

City Council Work Session Meeting Transcript

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Part 1: Special Called Meeting and Work Session.

[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

[9:45:54 AM]

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 porpoise 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 plopped. 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 prenatal 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.

[10:28:57 AM]

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

[10:35:03 AM]

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. So 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

[10:52:25 AM]

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 lbj -- 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

[10:54:28 AM]

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 --

[10:55:30 AM]

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 scada 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 out 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.

[11:16:09 AM]

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

[11:17:11 AM]

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?

[11:19:11 AM]

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,

[11:22:16 AM]

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 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

[11:32:38 AM]

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

[11:33:39 AM]

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

[11:36:45 AM]

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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

Part 2: Work Session.

We're going to leave here now, go back to our offices and sign in to the executive session. We'll take up one item, pursuant to section 551.071 of the government code we'll discuss legal issues related to lawsuits and claims during the protest that occurred on May 30th and 31st of 2020. Without objection, it is 11:44. Let's take five minutes to

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move -- actually, 10 minutes, give people a chance to go to the restroom. At five minutes to 12, five minutes to 12:00, we'll be back on executive session. I'll see you guys there.

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>> Mayor Adler: I'm going to dead and we will reconvene the Austin city council meeting. We're out of closed session. In closed session we discussed legal issues related to item e1. It continues to be February 15, 2022. The time is 1:58. The only thing left we have this afternoon is the briefing from Kroll, manager, I will turn it over to you. >> Good evening, mayor and council members. Today is the continuation of a conversation we were having with our third-party evaluator, Kroll and associated, with specifically the police department's academy. And here you will be getting essentially their final updates regarding their evaluation of the academy and we will be hearing from both the department on how they have implemented the recommendations that came from their findings and then the final steps that Kroll

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will be taking and issuing their report, which is forthcoming. We did post in backup on Friday the memo that came from ACM arrest ran know detailing these recommendations and the actions that have been taken by the department as well as a presentation you will be seeing today. But with that I'll turn it over to chief Chicon who will walk us through the presentation. Afternoon, chief. Chief Chacon. >> Thank you, city manager and good afternoon, mayor, mayor pro tem and council members. Joseph Chacon, chief of police. I am pleased to be standing in front of you giving this report, an update on the academy, the progress we've made and the work that we still have left to do. Members of the Kroll team are online. I

believe mark elers who has led the effort is online and will be available for questions, as well as some of my team, Dr. Ann kringen

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and Dr. Katherine Johnson if a question comes up that I may need them to weigh in on. This is a bit of a longer presentation because we will be going through and providing updates on the progress. I will do my best not to just read to you off of a powerpoint. I want to provide good context and certainly be ready to answer any questions that you might have. And just if I can get the next slide, please. As an introduction, this was the 144th pilot academy class. We are changing from one that is a military style to one more adult oriented and has received good reviews from the cadets that have graduated and are now officers.

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We will be -- I'm going to be moving through the presentation and I'll just tell you as I go through it, I apologize because the numbers that you will see are not necessarily in numerical order. They refer back to the recommendation number, but are actually captured in the presentation in the order in which we accomplished them. So that will help to provide a little bit of context about why sometimes you will see us jumping around in that numbered sequence. We have both starting off with short-term recommendations, moving from long-term and progress that we implemented mid stream during the academy and then opening up for questions at the very end. As I said, we'll be going through talking first about the short-term recommendations and then moving on the long-term preliminary recommendations that were made during the

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academy. Our progress in diversity and recruiting in cart and how we're doing on that front and moving forward and I'll be touching very quickly on the phase B report as it relates to recruiting and then plan evaluations and addressing any challenges that we'll have in the future. As you can see, very happy that of the 18 short-term recommendations that Kroll recommended, 17 have been depleted and we only have one that is left in progress and that will be completed before -- well, I'll be talking about that here in a second. But again all of the recommendations that were made by Kroll we agreed with and agreed to implement. Next slide. So I'm going to go very quickly through the completed and verified parts here. The first two there have to do with our staff.

