream in the plant. And the data tells the story. I'll summarize very quickly here. On Friday, February 4th, at 10:00 P.M., basin 6 had been started out. Our turbidities out of basin 6 were 8.7. Typically a basin starting up, you would expect about 5 to 10 turbidities. Tap water turbidities were 0.4 to 0.6. Very, very low, well within any requirement. On Saturday, the next morning at -- on the 6th at 2:00 A.M., four hours later, basin 6 turbidities had risen to 21. Again, you're expecting about 5 to 10. You can see this basin is starting to have some problems.

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Again, finish water taps are still fine, 0.5 to 0.7. There's a buffer. As you're making new water and it's moving its way through the plant, the old water is in the reservoirs, pumping it out. So as you have a problem inside the plant, it doesn't immediately cause a problem in the taps, what the public is seeing pumped out. And that's good. That gives you a buffer to try to analyze process problems and deal with them before they ultimately translate out to the public. Basin 6 continued to deteriorate. Four hours later, turbidity readings are now 145. A basin that's totally out of control. Taps are still good. .05 to .06, but this high turbidity water from basin 6 is pouring on the filters, the filters are going to ultimately -- they're not designed to handle those kind of loads. They're going to start to breakthrough. Higher turbidity water is going to start to get into the reservoir and ultimately that's going to get pumped out, and the

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finished water turbidities are going to start to rise. That's exactly what happened. After 6:00 A.M., by roughly mid-morning, we had shut down the plant, and had issued -- had started the process of preparing for and ultimately issuing a boil water notice. So, again, the data is all pulling back to basin 6. And that's really the heart of our investigation and interviews is, how did communications break down?

Why weren't we able to diagnose what was happening with basin 6? When a remedy didn't work, what additional remedies were we turning to? So all of that decision-making and communications, how were we responding to alarms? As we were recording this data, as we continuously monitor the basins, as we saw these rise in the control room, how were we responding to these alarms, as the alarms went into the filter system, how were we responding to the filter alarms, what were we doing or not doing, how was that all happening. How were we escalating?

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Did we call for help? How did we call for help? When did we call for help? When did we pass down knowledge? We're evaluating all of that, and that's all what we call operations. And the decision-making, communication, responses and escalations that we're doing there. We're not complete with that. We expect to be complete soon, you know, within a week or two. We're pushing hard, but again, these are people, you're interviewing people, you're documenting, you're writing reports. I'm not doing this. I'm not involved in interviewing. I'm not involved in report writing. This is being done by hr professionals and others so they can have an objective and good review of the human side of this. So that's kind of where we are with this. Again, there's more elaboration in the memo, and Rick's here, he has a few slides to go through the process. I think I probably covered some of the process understanding, but Rick can amplify that, and certainly also speak to some of the initial preventive measures that were put in place given our experience on this event.

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And I'm happy to answer questions now, or if you'd like to continue with Rick, really at the pleasure of the council, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: I think we want you to continue to do your presentation, then we're going to come back up to the dais, we'll have a chance to collectively ask questions, we'll go back to you again. But you've had a chance to see some of the questions, so we'll let you go ahead and help frame out your response. >> Thank you, mayor. Rick, I'll turn it over to you. >> Again, Rick Coronado, assistant director for operations. City manager, mayor, council members, I just kind of would like to kind of add to. I know you have a slide deck that has some of the details

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that Greg Meszaros has gone over. I want to reinforce some of the information that you've already been receiving, including the operations of the water basin number 6. That kind of talks about, you know, how important it is to have, you know, good solids handling, that operate the basin itself. We have process control information that not only is instrumentation that's online, but also lab tests that are performed by the operator on a routine basis. All that information has provided us with direction, that it

was the basin that was upset, that ultimately impacted the processes downstream of that. One of the slides that you have regards what happened includes -- >> Excuse me. I'm sorry, mayor, we don't have the slides. If we can have those emailed to us.

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>> They're posted in the backup for the special called. >> Mayor Adler: I think they were posted this morning. >> Is it possible to stop the ticking sound? I can only imagine what it's like if you're speaking. There was just a ticking noise. >> Is it the mic? >> I have two presentations available and I will put up what we have in our I.T. Folder, and we'll go from there. Apologies if those are not what you're looking for. >> And the presentation, mayor, was sent out at 8:31 from Katie powers. >> We'll wait for that. We'll look for that. Thank you. >> So let me just kind of talk through, and I'll reference any questions that you might have

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related to some of those slides as you receive them. So an important part of the process of starting up a basin, we kind of had that as a requirement for flow increases. The basin that was started had to be seated, what we call seating the basin is adding solids. That combined with the chemical edition provides us with a control of operations for that basin. >> They're asking do you want them to continue. >> Okay. >> So I mentioned that there's testing that's performed not only at the basin. The center of the basin is what we call a mixing well, and that helps the operator determine

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whether or not they're in parameters, control parameters of that basin. They'll take a test. They'll sample for not only ph, turbidity, or in this case settleable solids. There's a range in which that basin will operate to ensure that it is a -- it will produce good water. They also provide with tests that exit the basin prior to going to the filters. And all those indications, whether they were alarms that were online and also samples taken indicated that there was an upset in that basin. Obviously, the next step of the process is also to filter that water. Once that water has exited the basin, it enters into a common pipeline that goes to multiple filters. There's a total of 18 filters at ulric water treatment plant and multiple filters experienced that high turbidity water going

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on top of the filters. Eventually, the filters, they performed well initially, but eventually that breakthrough of those solids went through the filters. The filters then exit -- the water exiting the filters go into what we call a clear well. What the clear well is intentionally just an underground storage tank. So that storage tank is our reservoir to pump out to the distribution system. So you will -- once those filters receive water and filter that information -- or that water, there was alarms that were set for the performance of individual filters as well as low level alarms, high level alarms that indicated that there was a problem for those filters. There was no indication that we

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could not operate any valves related to the filters or any equipment from the top end, which we call the control center, that we weren't receiving information. We received all the information that was relevant to the process control of those operations. That water then entered into the ground water -- the storage tank underground before it was pumped out to the community for about an hour and a half of higher turbidity water that exceeded some of the regulatory standards. We received notification -- next slide, please. We received notification the next morning that also addressed the assessment of the situation. The plant was shut down immediately. That included also starting to clean up some of the filters. We also needed to meet the

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demands of the distribution system, so we ramped up both Davis and Hancock's water treatment plant to meet those demands initially. Those plants were operating within all regulatory requirements, including strong disinfection, which ulric also experienced strong disinfection throughout this entire process, but that allows us to keep the demand needs for the community while we were assessing ulric water treatment plant. I want to kind of point out, you know, obviously our largest plant, ulric, can only sustain so long being out of water, so we definitely saw the need to pivot to the other water treatment plants to ensure that we were still meeting the demand requirements as well as flow protection. Next slide, please.

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So I want to kind of point out, you know, there are some ongoing actions, some initial actions that are going on. I personally have met with all three plants to ensure that they continue to stay focused with their day in, day out operations. Whether they workday shift, night shift, or if there's support for the entire plant, I've met with the teams from ulric water treatment plant, including the management staff, have met with teams. We've met with the Davis water treatment plant staff as well as the an re Hancock's water treatment plant staff, one, to ensure that their day in, day out job is very valued in the

community, that they produce high quality water every day and we want to keep them focused to ensure that they continue to do so, to ensure that they communicate with coworkers from

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going from one shift to the other, that's the purpose of communication, that they address any needs that they may have to escalate, to make it successful for them to operate the plants 24/7. We definitely want to continue to reinforce that communication that they're supported, not only by chain of command, but if they need to reach out to me directly, to do so. So that is an important message to all of the employees for Austin water, and even through this critical time as we assess some of the needs for the plants. That may include evaluating some additional process control measures that we have within the plogpeds. They may also include some technology needs that might address some more advanced notification or some notifications that are external

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to the team. We will continue to evaluate the training protocols. I think some of the questions have been around, you know, what does it take to be an operator here at the facility. And so anyone who has to perform process control must have a license from the state of Texas within a year, and they should be, you know, performing that work under a licensed operator. So that is being met with all our facilities and we'll continue to evaluate that need. There's a lot of training that goes on that's on-the-job training. We have had a workforce that turns over quite frequently because of the high demands for this skill set. They are operating a very highly technical facility and will continue to evaluate their training needs. In addition to that, we'll continue to review the alarms, alarm protocols, the testing protocols, and any notification