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So it was hiring a new division manager, which is Dr. Ann kringen and then offering a training officer which is Mr. Phil Axelrod. They have been instrumental in moving all of these recommendations through and making sure that we are delivering in a manner that is consistent with that adult learning environment. The third one you see there, procuring and implementing an automated learning management system, we have entered into the contract for that learning management system. It is in the process of being implemented and we fully anticipate that that will be up and running before the start of the 145th cadet class. The fourth recommendation there is creating an internal curriculum review committee. I've reported on this before. The curriculum review committee has been meeting for months, in addition to the civilian team that we've been talking about, we

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established this committee which consists of local academic experts, community representatives, victim services staff and our academy staff. The committee met twice a month throughout the 144th cadet class and reviewed and commented on lesson plans and course materials for approximately 21 different courses. Their work will continue and I'm looking forward to hearing more about their progress in the upcoming classes that we have and through -- as through the rest of this year and as long as it needs it takes to complete all of the courses, both within the cadet class, in other words, our preservice trying, as well as in our in-service ongoing training for our current officers. Next slide, please. For recommendation 5, to establish and formalize a process for a community video review panel. We did establish that panel

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and we plan on moving the video review work into the curriculum review committee. So consolidating the efforts and essentially sunsetting the video review panel. I'll talk a little bit more about how moving forward we're going to be doing some work to make sure that any future videos that we install into the academy will have been examined through that dei component. Recommendation 6, we replaced the will to win, which had formerly been referred to as fight day, with a self-defense exercise, which occurred later in the academy. And the purpose for doing that was teaching the defensive tactics, teaching the methods so that it is not simply a -- making sure that people weren't going to give up, but that they actually had been trained and are implementing the ways that we want them to

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defend themselves and to defend others in the public. Again, with that deescalation component within the training. Recommendation 7, I can just tell you it was a recommendation to either modify or eliminate the sand bag exercises. Those have been eliminated from the academy and will not be in our academy moving forward. Recommendation number 8, we significantly expanded our physical fitness training in this academy. This was one of the academies where we had more hours than almost any academy in the past. Many of the participants were very, very resip tonight that and actually said it would be good if we had even more. So we are planning for still significant hours in the 145th. Next slide, please. So talking about the history of police and racing in

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American course, this was taught by Dr. Kevin foster who is an instructor at the university of Texas at Austin. He taught the course with very good reviews that were coming back from Kroll, from staff and from the participants, and he has agreed to continue to teach that for the 145th. Recommendation 13, so this is talking about our adjunct instructor base that we have within the department. And this really goes to increasing the diversity of our academy staff, so we are -- we have a number of adjunct instructors that supplement the regular full-time instructors that we have at the academy and we're looking to expand that base, diversify that base and have them play a future role in the academies and Kroll has agreed that we have accomplished that recommendation. The next one, incorporating

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the anti-racism and culture diversity training and workshops, this of course we accomplished by both our inclusion of the community connect program, which was at the outset of the academy. That will change a little bit and I'll talk about that a little bit later, for the 145th, as well as the groundwater analysis courses which are being delivered by the Joyce James consulting group, have been a part and will continue to be a part of our academy looking at structural and institutional racism, and that's not just within the academy. We are delivering that instruction within the current officer base as well. So reinstituting -- the next one, number 15, reinstituting a practice of follow-up with a cadet who leaves the academy for any reason. We conducted extensive exit reviews with our cadets as they were departing the academy. This was done by a number of

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different folks, including our academy staff, the Kroll team, and the Joyce James consulting group. So what we're actually looking to do is streamline our process in the future to make sure that we have kind of one review that all parties that are there can ask questions. We do find a lot of value in getting that feedback, but we have accomplished that recommendation as well. And then revising lesson plans that

are going to be -- that we are going to constantly be looking at, the lesson plan, the course content, and relating that back to cultural competency as suggested in the report, that is actually happening right now in preparation for the 145th and future classes. So we are working again in concert with all the stakeholders on this, including our crumb review committee, and -- the

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curriculum review committee, and this effort has been accomplished. Next slide, please. So requiring an ongoing independent review of the academy by the outside evaluator, that is what we've just essentially accomplished. And I know that Kroll has provided a very comprehensive report on the 144th to ensure that we have accomplished all the things that were necessary, and I believe they'll be available to answer any questions that you might have in that regard. The nix one, proactively reaching out to community leaders, activists, critics, we're willing to work productively with APD to provide different perspectives and kind of engage with the programming. So we did that on two different fronts. The first is through the groundwater analysis course in which we ask members to participate in the discussion around the idea

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of constitutional and systemic racism and to give cts from the ground floor a perspective on that so that they are hearing directly from community members. And the other part is in the curriculum review committee itself, which they have participated in reviewing those things. And again, these are academics, these are people in our community who have been very active and provided that voice. One of the things I'll also be talking a lot bit more about in this presentation is the co-facilitation of outside subject matter experts to come in and co-teach with academy staff so that we make sure that we're getting good perspective from outside of strictly that academy culture. Thoroughly reviewing all dei related courses, we have worked pretty extensively in

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the area of looking at all the courses through a dei lens and making sure that where it is applicable and really it's necessary to provide some changes, that included the videos we were showing, that included a very strong emphasis on deescalation in that we were making sure that that component was being put in there. And we will be kind of continuing that effort as we move forward. Kroll has agreed that we have completed that task. And then implementing -- finally the last one you see there, implementing additional community outreach and immersion strategies is another thing that both the division manager, the training supervisor and we will be bringing on an organizational and training manager

position that will also reside at the academy and additional staff members, civilian, that will be a subject matter expert

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in this area and is going to help us to not only do this in this environment in the academy, but again within the entire department and it will expand as that role grows. So these are the ones that have been completed. If I can get the next slide. In progress, this is the one short-term recommendation which is still in process and this is establishing a mentorship process for all the cadets. We currently have a mentorship program for our female cadet. We are working with the Joyce James group right now on creating the mentorship group for our African-American employees and importantly as we bring on that organizational and training manager position, that person will help in this effort in creating essentially one large overarching mentorship program for our department. That is going to kind of start here at the academy,

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but that we will grow throughout the department. Next slide. Okay. So talking about the longer term recommendations, there were a number of longer term recommendations made that Kroll -- you can see 10 of them we've completed and they have been verified. We still have five that are in progress and there is one that we have not started and is under consideration and I'll talk about that here in just a minute. So first, with regard to hiring a media literacy expert to help us with developing the teaching videos. We have a contract pending with Renee Hobbs from media education labs, which she is a nationally renowned media literacy expert and will be helping us to deliver on this particular

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recommendation. Importantly what we're going to be doing in the area of videos is also really developing our own videos. So as we get better, instead of trying to find the videos that we want to show our officers, we'll be shooting and reviewing and ultimately approving our own videos that have relevance here in our community. So if we want to highlight things that have happened in the past then we can shoot videos and make that come to life for our academy participants. The next one there, revising academy class schedules, by eliminating the 40 hour blocks of this really dry material that we have seen the cadets struggle with. So these are in the area of penal code, transportation code, arrest search and seizure, those have been broken up in the next academy class so that we're delivering them in smaller, more digestible blocks and hopefully we'll see a lot of improvement. One of the things that trips

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the cadets up is that they have to maintain a very high grade point average throughout the academy. They can only -- they have to maintain not just pass, but get above an 80 percentile average over the course of the academy and they can only fail so many exams. So by breaking this up we're hoping that we can actually see -- cut down on our attrition rate because of the academic failures. The next one there, further analyzing the relationship between pre-academy, academy and post-academy physical fitness standards. What we have seen is a -- there's that entrance standard when we have them trying to get into the academy. We test them right at the beginning of the academy. Of course, we have to test throughout and then there is a final pt test. And we do lose cadets even up to the very end because they cannot meet the standard. So we've gotten with Dr. Jonathan kringen who is

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helping us to look at the data around physical fitness testing and to develop a better way of doing that and we are in the process right now of transitioning our physical fitness standard testing so that it is I won't say easier, but much more achievable for each one of the cadets who might struggle otherwise. Next. All right. So this is part of integrating basically a program for all of our cadets to do the community connect part of it, which is they are spending a lot of time with our neighborhood liaison officers, our district representatives, with community members, we will be changing and shortening the amount of time during community connect and I'll be talking