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procedures for improvements. I stand here before you very apologetic that this has happened, but we're going to continue to evaluate and make this a stronger workforce to ensure that they make the right decisions, day in and day out, and that they're supported by Austin water and the city day in, day out, to ensure that they're producing safe drinking water. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, I'm going to go back to council member Ellis and council member harper-madison. We're going to stay on the dais here to ask questions. Manager, director, if you take note of the questions that are being asked, we're just going to go down the dais so people can ask questions. You might be able to order them in groups. I'll give you a chance to

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respond to that first collective question, and then we'll come up to the dais to ask specific questions in realtime. Did you have anything else? I know that you use your opening to ask questions, but I want to give you a chance if you want to say anything else at this point. >> Ellis: I did, and I don't want to hug the microphone, because I know everyone's got questions, but did you want me to list them and everyone to kind of say what they're thinking, or how were you imagining? >> Mayor Adler: I think you've asked -- in your opening, I think you asked those questions, and I think that they heard those questions. If that's what you have, that's great. I would then go to council member harper-madison, if she wants to add any questions for those folks to answer? Council member harper-madison? >> Ellis: Yes, let's let her go. >> Harper-madison: Honestly, I'd like to hear what my colleagues are thinking. It's not questions so much as I really didn't get the opportunity prior to presentation. Once again, I'm too polite for my own good, I didn't holler out before the manager spoke. I really just wanted to echo

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what council member Ellis said earlier. I want to highlight that we obviously understand that our city staff, they worked around the clock to mitigate this recent event. And I really appreciate the presentation. I appreciate hearing from director Meszaros. They continue to work around the clock to figure out exactly what happened, how to prevent it from happening again in the future. But I just want to make sure that we're clear about recognizing the deep frustration that our constituents feel. I've heard apologies. I personally, I've registered them. I think you mean it. And I think most people who are thinking about the difficulty of your job, they think you mean it, too. But this is compounded by the fact that this event really just echoed the trauma of last year. You know, the resolution that we did -- I'm sorry, the proclamation we did this morning. So I just want to make sure that as we are saying there's no direct fault, blame, et cetera, that we're tossing in the direction of city staff, we do want to make sure that we

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recognize the frustration of our constituents. I have just a couple of questions that are unanswered currently, but I really do want to hear what my colleagues have to say. I just wanted to make sure to recognize that both things can be true. This is complicated and we appreciate the hard work of city staff. This is complicated, we appreciate the frustration of our constituents. Both things exist at the same time. >> Mayor Adler: Great, thank you. Let's go down the dais. Council member kitchen, do you have any questions you want to throw in? >> Kitchen: First off, I want to say that I echo what council member Ellis has said. I appreciate the work of director Meszaros. We will miss him. I want to say thank you for all the work that you've done over the years, including very innovative efforts. I think that the kinds of questions that you articulated when you spoke is what I'd like

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to understand. That boils down to how did -- what was the response system, both from the standpoint of the workflow for staff, and the technological alerts. So I think that this is an opportunity for us -- first off, I think it's very important that this is not -- this is not an exercise in blaming any of our staff. I think we've all said that. It is an exercise in understanding exactly what happened and where improvements can be made. So the questions that you articulated, director Meszaros, are the things that I want to understand, and that's the details around the response. So, how and who and when, and from a person standpoint, is there any technology that could be added that would help with that response system.

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So, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Council member Fuentes. >> Fuentes: >> Thank you. I'd like to start by thanking director Meszaros for his 15 years of service to Austin water. You have embodied what it means to be a public servant for our community, and your service to our utility, and I just want to thank you for your service and your leadership, and I know we owe you a lot of gratitude for that. And I also want to extend my gratitude to the hard working staff at Austin water, for your hard work during our recent boil water notice. Certainly, you responded quickly to get our water back online, and make sure that drinking water was available throughout our city. I was able to visit one of the water direct examination sites in my district, and connect directly with Austin water staff, and got to be with them as we loaded up cases of water in vehicles. Despite everything that was going on, they were very committed to making sure that our vulnerable community was

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getting what they needed. So I just wanted to say thanks, first and foremost. Also I wanted to highlight, you know, why we're here today. That even with the best intentions, nearly one million austinites and central Texans were without drinking water for over 72 hours. And unfortunately, too many have lost faith in our utility and the service that we provide. And so we've experienced too many water quality issues over the years to not demand better. And I know many of my colleagues share that sentiment as well. And so I was appreciative of your opening comments, director, when you shared about really focusing in on the operations, on the decision-making process, on communications and the protocols and procedures we have in place, because certainly, that's the lens that I'll be looking at for today's conversation, and really looking to make sure this doesn't happen again. I think in order to get to that, we're going to have to hone in

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on what are our procedures and decision-making process. So I appreciate my colleagues for calling this meeting today. I know as the newly appointed chair of Austin water oversight committee, that I am also committed to that work to ensure that we work closely with our utility over the next 30 days and beyond, because we know that while the next 30 days are critical in understanding what exactly happened, the real work lies ahead in making sure that we're making the necessary adjustments and changes. And so, as was laid out before me earlier, we'll be taking a look at the audit that will happen, as well as ensuring that there is a smooth transition. I did want to highlight for the community that during our last water oversight committee meeting, which we had in January, we received an update on the efforts to modernize our power distribution equipment at the ulric plant. We talked about the significant infrastructure improvements such as upgrading control panels, replacing pumps, changing out

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motors. And so, there's a lot of important work under way at Austin water, and critical work that we have in our infrastructure here as a city is important. And that's something that the Austin water oversight committee will continue to have conversations about to understand what exactly we need to hone in on and to ensure that the act in the action part is done, and that we hold our system accountable. So some of the questions I have, to build off what council member kitchen was sharing, is looking at understanding if there is a standard operating prenyl that -- procedure that Austin water has for seeding the filters, and what that process looks like. Also looking at why was the -- why did the seeding process go so long? Why was it not terminated successfully? Why did the alarms not go off? Were they intentionally disabled? Was it a matter of us not having

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a system in place where the alarms were activated appropriately when the levels were exceeding the regulatory requirements. Also looking at were there valves that could have been closed to prevent the high turbidity water from leaving the plant? So these are just some of the questions that really hone in on this particular incident. And so I hope that we're able to cover those questions today. And then, of course, we'll continue the conversation next week at our Austin water oversight committee meeting. >> Thank you, mayor. There are a number of questions that I put on the message board that I know is out there in an attachment that y'all have provided responses to. So I may ask city manager if staff can put those in the backup as well, just so people know what questions have already been answered. But I want to make sure when we walk away from this meeting today, we have the answers just about training and oversight,

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the alarms, as other folks have mentioned. It's my understanding that no one got sick and the taps that were coming through to people's homes -- you know, that this was very preemptive, and ensured that there was actually safe drinking water as people were told to conserve and to boil water, that there was no contaminated water that actually got out to any of the customers. And capacity at the treatment plants and whether our infrastructure can currently hold all the capacity that is needed during events such as this. Any unfunded infrastructure. I know you have multiple years of capital improvements planning in the works, and so I just want to make sure if there's anything council needs to direct funding to, that we understand that. And the last one would be the reporting process to tceq. I've heard some folks say it could have been reported earlier, and I've had other folks say you actually got ahead of the game and did it before you needed to, and so I just want to make sure we know how that testing and conversations work with tceq to know which end

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of that it is. And I will leave it there, because I know other folks have more questions. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Director, I just want to say to you and to the water department staff again that it's a department that we're all real proud of in our city. So many awards over time. The advances, the work done, not only operationally, but the water forward work in our city. We really do have a department we can be real proud of, and you have led it for a long period of time. And deserve much of the credit for that. And I want to thank you for that service. It's really hard being the guy who is in charge of the -- in charge of the department, because things will always happen that go wrong. The nature of things. No operation can ever be

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perfect. We need to make sure there's always a sufficient amount of good will and faith in reserve to be able to weather those future events when they happen in the community, and we've been obviously star crossed here in the last four or five years, which has impacted kind of that reservoir. But in any event, I want to thank you and the staff who I know have worked tirelessly, and I've been through many of those events with you to know just how hard you and the staff work. I want to say thank you for that. The questions that I'd like you to address for me when it comes back to you would be I guess a little bit more detail as well. You started off by urging people to be really careful about the information and data that they use. That there are a lot of people in the community talking about a lot of different things. And it's real hard to know at some point what's true and what's not true, which is why it's important for us to have this meeting here today and the