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a little bit about the decision to go ahead and shorten that time a bit. There were other considerations that were asked for by Kroll, including the more physical fitness time as well as reinstituting our rideouts for cadets. So having our cadets actually ride with officers while they're in the academy so that they're getting a very, very good idea of what the job actually feels like, what it entails. Because they have seen in the academy what happens, and in the first week they Melissa this is not what they thought it was going to be. So we want them to have a good eyes wide open understanding and that's why we have changed that part a little bit. But the community connect part has really delivered on this particular recommendation and Kroll considers it accomplished. The cat, is our

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deescalation training and requiring that it is not just in the academy, but part of service and refresher trainings and the training that officers to do under tclor every year. So we have instituted that training ongoing in that part. We are continuing to look at all of our policy to make sure that we are instituting the things that we're training into policy and that those match. And then the videos are -- that are shown during the cat training are consistent with the way that we want the videos to appear in our academy. And then finally on this slide, building recovery time between the classes for our instructors. We have about a two-month break between now and when we would like to start the 145th. And that was pretty intentional to be able to give our folks some

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downtime. Very, very proud of the work that was done by academy staff to get us to this point. It was a very heavy lift. For each one of them permanently I know it took a toll because we had been doing things the same for so long and we're asking them to do things differently and in many cases to do them much better. So that required them to be very versatile and innovative during the academy to accomplish. We had a couple of missteps but they quickly rectified those and so now this is a little bit of a break for them. We are going to try to build in breaks, and the way to do that really is to make sure that our folks are still able to exercise their vacation time, even while classes are going on, and I was talking about increasing our base of adjunct instructors that can come in

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and kind of give them a little bit after break when they need it. So that is also built in here and again has been an accomplishment and one of the recommendations. Next slide, please. So with regard to collaborations with outside mental health, advocacy groups, we have a very strong connection with integral care. They have been participating in our cit training, but this is what we needed to do was really take it to the next level. In many respects the way we did this was through our inclusion victim service counselors at the academy. And building in courses on mental health on emotional intelligence, on resiliency, so that as cadets are going through not only the rigors of the academy, but this is going to translate after they graduate and they're

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dealing with the rigors of the job. And finding ways to keep themselves mentally healthy understand to the other things that we're doing within the department. With regard to the fto standard operating procedures, those essentially have been retooled and are done. We're in the process right now during the month of February of getting in front of every single fto on the department to show them where the changes have been made in the standard operating procedures. We recently had our fto coordinator retire

so we are bringing on a new fto coordinator to make sure that we keep the program running, and as an aside, we will be looking to really retool the fto program so that we are attracting the very best officers so that not only do I have the very best that want to be ftos, I have a waiting list. That is the either right now

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around our fto program to make sure that we have the officers that are training our brand new officers in the right way. All of our ftos have been through the groundwater analysis course as well. The next one, reviewing [indiscernible]. So this was really about just making sure that all of these focus group sessions were everything, all of the results are shared back with me and I can tell you that I have been -- I've been in many meetings with Kroll, I've been in multiple meetings obviously with academy staff and I don't need to tell you that this has been an area of focus for me as this academy has been ongoing and so again, I think that Kroll has recognized that we've accomplished this. The last one on this slide

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is developing, and we do have -- this was actually things that were already in place. So as we have members of our department that are in the military and are deployed, sometimes into combat situations, as they return there is a reintegration process, they spend time at the academy and most importantly they're spending time with staff psychologists and our victim services personnel to make sure that they are being debriefed, that they are mentally healthy and that they are given the resources to make sure that the things that they might have experience that they're able to work through those and I know that council is very aware of all the tools that are now available, including mdmr, that are available for our folks not just for trauma they might see in combat overseas, but for what they may see here in the cities. >> So the one that I

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mentioned we have not started but is under consideration. And I briefly mentioned this is really incentivizing the fto program. Right now the fto program, the incentive to be an fto, is a stipend, it's a contractual issue. We are in contract negotiations have begun for the police department and I think it is important that this is one of the areas that we look at and that we have a discussion about. So that will be under consideration. With regards to those that are in progress, the long-term diversity of our staff, and I'm talking about the staff members that are assigned there on a full-time basis, were very intentional about it. It's the only unit in the department that -- I won't say that. I think there's one or two other units also, where I have kind of the final say about who goes to work out there, to make sure that not only are we getting the best

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and brightest, but that we are being intentional about, you know, really diverse phiing the staff with race and gender as well. So I've talked about it that the academy is a very diverse unit. The recruiting division is actually our most diverse unit in the department. So from day one I talk about procedural justice and I think y'all saw that in the report that Kroll just issued. Talking about the tenets of procedural justice and we continue to look at the tenets of procedural justice and how those integrate into academy courses. Where we see that the most is in the role plays. And making sure that we are guiding our new cadets, new officers in the right way to talk to folks and make sure they're answering questions

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that they're deescalating, slowing things down when it's appropriate, and making sure that we are being, like I said, very intentional about doing that. We are looking at how, you know, not trying to reinvent the wheel or operate in a vacuum. We do lack at other courses -- we do look at other courses such as one that the Chicago police department has put together to see how we can use elements of those kind of courses in our own course work. Next slide. We are in the process -- this is one of the ones that is -- will likely not be completed by the start the 145th. It is installing one of two programs. The ethical policing is courageous program known as epic or project able. Both of them essentially are about intervention and making sure that as -- if we have officers that see something that is wrong that

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they are taking active steps. Of course, we have policy that addresses that, but we need to back that up with training. So this is this is the training that is recognized here in Texas and across the country, and we'll take a little bit of resource and effort to get it installed, and we expect that that will be done prior - or by the end of fy22. Continuing to research ways on cognitive decision-making, emotional intelligence, those are the kinds of things that I've been talking about with regard to not just procedural justice, but, you know, bringing in outside experts to co-lead that are experts in these type of areas, and again, I think Kroll has agreed that we're making steps in the right direction. We're still looking at ways we can incorporate our current

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instructors into the current field officer training program. So that one is obviously still in progress. And we're -- it's very difficult when I have them teaching courses to be able to also be in the field training or out on the streets. So we're trying to figure out how we can incorporate this particular recommendation and have not landed on a final answer on it. Next slide, please. So we had -- again, this was part of the preliminary report, so this was the one that was issued about midway during the academy. It had eight recommendations, six of them we have completed, and they've verified. And two, again, are under consideration. Next slide. So the process, obviously, to receive that community feedback

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has precluded to a large extent in the 144th class the use of videos. That was problematic. And we heard that, not just from staff, we heard it from the cadets, that said that they would have liked to have seen videos as we've done report-outs with the cadets. They said that they think that it hurt their learning a little bit not to have videos that explain that. And so we're finding -- again, I've talked about how we're going to be using a media literacy expert. Moving the video review into curriculum review to make sure that we're doing it. But reinstituting videos into the academy to make sure that we use them. Performance accountability measures, formally referred to as behavioral modification. Measures have been significantly changed moving forward into the 145th. So that was -- you know, we changed it kind of mid-course during the 144th, and will be wholly changing it in the 145th,

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so that there's still a -- an environment of accountability for themselves personally, and for them as a team. But that it does not disrupt the instruction, and that was the big kind of takeaway and the big criticism was we would stop things right where we were. They would go out for a performance accountability session and then come back, and now we're having to rush through the material. So, we're building those into the pt sessions, when they're properly warmed up, we'll see fewer injuries, and we're not taking away from any kind of the instruction time. The next one actually talks about moving community connect, and what the feedback that Kroll got and the academy got was that it would have been good to have some kind of ground rules that were set at the outset, so that

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as they step back into if academy setting, that they kind of understand what the expectations were. So a little bit more challenging for our instructors at the outset of this academy, because for two weeks, it had felt like, you know, very interactive, we're out working with the community, and they came in a little bit more relaxed. And so setting a tone right from the beginning of kind of the discipline that is necessary in the academy setting, and then introducing the community connect in individual smaller

sessions throughout. So they're going to be not doing two full weeks all at once, rather it's going to be shortened to one week. But including the ground water analysis course as well. And so what happened during the original community connect, we had to get that ground water