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oversight meeting next Tuesday and the conversation we'll have on Thursday at the council meeting. And in the society that we live in today, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between what's true and what's not true. You mentioned in particular, the person who called in to the KLBj radio show and was making representations, including that they were one of the people that had been suspended. You start off by saying you wish people would ignore that call. I'd like you to tell us whether or not you think that that was a person -- one of the people who got suspended, or whether we had someone calling in who purported to be that, purported to know that information, and whether, in fact, it was really not someone that was suspended. Because I think it's important for people to know what they're hearing, to be able to evaluate it. The second thing is, I'm still a little confused as to timing. In the reports that you gave us,

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you said that, in the outline of the timing you gave us, that the turbidity was detected at the plant at 8:00 A.M. And I don't know if that's when there was a shift change, another shift came in that saw it and went oh, my goodness, the numbers have been high. Because from what you also said, it sounds as if it was actually detected at about 2:00 A.M., when the number had gone up to 21 out of the range of the five to ten. So that it may have been reported at 8:00 A.M., up the chain, but it was detected at 2:00. And I want to know if I'm understanding that correctly. Part of the challenge is that while it was detected at 2:00, it was not sufficiently reported or acknowledged for what it was until 8:00, and I want to make sure I'm understanding it, that the human error that was involved here was that period of

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time between 2:00 A.M. and 8:00 A.M. When we started putting in motion measuring and then responding to what we saw. That's my first question. The second question concerns the 12 hours, after 8:00 A.M. Before we got to the water boil. I think it's really helpful to know that there were no contaminants that we know of that were in the water, in the plant, and released out to the public. That's good to know. But we know that -- but we don't -- but my understanding is that because of the turbidity, we couldn't be sure of that at the time. And it's because we couldn't be sure of it at the time because of the turbidity that we did the water boil. So, it seems as if we did the water boil because there could be bacteria in the water. We didn't know. We have no evidence that there was. But we did the water boil because we couldn't know. And the question is, we went from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. Was there the potential for

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bacteria to be released into the drinking water during that period of time, 8:00 A.M. To 8:00 P.M.? And would the amount of water that was released be of sufficient concentration in our overall system that it would present any real risk to the public? So the question goes to risk. What risk did the public face, if any, from 8:00 A.M. To 8:00 P.M. When it's possible -- no doubt no contaminants were released, but during that period of time when we didn't know, what was the risk, if any, to the public? The last question I have is probably not a question to be answered here, but I just want to log it in. We've had three citywide boils over the last four years. We've had two other water boils that were more contained geographically. And they appear to be really dissimilar events with

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dissimilar causes. But yet, it's a lot to have in a short period of time. So I think the question I have is, is there a commonality over the course of those five things. Is there something else that's happening that led to even these widely divergent incidents resulting in water boils. Council member tovo. >> Tovo: Thank you. I too want to add, director Meszaros, my thanks to you. Serving the public is challenging, no matter what role you have, but I think you've had an extraordinarily challenging role here directing our water utility, and you've done so during an unbelievably challenging period for our community. So I appreciate your leadership as the mayor said. We've had you know, Austin water has been an innovator

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nationally, and under your leadership, we've moved forward with water forward and other kinds of innovative programs. I've been here long enough to know you also led us through an extraordinary drought, a drought of record. And so there have been -- you know, in the course of your time here at the city of Austin, it has been -- there have been all kinds of unexpected and really challenging obstacles. And I know -- I just I see that and I appreciate your leadership and your work on behalf of the city of Austin. So, thank you, and I join others in just wishing you the very best as you take your next path. I also want to thank you and your staff for the way in which you responded. We're going to encounter unexpected challenges and crises and it's really how we respond that I think shows the strength of our city. And I appreciate that in those water distribution efforts, you learned from and immediately implemented some of what you had described in the after action report. We had water on hand, the

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network of water distribution was more organized, more geographically distributed. I mean, I appreciate you and our other city leaders for really responding to that. That is not in any way to ignore what council member harper-madison said, which is, of course, this is enormously frustrating for many of our Austin residents. We hear that too and we're all going to work together to make sure that we're figuring out what can be done differently to make sure that we're not facing and we're not in this same place again. So... My questions -- and I'm trying to siphon out the ones that have already been asked. We've talked a little bit about the caller and some of the assertions that person made. I think you've addressed this, director Meszaros, but I would appreciate it if you would do so again and a little more clearly. One of the things that I took away from that caller was an assertion that doesn't seem to

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match any of the information we received, that weatherization on the plant had failed in some way or was faulty. If you could please address that, which again, does not seem to be supported by any of the conversation that we've had or any of the information that you've provided. I think in the subsequent week, we've heard on social media and in other places assertions that the infrastructure is old, faulty, that we as a city have failed to fund it. If you could address that, too, and again, do what you, I think, have done throughout this presentation, and through all of our information, and again, just very clearly provide your response to that and, again, highlight that it does appear to have been an error in terms of how the staff responded. And then four additional questions. Basin 6, thank you for describing that process. I'm still trying to follow all the ins and outs of the details.

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If you could tell us how many basins there are in the plant and whether or not they can be detached from the rest of the system. I think you've answered that on page 2. But I don't entirely follow all of the details of that answer. I think what you're saying is that you are going to now look at interlock technology preventing high turbidity water from entering the filters. I think that's the answer to that question of whether the basin can be disconnected from the system, but I appreciate it if you'd just focus in on that and tell us whether the system could be changed or upgraded in some way that would cut off the basin, a particular basin, if there are problems detected within it. The same with the linkage among the water treatment plants. Thank you for answering that question. I think that too is something that came up again and again in the public conversation, why if there was a problem at one water

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treatment plant, why we couldn't rely on the other two. If you could explain whether that's a system that could change. You've answered this question on page two out of six and I think in attachment three

out of three, that the water when it leaves the distribution plants, intermingles. What would it take to alter that situation? I believe there may be some utilities where that is not the case. Is that something we want to work toward, and what would it take to get to, to that place? I'm really not understanding why the alarms did not activate a different response among the staff, and so maybe you could help me understand that. There was a comment -- and I'm sorry, I don't remember which of you made the comment that there may need to be -- there may be one technology need that you assess is whether alerts should be external to the team. And so I think what you're saying is that alerts were all

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internal to staff and for some reason they were not attended to, not heard, not understood, not -- I'm not sure what happened there, if you could explain just really clearly for there were alarm going off, what happened there. Why with respect they getting the attention they needed. And then there's a paragraph on page 2 that I would appreciate you kind of talking us through. Among it's on page 2. Yes. This is in the attachment. Please describe the conditions at Ulric during the heavy rain and ice, and that answer -- I think that answers a lot of the questions that we've been

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hearing, but it is still a bit technical I think for the general audience to follow, at least this general audience member. So if you would kind of talk us through that response a little bit, that would be really -- I'd be really grateful for that. I also want to say, you know, getting a memo like this so quickly after was extraordinarily helpful, and that too to me really represents a learning from what we experienced last year. And so, in the same way, I really appreciate that by the time we had our after action presentation in the audit, you, director Meszaros, could stand up and talk about the things that you had already put in place to really respond to that, to really make sure that we're more resilient, that we're learning from the event. I just want to thank you for this. It was thorough, it answered the questions that were immediately on people's mind, and it did so in a really timely way. And so, thank you for that. >> Pool: I want to start with thank yous to director Meszaros

[10:33:00 AM]

and staff for so quickly bringing us the report. It made a whole lot of difference I think in our understanding of what did and did not happen. The two areas that I'd like to have additional information on go to who that caller was and how that person was purporting to be one of the members of the crew, and not that we have any control over it, but what vetting might have been done to make sure that that person's identity was -- that person was who he said he was. So, yeah, I'd like to dig down a little bit into what actually happened among the crew members. I also understand with personnel issues that we're

very careful on what we do or say before an investigation, but I think the investigation will be really important to understand what happened and whether we need to have additional alarms on top of alarms, watchers of the watchers, if you will, for our systems to make sure that this doesn't happen again. So, excellent reporting back to us all. I think we all appreciated that. Thank you, city manager, for

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making sure that that happened and director Meszaros for so clearly putting the information together so quickly. And then also, the assistance that you gave to the community in helping with getting us back on track. I'm sorry that you're leaving us. I have appreciated the work that you've done quietly and with grace, but I respect your decision and understand why you're making the change. I want to make sure that our staff who remain recognize how important they are to this dais and to our community and to the work that we will continue to do going forward. It's a very strong unit that you have. The Austin water utility has a good reputation and I know that y'all will continue to hold that flag up really high and wave it, because it's really important what you offer and provide to

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our city. We can't do it without you. So, thank you. And that's about all I have. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem. >> Alter: Good morning. Director Meszaros, I want to thank you for your service and contributions over the years. I also want to thank you for recognizing the need our community has to restore and the need that our city has to restore faith and trust in our utility, and your choosing to retire is going to be helpful to us, even if we are willing to need to make a transition in leadership. Also want to recognize our city staff across departments who helped in the process. I'm going to ask a lot of questions, some here now, some later. I've been working on putting together the external audit

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resolution. And before I talk specifically about the questions, I do want to acknowledge that many of the people that I talk to about how best to proceed acknowledged your approach to transparency and openness and many of the things that you've done as a leader over the years. That being said, I have four pages of questions and I'm not going to ask them all now. I'm going to try to summarize them. I'm really interested in getting a better understanding of the operational system errors of the organization so we can fix them and figure out what resources we need to invest to prevent future water quality and supply failures. Really looking for answers and better understanding. One set of questions has to do with stuff that my colleagues have brought up with respect to what happened with the alarms and why they were not answered. You seem to be saying that the alarms all went off, but nothing was done, and I don't understand

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why they were not monitored or detected by other fail safes. The paragraph that council member tovo just showed indicates that things were not in place that seem like they should have been in place. So I want to understand if we are following best practices for our manual operations and automation levels, whether we need to update our scata system, whether we need standard operating procedure revisions, whether we need to change treatment approaches, whether we need to update tceq regulations. I want to make sure that through this process we are asking why are we doing what we do in water treatment, and are we asking ourselves if this can be done in a more efficient and more resilient way. I understand that there are short-term, medium term, and long-term responses and things that are specific to this issue, but the goal is to prevent this from happening again, and if we have learned anything over the last four years, it won't happen in exactly the same way.

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And so we really have to be looking at our systems and how they move forward. I have lots of detailed questions about the automation. I'm going to spare you those and hear what you have to say and we can keep asking those. I do need to know on a broader level whether we have scata or other automation failures that are happening within our treatment plants that may or may not be reported to management. I want to understand some of the choices that were made on Saturday. I understand that we do not compartmentalize our water. However, state rules would have allowed Austin water to issue a hydraulic model base boil water notice to just some parts of town that are most likely to have received water from ulric. Instead, we had a citywide boil water notice, and I want to

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understand if they considered smaller areas for boil water notice. Ulric mostly serves south Austin and core downtown, and we could have perhaps run a hydraulic model, to predict the Zones of the impacts of the high turbidity water and therefore reduced the scope of the boil water notice. A lot of other specific questions, but I want to -- I want to challenge this narrative that all of the boil water notices and the zebra muscles were a function of things that are outside of our control. This narrative that it was a function of the weather to me seems problematic. Four of the five water quality supply things, not including the fire retardant, all related to ulric. And so we have to be asking if there are things going on in ulric. In 2018, we know there were intakes along lake Austin, along lake Travis, whose systems handled the high level of turbidity without needing to do

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a boil water notice. In 2020, with storm uri, that was also a problem at ulric ultimately. It was obviously started by weather issues and power failures. But we didn't practice the emergency response to be able to switch the emergency generator power on, or at least that's my understanding and I stand to be corrected if I'm wrong. Zebra muscles was also, as I understand, related to ulric. And there's a lot of complicated things and if I'm missing something I want to know. But we have to be able to respond to these things. We have to have these systems in place, and the evidence that I have before me suggests we need to do more. And the last thing that I want to raise for this portion, and it is frankly frustrating not to be able to get answers, is have we ever done a third party review by inviting high-performing U.S. Water -- other utilities to review our practices, to identify areas of needed improve. Such as peers

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in the American water works association. >> Mayor Adler: Council member Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you, mayor. When I was informed about the failure that would require another underground boil water notice. I was frustrated, I was upset, and I was angry. But so were other members of the community. Austinites pay taxes for city services and as council members, we are tasked with being good stewards of taxpayer money. My hope is that this shared frustration leads to an outcome that will hopefully provide answers to the community and rebuild trust in a utility system that has been broken. We have to do better. Today's discussion is a good first step. We know from history that broken systems can be repaired and that there can be a stronger outcome on the other side. We must dig deeper into the situation to ensure that Austin residents have the resources they need and pay for. After the boil water notice was issued, I went to help at the Kelly reeves athletic complex in district 6 by passing out case of water. I learned a lot by speaking with

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families that passed through there, including that our community is resilient. I'd like to take a moment and thank our partners at Williamson county for being there as well. One thing is clear, we talked about it this morning also, austinites come together in times of crisis. We're tough people and we don't back down. I want to echo my colleagues' sentiments about thanking Austin water staff, including director Meszaros, for their work when times get tough. Colleagues, we are definitely faced with an important challenge following this boil water incident to not let austinites down and we have a unique opportunity to live up to our promises and to take responsibility and correct what's going to be corrected, and looking forward to future discussions, but here are some of my questions. I'd like to know how the emergency manager with Austin water utility works together with the hscm director. And I'd like to know what steps are in place to prevent a repeat of initial findings during informations. In preparation for this meeting today, I reviewed all of the

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after action reviews from previous incidents at Austin water. I saw several recommendations related to emergency training. For example, on page 3 of the winter storm uri after action report, one of the findings was that some of the incident management team staff had not participated in incident command training and had a lack of familiarity with emergency protocols that hindered the overall function of the incident management team. It was said that part of the reason for that not happening was because we were under covid restrictions. And so I'd like to know what training has been done since that recommendation was made and how we're moving forward. I'd also like to know the status of our senate bill 3, we're required to submit documents to tceq for approval. It's stated in one of the after action reviews that it must be submitted by March 1st, 2022. I'd like to know the status of that plan, if it's been submitted, and if council could receive a copy of that.

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And then finally here -- well, I have one more after this. During previous incidents with Austin water, it was identified that the utility was not able to communicate directly with tenants who don't have direct billing accounts. I'd like to know during this boil water notice how we had outreach to multi-family property management companies, tenant associations, and property managers. My understanding is that water treatment plant number four is only pushing out 50 million gallons of water per day. I'd like to know what it might take to get that elevated to possibly 150 million gallons per day or more, building capacity is something that we need in case we have another issue at another water treatment plant. And that's all. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Council member vela. >> Vela: My colleagues have

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mostly covered my questions, so I'll keep my remarks brief. Council member alter, I share her sentiments with regard to the natural disasters will happen, you know, floods, freezes, but our response is what we can control as a city, as an institution. And my sense -- and I would say that the community sense is that the response has been sub par. That other water systems have not had the kinds of problems, again, with flooding and with the freeze. Everybody struggled, but we seem to have struggled a little bit more than other communities have. That's a major concern for myself and obviously for the citizens, the residents of Austin.