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analysis part in there. And so, we had some cadets that missed parts because they would lose two whole days to ground water. And so we had to have smaller classes of ground water, and so we had three sessions during those first two weeks, which meant that each one of them missed like 33%. So in order to kind of rectify that, we have all the ground water will be conducted at the same time, in small sessions, but that we will also make sure that they don't miss any part of that community connect. Next slide. Talked about the cadet ride-outs. I think the cadets said this would be helpful and Kroll certainly said they think that it would be helpful. So we have instituted 40 hours of cadet ride-out into the 145th, and we'll be doing that moving forward. The roles and responsibilities of the authority of the manager,

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have is Dr. Kringen, have been established into policy for the procedure for the academy that's reflected in Kroll's report, and they felt that the language is very appropriate and that her role has been clearly defined. So again, an accomplishment on that recommendation. The coordination between cadet training and the learned skills unit, when creating course schedule. I talked about it just very briefly. Right now, that coordination is occurring. We have, during each segment of the academy, those segments, all of the instructors that are responsible for their segments are sitting down with the academy commander, and with Dr. Kringen to work through it to make sure that we have good coordination, and we're not teaching advanced first aid before we teach basic first aid or something like that. We're just making sure that everything is lined up, and that it's sequenced properly and it's logical. So, that is occurring right now.

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The ones that are under consideration, supplementing the skilled staffing. I've talked about staffing. Staffing is an issue for us. Many of our learned skills type of instruction such as firearms proficiency is taught sometimes by adjunct instructors. So we are going to continue to supplement our learned skills staff with adjunct instructors, but at this point, I don't have the additional staff to put on a full-time basis. So that one we're going to leave under the under consideration banner. And then with regard to the facilities, this has been an issue for a little while now. We sit out at the public safety training campus in southeast Austin, share space with fire and ems, who are very good partners with us out there, and

always very receptive to coordinating schedules, especially for the big classrooms. But we still share those smaller facilities for showering,

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bathrooms, and all those kind of things. And so that can be a problem when we're trying to run 100 cadets out for a bathroom break and it just slows everything down. What we're doing in the meantime is looking at portable buildings, which we've already secured one portable building from fire that they were no longer using and we're looking at a second one. So primarily using those for learned skills so that we can kind of take that part out of the main building and spread it across the campus a little bit. It will help alleviate pressure, not just for us, but for fire and ems as well. Longer term, obviously a portable is not desirable, and I am talking with the manager about longer term recommendations that we can make about making the space more usable out there. But that will be an issue we are working towards a resolution. Next slide. Talking about recruiting. I'm going to hit on some percentages, but the follow-up

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slide will give you some actual numbers. The 144th academy class was the most diverse class we have ever had in our history, and I'm pleased to announce that the 145th is on track to be even more diverse. So our black representation currently in the applicant pool that we still have is almost 25% greater. The hispanic representation almost 10% greater. Asian and pacific islander representation is about 50% greater. Next slide. Our representation of black and hispanic applicants in the 145th applicant pool currently exceeds the 2020 census data for the city, and while the representation for Asian and pacific islander does not, it has -- it did so the greatest growth of all those categories from the 144 to the 145th.

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Next slide, please. So I was talking about the numbers. This gives you the numbers and you can see the applicants that we had for the 14th compared to the applicants for the 145th, on a percentage basis that are minority applicants have actually increased. You do see a smaller applicant pool, okay? What we saw is that we had shut down our academy for a number of months. When we reopened it, we saw a surge of applications that came in. We've continued to accept applications, and as we start talking about our transitional officer program and that academy class, we will see some of those applicants for the bigger classes will continue to shrink a little bit. But with almost a thousand applicants for the 145th, I think that we would be able to field a class, hopefully between 60 and 80 cadets.