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The one question that I have that I have not heard brought up is we've received a number of constituent communications regarding credits to bills regarding refunds, something to that effect. Is there any precedent for some type of billing credit from Austin water to its customers, as well as statewide. I mean, is there any precedent for any public utility to have given some type of credit, refund, something to that effect to their customers, given that in this situation, that there was no kind of natural disaster proximate cause. I would extend this question to the city attorney as well. I don't know if there's any civil liability, you know, class action, anything like that that's possible. Those are concerns that come up for myself, and concerns that I've seen that we've received

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through email and through other comments into the office. >> Mayor Adler: All right. Manager, you've got a list of questions. Oh, I'm sorry, council member harper-madison and council member Renteria, if you have anything that you want to add? >> Harper-madison: I do not. Thank you. >> Renteria: No, mayor, I don't. My questions have been asked. >> Mayor Adler: All right. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mayor, council, obviously, the detailed notes that we were taking during this, so we can try to address as many of these questions as possible, is going to be critical. But knowing that this is just the beginning of this conversation. Also it has been pointed out later there are going to be multiple opportunities for this dialogue to continue. So we will do our best to address the ones that have been articulated, knowing that we have more time and opportunity to further address that in written communication or in future meetings. But I'll turn it over to

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director Meszaros. >> Thank you, manager, and I'll get started on some questions. Certainly we'll ask Rick and some others to contribute. I want to answer as much as we can today. Some of these will be top of mind, so please forgive me if I don't nail any single detail down correct. We'll be able to follow up and amplify or address questions that we don't cover today. Council member alter, I'll start with you. You asked about -- and the mayor asked this, too, about commonalities over the last few years. We'd gone a very long time without boil water problems, and we're kind of concentrating now. We had the Colorado river flood, which was really a water quality upset of the source water. We had uri, we had this event, we had zebra muscle paste and odor issue at ulric. Really, it wasn't a public health and safety, but a very unpleasant event. There were a couple smaller

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scale distribution ones. We had fire department cross-connect their phone truck into our system and I don't recall if there was another. And in terms of the commonality of that, they're all distinct. I would

say one of the focus areas is strengthening Ullrich. That our Ullrich plant is unique in several ways. One, it is our biggest plant by far. And when Ullrich is wobbly, the system is going to be wobbly. And I think focusing on Ullrich is critical. We identified Ullrich as a focal point a couple years ago, at least, and have really been trying to focus on strengthening Ullrich. I think it is strengthening the culture and the workforce and the training across the board. I think it is strengthening the culture and the workforce and the training across the board. Not just Ullrich, there's others, but I think Ullrich is

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really, really critical to stay locked in on. Not only is it our biggest plant, but it is uniquely situated with regards to our distribution and transmission system. It isn't just the water you have at your plant, it's how you can move it around the system. And Ullrich has really some of the largest lines, it's uniquely positioned to serve south of the river. The other plants don't have the same capability. Ullrich was really just the way the distribution and transmission system was set up, really the key plant for that, and why it can't be out of service for long before we start to get -- to get anxious. And so I think that is a commonality. It is between all of that, is our Ullrich plant has been struggling the most, and we've been putting a lot of energy into it in terms of new staff

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and new management and additional management, but they're not there yet. And I think that that has to continue. And I would say staffing in general is something we need to strengthen. We have been experiencing enormous turnover at Austin water. Just one example here. You know, last month, in January, 20 employees left Austin water. That's the most we've ever had leave in one month. And our experience is being diluted. You know, we used to turn around, you know, a lot of operators that have 20 years experience, 25 years experience. Those days are gone, right? I mean, we just are seeing a persistent turnover. You're experiencing the withering effects of this pandemic, is a part of all of this, too. So focusing on staff, on culture, and on Ullrich in particular, I think is -- if I'm departing -- I am departing -- that that would be my recommendation to everybody, including my own team, and I think we've been clear about

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that focus. There was questions about the caller. Several of you had questions about the caller, and I'll do my best to address that. The caller that called in, there were two callers to KLBj -- to KLBj radio, and the latest one identified himself as Lawrence, and he said he was one of the employees that was suspended. Well, of the three employees suspended, none of them are named Lawrence. So I don't know why you would say you're one of the employees but give a different name. I didn't do voice analysis or anything

like that, but from what he said, it's inconsistent with anything that we've been hearing from this event. And it was quite a weaving in and out narrative. I don't believe it was one of those employees. That's my own personal belief. Rick, I don't know if you have a differing opinion. It may be an Austin water employee. I mean, I don't know that.

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But I don't think it was one of the employees on the shift or -- but Rick, any -- >> Yeah, I don't have anything to suggest that even the information that was -- I don't have anything to suggest that even the information that was relevant to -- you know, they talked about filter valves not functioning in the criminal system. From what I gathered was fully functional. You could turn off filters. So I think that in itself was not even consistent with what we've been collecting so far. >> But we'll press on that more specifically in terms of documentation and the interviews and the questions and really put that to bed one way or another. That's my belief in terms of that process. There were some questions about -- hang on a second. There were questions about the

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integration of our plants and system and why we could have or chose not to do a more limited in scope boil water notice. I don't remember who asked that. There were several that maybe asked that. And I'll address that. So our system is interlinked. We do have -- we have three primary large scale drinking water plants. Ullrich is our largest. Davis is next. And Hancock or previously called plant four is our third and newest plant. Ullrich was originally built and started in the '60s, was expanded many times. Davis was build in the '50s and expanded several times. Hancocks went into service in 2014. They all are interlinked --

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okay, am I working? There we go. So, our system is interlinked. The three plants all produce water that moves into our system and can be distributed about our system. There are some, as I described, some plants are better to serve different parts of the system, but we can move water about. That's an overall strength. That is by design that that is done. That allows multiple points of redundancy and resiliency. Both within the plants, the ability to move water from different plants to different part of the system, which is exactly what we did when we had to stop Ullrich, is we compensated as best we could from the other plants in moving water across the system. It also is redundancy within the distribution system. If you have a transmission main system problem or you have to isolate a transmission main because you're relocating it for a mobility project, this gives you the ability to move water in and around your system with parts of it out of service. I think that is a strength, and

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we should be thankful that we have that ability. Although, you know, it does play a role when we have a plant have an upset. So, with regards to how we work that with this plant, as Ullrich had the upset and we were making determinations with tceq on a boil water notice and engaged on sharing data and working through those processes, we did evaluate whether or not we should do a more limited scope boil water notice. And we did that in consultation with tceq. We determined that Ullrich serves south of the river, the central zone, it does produce water that goes up to the east Austin pumping station, which can pick up Ullrich water and pump it into the north system. It's not as much water going up that way, but it is possible that water could get up that way. Ullrich water probably doesn't get up to the far northwest, but

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in talking with tceq, the process to document for them all the valve settings in our distribution system, to run a hydraulic model, to run a hydraulic model that has the age of water analysis, that that would take many hours of work and would not guarantee that tceq would support a more narrow scoped boil water notice. At a minimum, we knew it was going to be at least 2/3 of the city, at a minimum. And you're balancing this desire to get the facts right and understand what happened and work with tceq and configure your boil water notice and line up to notify the public with the time -- I mean, many of you brought up the time. You don't want to wait too long to issue the boil water notice, you want to be thoughtful in your decision-making, but regulatory-wise -- and that's our bible is regulations, is, you know, it's at least 24 hours. You must do it in 24 hours. Ideally sooner. And so that was the interplay. And I will say, I made the decision. I said, let's do a citywide boil

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water notice. That's the most protective of the whole city. It's going to allow us to do it in the most reasonable time without further delay. And I meant that decision and that's what we did. Again, I don't know what would have happened at tceq. I know it would have taken more time and certainly we would have had a major boil water notice, but I made the best decision based on the knowledge and judgment that I had. And in that same vein, there was a series of questions about, you know, how long does it take, why did you wait 12 hours, you know, what risk were you balancing. And so, as you work through an event like this, again, we go to the regulations. The regulations specify 24 hours. Those regulations are based on, you know, public safety considerations. You know, you want to make a

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good decision with regards to boil water notices. In the beginning, when this was first happening and as we were mobilizing in, there was a lot of just verifying, making sure that -- you know, did the scata system have a flaw? Was it hacked in some way? You know, let's make sure that it's not that. Let's take more hard readings and hard samples and make sure that those are showing the same data that the monitors are showing. You're reviewing the regulations. I consulted with our engineering staff, with our regulations experts who used to work at tceq and ask them for their guidance. And not just me personally. I mean, the collective team that was helping to manage this event. They advised that in this case they would recommend a significant consultation with tceq and to share data on the event. Because this was processed water, internal processed water that had been seeded into this basin and had gone through considerable disinfection, more

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disinfection than you would normally have water go through, just because of the nature of the process, there wuss some sense that this may have been characterized as a treatment technique violation, as opposed to a boil water violation. A treatment violation requires notice, but it does not require a boil water notice. Tceq reviewed that data and ultimately determined that the regulations did not allow that. And let me say publicly -- and we said this in our q&a -- tceq worked tirelessly here. They -- you know, they're under a lot of pressure. They even got frustrated with some of our communications, and you know, it's a Saturday. Their world is flipped upside down. I just say that they were professional throughout this, demanding, exacting, as you would expect regulatory agencies to do. And so I just want to note that. But we -- you know, we worked through that process, we consulted with them, we reviewed whether or not this was a process technique violation.

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Whether it was a boil water notice. They went back, they said no, this is a boil water notice. Then we started talking about, you know, like should we limit it? How would that work? What would you need from us for that to happen? And we worked through that process. Certainly, you know, notified the manager, we got ready at hsem, we reached out to elected officials, we keyed up for communicating this through our portal, and ultimately issued the boil water notice, I think it was at 7:30 that evening. You know, well within the parameters of all the regulations. As I indicated, every boil water notice is -- you're doing it because there's a heightened risk, and so I don't want to minimize this risk. I do want to emphasize, though, that our disinfection systems remained well above minimum standards throughout this event. Our other plants, and even Ullrich up until the last few

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hours, was producing very high quality water. You know, we felt pretty confident that we could manage this event, but that's where we ended up there. The risk you're managing in a turbidity event, really there's two barriers in treatment that you're managing. One is disinfection systems where you apply various forms of disinfection. We use chlorine at our plants to kill harmful microorganisms. The other is turbidity. And that applies particularly to surface water utilities. Ground water utilities are not a subject as much to turbidity upsets in regulations. You're really, by having very low turbidity, very low cloudiness, that's another way to reduce risk of microorganisms that could be harmful. Certain microorganisms can be resistant to chlorine, and so you can use turbidity to make sure that you're minimizing the

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risk of those microorganisms being in the system. There's really nothing for them to cling to or to hide to. These ultra high -- the high standards for low turbidity help manage that risk. You know, we're fortunate, our source water typically falls in a very low risk for those type of microorganisms, but it's not a zero risk. And so that's why turbidity is really important, is that that's another way for surface water utilities to manage harmful risk from microorganisms. It's not the particle itself that's risky, it's the microorganism. You know, something that could give you distress. That's really what you're managing with turbidity. Let's see.

[11:04:46 AM]

There was a series of questions about alarms. And we're still working through, you know, documenting all of that process. And Rick, I'm probably going to need your help here. But our plants all have scada system. Each plant has a control room. The control room shows you the status of the plant in terms of pumping and turbidities and there's alarms and alarms are set for different standards. We even have sometimes high alarms and high, high alarms to indicate kind of escalating. To the best of all of my knowledge, our alarms were working during that system, and they were being acknowledged, but the decision-making for that was where it was breaking down. I don't fully understand that now. I think that's things that we're still investigating. As this situation intensified, during the night, there was not a call for help from outside of

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the staff that were operating that. I don't entirely know why. They felt that they had it handled. That is the kind of things that, you know, we're going to have to continue to examine and ultimately strengthen. I know, Rick, would you like to speak to that more? >> I'll add to -- just to the alarms. I mentioned this. The scata control system, the monitoring and controls software that picks up different devices, operational statuses for equipment, were all functional. I think there was reference that I made also that this is all internal controls monitoring within the plant. There are some technologies, one is to remote into the plant to -- you know, if someone reached out for assistance, from one of our supervisors or maybe

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monitoring location that we have, that that would be available to us and we're exploring to get those, and we've actually received access to some of our supervisor staff, so that way they can monitor the system itself. They can't control it remotely. But they can monitor the same views that the operators are having. We talked about alarms a little bit. There are multiple level alarms, and they have both visual and audible alarm sets. We're looking at whether or not they continue to be alarming or if they were -- once they were acknowledged, those audibles went away, but there's still a visual. So we'll explore whether or not there's some technology or programming that can be done within the system to ensure that there's more oversight or maybe even tighter controls. That includes even shutting down portions of the process units,

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not necessarily the basins, but maybe the filters. So we're exploring that to see whether or not there's something we can mimic from the other plants, especially our newest plant, our hancocks plant, whether or not we can have similar controls to that. And so that to me, in addition to the alarm settings, reviewing and having oversight of access to the systems, are all those that are immediate actions that we're undertaking. >> And, you know, there were questions like could you have isolated basin 6. Yes, you could have turned off basin 6, or isolated it from the filters. You can isolate individual filters. You can isolate those from the control room. You just press a button. It's not like you have to go and, you know, physically take two or three hours to turn those off. You know, we don't entirely understand why some of that wasn't done, or at least why there wasn't more of a call for help. Why that plant staff shift thought they could handle it on

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their own. I think there's -- you know, other things in terms of alarms and knowledge, when shifts change -- we run 12-hour shifts from 7:00 to 7:00, so you have a shift from 7:00 in the morning to 7:00

at night, and that just continues. I think there were misunderstandings or breakdowns or need to improve what we call the pass-down process, how one shift passes down data and information to another. I think that's a part of our reviews. So a lot of work in this arena that we have to do. Strengthening sops. Somebody mentioned that. I think that that is a part of this. And sometimes, you know, you get kind of complacent in your sops. One of our lead operators on this shift, a senior, he had been with us ten years. Licensed individual. Sometimes you assume people understand things or know things, and, you know, I think we have to revisit those assumptions. Things that worked for the last ten or 20 years sometimes break down and we have to examine those.

[11:09:59 AM]

There were questions that some of you had about -- I guess it was funding and infrastructure, and let me say in my 15 years as director, whenever we have proposed a rate increase or a need to fund a project, we might get a lot of questions from the council and the community and we work through those processes. But in the end, we got the support we needed. This wasn't because we didn't get funding from the council or along the way. I just want to be clear. We have a very robust capital improvement planning process. You know, we need to modernize our plants, we need to stay up with those things. There's a lot of need in our utility. There's growing risk from a lot of different threats. Our capital program is expanding. It's going to expand, and that will continue into the future.

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But I have never experienced that the system was starved for funding. Now, we've gone through a period where we haven't raised rates for several years after a period of raising rates every year. We're reentering a rate increase periods where we're going to need to engage with the council on our rate planning and all that goes with that. You know, the council had requested during our last rate increase that we go through what are full independent hearing examiner processes, where you kind of simulate a Texas public utility process for raising rates. That's very complicated and time consuming and expensive to do, and I think that that -- you know, my advice as the departing director would be maybe you should re-examine that, and maybe there's an opportunity for us to tackle some rates in a way that doesn't cost us several million dollars and two or three

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years of time to do that. And I would ask that you maybe reconsider that direction, would be one of the requests that I would have to allow our team a little easier pathway to engage with you on rates and discussions and how that's connected to capital and staffing and climate. I think that that would be a recommendation I would have for you. Council member, you had a question about credits, and I will say

that I talked to my chief financial officer, Joseph Gonzalez. I talked to the manager. We are evaluating how we could give a credit to customers for this event. We know customers -- not only all the upset, but maybe they used more water to flush their pipes, and there's I think an opportunity for us to acknowledge that and give a credit to customers. You know, roughly a credit -- you know, a 2,000-gallon credit for us would be very I think manageable, or something of

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that. We haven't formulated the final recommendation to the manager. But that is something that I've asked Joseph and his team to work on, to engage with Spencer, and then come back to the council. I think we would require your approval for that. And so we would come back and hopefully be able to attend to that in the weeks and there were a series of questions about our training for homeland security management and incident command training. And dang, I'm going to call on Ana. Ana, would you mind if I asked you to help me with this one? >> Good morning, council members. I'm Ana Brian babor, director of business services at Austin water. Councilmember Kelly, thank you for your questions about our FEMA training program at Austin water. We do require our staff to

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take both online FEMA courses and in-person FEMA courses. We have two staff members who are certified FEMA trainers who deliver those in-person classes to our staff. When we deliver those classes we also open them to the community and staff from other organizations in the city of Austin or in the community are able to register for those classes through preparingtexas.org. In response to your specific question about the covid impacts, yes, we did have to pause those in-person incident command system training courses during covid. In November of 2021 we reassumed the in-person training classes, we offered incident command system 300, which is the intermediate course. We offered it in November and December. We have scheduled another instance of that class coming up in July of this year and we will be offering

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the ics400, which is the advanced incident command system internally to our department leadership in April of this year. I could provide more information about our training program, but is that sufficient? I'd also like to point to how our manager at Austin water interacts with the emergency management director. We do have a director of emergency management who oversees a staff of five employees of emergency management at Austin water. Our emergency manager serves as Austin water's single point of contact to HSEM. That person attends regularly meetings with here so many. That is a long-standing practice for us to interact with so many in that way.

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He so many in that way. You also know in this budget fiscal year we have added a position that is our emergency plans officer senior, part of our emergency management team. That position will be co-located at hsem two days a week and will be a shared resource to help both Austin water and homeland security and emergency management continue to enhance our bonds of collaboration as we work together. That position is very near the end of the hiring process. I recently approved some paperwork and decision making related to that position. Did that answer your question about emergency management? Thank you. >> Thank you, Ana. A few other questions that came up, councilmember Kelly, you also asked about senate bill 3 submittal. And what is called the Epp or emergency preparedness plan. That was a part of a recent

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law after uri requiring water utilities to do several things. One, notify all their power providers which facilities they have that are critical and we have done that. That was done in November. And while ae is our primary provider, we have other providers that we can do like bluebonnet and pedernales and we've taken that step. The other is a submittal to tceq documenting and substantiating how our system is setup to provide reliable power during an emergency. We were on course for that to happen and I assume we're on course, some of the same folks working on that also helped with the boil water notice, but I have not heard that -- I believe they're still on schedule for that

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submittal. And we will certainly provide you that submittal, but there's a lot of sensitive information in that and critical infrastructure and how it's set up and how it's powered. So we would need to do that in a way that is my thought with terms of risk. So we will certainly do that. There is an option in the law to request an extension of 90 days on your submittal. There was a question about tenants and Howie work with tenants here. And we did have a special mailer to tenants as a part of our communications. That was one of the things we identified in our previous after actions and we did work with ae on a tenant communications. Randy, I have that correct, don't I?

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We did do that. We could follow up more on what we did there. I think councilmember alter had a question about peer review and we have done peer reviews. We have been a member of the pip for safe water. The partnership for safe water is a group of utilities and regulators and professional organizations that encourage surface water utilities, particularly with regard to turbidity to go beyond just the minimum regulatory requirements. We've been a long-term partner, I think even a founding partner of that since the '90s. There's a series of levels of partnership that you go through and it's a very data intensive process that you submit. There's peer reviews, there's analysis of that, we have -- actually, our Ullrich plant had been one of the highest certified plant of its size in the nation. I think we've probably not been as active in the partnership the last few years as we can be and I

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think that is something to renew again with our commitments there. We've had Brian Hawes who I mentioned has served as an officer of the partnership for safe water. He's done peer reviews of other utilities and their data. And he's very knowledgeable, but Rick, I would ask that you speak to Brian and others and that we renew that commitment again on partnership for safe water and council member in addition to the audit processes. So we do take drinking water safety seriously and particularly turbidity. And I just -- but we will come back to those. I think I probably touched on a good part of those questions. Certainly we'll follow up: >> Thank you, director. I think as the mayor was describing trying to get to this on first round and if

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there are additional questions that were triggered by some of the comments that were made by director Meszaros or others, we can go through another line of questioning or we can just -- well, we're here to answer additional questions as desired. >> Manager, I do want to thank the council for all the comments. It meant a lot. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: Thank you, mayor. You have impeccable timing. We were just looking at each other to figure out the next steps R. Thank you for that run down. I know there are a lot of questions being run today and being asked and answered moving forward. I ask in as we weigh the mayor pro tem's external audit resolution later this week that the conversation will be in good hands as it continues. And we'll also continue with the water oversight committee that my colleague,

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chair Vanessa Fuentes is chairing right now. And so I know that we're going to stay in communication with the water utility. I was just thinking that y'all are always so good when we have a question, and my office has the simplest question that both you and Austin energy bring like 10 or 12 people to the

meeting. You want to make sure the questions get answered. We have an opportunity to daylight those. But I think what's really important here is we all understand the frustration in the community. We know a lot of what happened here is triggering from the winter storm. We just had the lovely proclamation issued this morning with the community involvement. Everybody has their own story about what happened last year and so I think that's why this is so triggering was that everybody was bracing for the storm and then turned around and said okay, we're in the clear now and all of a sudden got surprised by the boil water notice. I know it was done in a way that was very calculated and calibrated and was done with a lot of thought and care. So I know that we're-- we

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don't have every single answer to what took place. We know that you're going to be looking at those training and oversight and alarm systems and reporting systems moving forward to make sure that we can continue to be a leader in clean water and water conservation and in a place like central Texas where it is of the utmost importance. But to also understand that there may be some folks out there that are trying to spread misinformation and they want you to distrust our processes as a city. And it's incredibly unfortunate that someone may have potentially impersonated an Austin water employee. Maybe that's not the case, but that could be an option that we're looking at and I think that's incredibly damaging to the reputation of the city. You certainly cannot impersonate a police officer without repercussions and I want people to be on the lookout that there might be folks out there willfully trying to spread misinformation and saying this is a lack of funding and infrastructure capabilities, which we've been able to see here is not necessarily the case.

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There are things that need to be looked at, that need to be resolved. This is not -- this particular issue is not a matter of crumbling infrastructure and underfunding. So with that I will pass it back to the mayor. I know we have other work to get through today, but I appreciate your time. >> Mayor Adler: So colleagues, let's talk for a second about what we want to do. It's 11:30 right now. I'm sure that we all have more pages of questions we want to ask. We can either stay with this and continue to work with this, we could go to a briefing. I know it's going to be more discussion on Thursday and at the water committee meeting, but we want to do whatever it is that is the desire of the council. So let's take a second here and talk about what it is that we want to have happen next. Councilmember kitchen and then councilmember tovo. >> Kitchen: I want to

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thank director Meszaros and all of your staff for the information that you've provided today. I think that this is -- you've provided a lot of information for us and I appreciate that. So from my perspective I would like to provide some time for staff to put in writing some of what was asked of staff. I know we will have an opportunity to speak more on Thursday. I think what's presented to us at this point is sufficient. And the only last question I would have is -- I think you're getting to this, mayor, which is our next steps. We know a next step is we have more conversation on Thursday. We know a next step is the water committee next week. We know a next step is the investigation that you all are in the process of doing right now. And we appreciate the next steps that you've given us today verbally with all the response to questions. And I know that will be in writing. So from my perspective you

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asked where we were. I think it's time that we move on to what else we have to do. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: I don't mean to be a contrarian, but I actually was going to ask that we continue this maybe for another 30 minutes or 45 minutes before breaking for lunch since we have so many staff from the Austin water utility here prepared to answer questions. We've asked questions and I think there's still some more really useful conversation that would happen that I believe staff have answers to right away. So I would suggest that we continue this a bit further here today? >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, other views in councilmember pool. >> Pool: I'd like to give our staff an opportunity to take a break and then also to look at the questions that they weren't able to answer for time constraints or just because there were so many, have an opportunity

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to gather their thoughts and maybe commit some of the answers to writing and give us another report and we will have more opportunities to engage directly. And also all of us will have time to kind of think through things and absorb the information that we've already gotten and go back and analyze what we've received so far because I think many of the questions will be if only partially answered in the information that we've already gotten and I would like to move forward with the briefing and then the other work Ta we have ahead of us today rather than continuing with this. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: I think that staff should take a break. They've given us a lot of information and I'm very appreciative of their time today. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: All right. It seems to me that -- yes. It seems to me that most people on the dais are saying that they would rather take a break at this point. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: I guess if that's the majority executive

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session decision then that's fine. I guess I would ask my colleagues whether we're asking our water utility to provide additional written answers or if we could have the conversation first on Thursday. It -- knowing the way this process works it just takes a lot of time to prepare written answers and multiple levels of review and whatnot. And they may actually prefer answering some additional questions on Thursday verbally prior to preparing yet another written memo. So that might be a good step after that. It's just a very short turnaround time from here to Thursday. >> Mayor Adler: I agree with you too. I think it will come up on Thursday. Is it reasonable for us today, it's Tuesday, to ask people to submit written questions so that we can at least get the questions out and we can have on Thursday the staff respond. They don't have to write something else. They can come up with that list of questions but they would have them ahead of time and we could go straight into the answers. Does that work? I think that might be a compromise between these two

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places. Council member Fuentes? >> Fuentes: Mayor, that works, and I want to say we have the Austin oversight committee meeting on Wednesday which will be another at least two hours for us to continue the conversation. >> Mayor Adler: And maybe we can put a time cap on Thursday so it doesn't swallow the entire day. Councilmember harper-madison. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor, I agree with the sentiments that my colleagues have shared, including councilmember tovo's point about there needing to be further conversation. I like the idea of us putting our questions out and offering staff the opportunity to review them and not have to answer off the cuff. I don't think that's as efficient as it could be, but I do appreciate that a lot of our constituents aren't going to take the opportunity -- don't have the opportunity to read pages and pages of information and might want to hear the conversation. I would also like to say and I don't know that this is something that we've considered. While I can appreciate their professionalism, from what I've heard the director we're losing, he's the best there is. And I've heard from multiple parties he's the best director that the city of Austin has and it's a damn

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shame we're losing him. So I think to some degree we need to offer, the opportunity for staff to really let that sink in that there will be a leadership change and I can image the effect that has on people. So not just thinking that answering off the cuff is the way forward, I think it is appropriate for us to offer staff the opportunity to really go through this process. I think it's probably disheartening for a lot of them. >> Mayor pro tem? >> Thank you. I would appreciate some answers in writing. I think it's helpful for the future work work and whether they're answered by Thursday or the Austin water committee meeting or in the appropriate time we may take a little out for some of the answers. I would like some answers in writing. I think it is part of the

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openness and transparency that needs to happen. So I want to make sure I'm understanding for Thursday this would then be kind of pulling my item 60 and having this conversation under that as the opportunity to have the discussion on Thursday. >> Mayor Adler: I think so. And manager, you're going to do an after action report on this so there will be a written error and I would urge you in the after action report that you include all the questions asked by the council in this meeting and in the next meeting. On Thursday, colleagues, let's limit the discussion to no more than an hour on Thursday with additional questions. Let's get people to post questions on the board between now and Thursday. And basically we'll just ask staff to respond to the posted questions. That way we have the questions ahead of time but we'll be limited and not go more than an hour on

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Thursday knowing that we will have it come up again next week. Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: Yes. And I also would like an answer worth mentioning that a lot of the employees has left the water department and that's kind of concerning because I want to know what's going -- what we're going to need to retain our employees and whether is it going to be where we're going to have to have a wage increase and whether we're going to have a rate increase, which is is it really going to affect our operation here and then turn around and we're going to have to increase a higher rate to make up for that. Those are the kind of questions I would like answered. >> Mayor Adler: Helpful. If we could go ahead, councilmember Renteria, post that on the message board so it's written down and then it will be in the queue to

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be answered. All right, colleagues, I would propose we go from here to the inclusive working group, smbr. Before we do that let's see if we can break for lunch right at the end of that, hit the executive session, come back this afternoon for the cadet class briefing. You ready? Director, thank you very much for being with us. Staff, manager. And again thank you for your service to the city. Some of the most important things we've done with the city under water have happened during your tenure. All right, manager? >> Cronk: Thank you, mayor and council. Our next presentation is in accordance with our adopted resolution from March 2020 and we have scheduled this briefing as an update from the inclusive procurement working group which was created by that resolution. This is the first of several planned updates to come from the working group. The task is to review

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programmatic issues relating to the city's minority and women owned business enterprises and ordinances and to provide recommendations for improvement. The working group includes community representatives and is supported by the small and minority business resource department, which is led by director Edward campos. Accompanying center campos today are two working group representatives, Mr. Haynes and Mr. Macines. And I will turn it over to director campos. >> Manager, just so nobody makes the mistake, I believe it's pronounced cleato. >> Thank you, mayor, city councilmembers, mayor pro tem. Thank you for having us today. We are making the first of several updates on work of the inclusive procurement working group. You will hear me say working group quite a bit since inclusive procurement working group is quite a mouthful. Next slide, please.

[11:35:42 AM]

I am joined as Mr. Cronk mentioned with two of our representatives of the working group, celet Haynes and genomacias with the Austin minority and women alliance. We are here to address any questions you may have after our presentation. Next slide should be on slide number three. The working group members including community members and city staff as well as the progress that we've made to date and first steps. Next slide, please. So in the resolution there were 11 areas of importance that council wanted the

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working group to review, discuss and make potential recommendations for improvements to the program. We've put them into four different buckets, certification, resources to our mbes and wbes and local businesses, communication and transparency, and then best practices. We also have included a separate bucket for the disparity study, the working group members will receive a comprehensive overview from our disparity study consultant on the findings of the study, as well as review the recommendations and come back to council with a comprehensive report on the recommendations related to the four buckets as well as to the disparity study. Next slide next slide. So this slide here represents the community members that have taken their time to participate with us since August on this initiative. We have representatives from

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our stakeholder organization such as our minority trade alliance members and our chambers of commerce, as well as stakeholders that have worked with our department as well as the mbe/wbe program for several years. Next slide, please. We are also supported by our partners in the financial services department, our law department, equity office, and helping us facilitate these meetings is our communications and public information office and we've been meeting with them since early last year

to make sure we have a good extra framework in place to really listen and understand and capture all the good comments and recommendations from this working group. Next slide, please. One of the things we wanted to work on because we had such a robust ask as part of the resolution was to make sure that everyone was on

[11:38:49 AM]

the same level playing field if you will in terms of what was the intent of our mission. So we start off every meeting with a presentation on that particular area of focus. We make sure that we cover what is the current process with our working group members and then we spend the rest of the time listening to the working group members having what we like to call conversations with them. And really jotting down and confirming their comments and their recommendations. Next meetings that we have with the working group are a time for us to review what we heard. We actually put together presentations that capture all the comments and all the recommendations to ensure that we have heard correctly what the intent was out of that comment or out of that recommendation. That is our format for every meeting. Next slide, please. So as I did mention, we have been meeting since August where we did a meet and

[11:39:50 AM]

greet to familiarize ourselves with each other, as well as to outline what our tentative schedule was. We've had several sessions to date, certification being one of the primary sessions in which we've had three separate session. We had a session on resources, on payment policies and then we had a discussion about this particular meeting and briefing to council. So lots of good work that have taken place so far. Next slide, please. And this slide has some of the next steps and tentative dates. We still have lots of work to do, including as I mentioned earlier a briefing on the disparity study looking at what best practices are out there in the country as well as looking at communications and transparency. We hope to conclude the work some time in may if not early June where we'll come back to council again with a

[11:40:51 AM]

formal report of all those comments and recommendations to help improve our mbe/wbe program. Next slide, please. Again, thank you for your time. We are joined by cloteal Davis Haynes as well as Geno Macias, and we are here to answer any questions you may have. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Boy, a lot of work and I'm looking at the page where you identified the issues that need to be answered. I think that really goes to the thrust of what we were all hoping would come back out of the -- will come back out of the working group. So I guess it's in June then that we would start seeing the -- your assessments

of those issues and what we should be doing as a city to move forward, is that correct, did I understand that correctly? >> That's correct, yes.

[11:41:52 AM]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you for that. Colleagues, any other comment on this presentation? Councilmember harper-madison. >> Harper-madison: Thank you for recognizing me, mayor, and thank you, everybody for the presentation and for being present. To answer your question, it's really difficult to do a comprehensive job of compiling our questions when we don't get the briefings well in advance. I'd like to remind folks when at all possible get the briefing to us in advance and we can prepare our questions and think through the most comprehensive way to approach how to lay out our questions. I will say this, over the years I've gotten lots of calls and questions and concerns about these programs that we're making reference to today. So I really do look forward to being able to really thoroughly analyze this briefing and lay out my questions. And you recall some of the questions that have been asked of me over the years, and I'll put together my questions in writing. Thank you for your time, though. We appreciate you being here. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Ellis? >> Ellis: Thank you, mayor. I don't have questions, but

[11:42:52 AM]

I also appreciate y'all being here and providing these updates along the way. I know when I worked for a woman-owned business that wanted to do work with the city, some of these topics came up and I'm really glad to see everyone putting their heads together and identifying where solutions can be found. I think it will be really helpful for our community, especially the businesses that are small and historically underutilized and owned by women and people of color. So I really appreciate all the work that y'all are doing with this. >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, anything else? All right. Staff, thank you very much. And thank you again for yet another series of volunteer work. Thank you to the community stakeholders participating. Thank you. Colleagues, it is 11:43. I would suggest that we recess the city council

[11:43:53 AM]

meeting here and then go straight into executive session. We'll do executive session, take a break for lunch, we'll come back out and get the police cadet class briefing. I do want to adjourn the special called meeting that I did not do earlier, so here at 11:44 that special called meeting is adjourned.