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Next slide. With regard to gender representation, it's slightly less gender diverse than the 144th, but the difference is pretty marginal. But one thing that I do want to mention in this space right here is that I recently signed the Austin police department on to the 30x30 initiative. So if you have an opportunity to look that up, it is an nyu-led effort to have all police departments, or the ones at least that sign up, be 30% female by the year 2030. So we have signed on to that with a very strong push. I have many of my folks that I have in the recruiting unit are female, and we will continue to recruit very heavily the females into the profession. Next slide. So this represents the numbers for each one of the classes and you can see that -- again, I talked about the marginal

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difference. It is slightly more, but it's pretty marginal and not a statistical difference. All right. So, moving forward. Next slide. So talking about the phase B report, which was released last month, and just talking about the goals that we're trying to hit in the area of recruiting. We do want to -- and completely agree upon increasing recruitment and hiring for individuals who represent a diversity of the city of Austin. This has long been our standard. We will continue with that particularly for hispanics and females, and then achieve a higher than proportionate representation of our population for blacks in APD. We've also agreed upon strategies for doing focused recruiting of women, including

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concentrating on women's groups, religious organizations. We will continue to develop community partnerships. We have, again, improved the manner in which we communicate with our recruits so that we keep them in the process longer and we don't lose them along the way, because many times we've seen recruits that are kind of shotgunning their applications out to many different agencies hoping to gain mroiments. We want to be the one that they land onemployment. We want to be the one that they land on and we feel that communication is the way to get that done. And we're still working on a way -- it's just a bandwidth issue -- on how we can assist applicants if they're having problems submitting their documents. Sometimes there's a lot of questions that our applicants have. We try to be very responsive to that. I just showed you a slide when we had 2,000 applicants and all those questions are kind of flooding, in sometimes there can be a delay, so we're trying to improve that process.

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Been talking a little bit about this, the evaluations that are ongoing for our disqualification factors. I know that has been some questions that have come from council before. The racial disparities that we see in the entry level cognitive testing, swelled -- and I touched on this a moment ago, our physical fitness requirements and how we can make those more equitable and have better outcomes and hopefully more people that can achieve not just the entrance standard, but also the exit standard as well. We fully recognize the issues that we have with data collection. This is not just obviously in this arena, but in many different arenas, because of the different systems that the police department employs, whether it's a cad database versus our records management database. You know, city databases. And they all contain different

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information that is not easily exchangeable, and sometimes will produce different outcomes when we ask the same questions to each one. That's not good. So right now, Dr. Jonathan kringen is working on solutions to be able to kind of streamline and make sure that all of our data is consistent, that we're putting it in the right places. That is going to help with linking program data to applicant and academy performance data, collecting information on why applicants separate during the hiring process and how we can do better at distributing information, recruiting, and doing those kind of things. So this is still a challenge, and it is one that we're working through right now. Next slide.

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So one of the things that we're still working on, and really bringing the kind of subject matter experts to bear in this, is how can we do a better job of making that job preview very realistic for folks. I mentioned, we have people that go all the way through the academy, and then they graduate and they're out for a few weeks and they realize, there is not what I thought it was. How can I overcome that? And again, this is a challenge that we have not really overcome yet, but that we are actively looking at to see how can we just really provide that good insight for applicants so that they kind of know what they're getting into. The other one is the explore program. I've had to trim back the explore program and go ahead and put it on hiatus, pending our staffing issues, because I had officers assigned to explorers full-time, which I've had to move back to patrol at this time. So we will be looking to reinstate that as soon as I can move through our staffing issues

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and the other thing is the internship program, which we are actively working on. All of our interns, whether we're going through -- all of those are working through some type of learning institutions, some of them higher learning institutions, sometimes we're looking at the high school kids, but trying to instill

this desire through understanding of the police profession so that they -- you know, as they move through their academic career, they're keeping that in the back of their mind and hopefully we're doing that. So that is the internship program is something that we're working on as well. Next slide. This is kind of the ending slide. Images from the graduation. It was a day of joy for these folks and certainly a day of joy for me to be able to administer the oath that day. Pending any questions from the council, I am ready to move forward with the 145th. Thank you very much.

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>> Thank you, chief, and I know we do, as you noted, have some additional folks online before I open it up to questions, I don't know if Dr. Kringen, if you had any comments you wanted to make. Dr. Kringen? >> I'll keep mine pretty brief. You know, the instructors have worked insanely hard to be able to do this. We've also been able to work with our committee, which I really admire the way in which some of them have worked on the previously -- the previous video review and are now doing curriculum committee, and they've really stuck with us throughout the entire process. And so I'm really looking forward to seeing what are the things that we can accomplish together. I just want to demonstrate how great our instructors have been

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working with this 145th and working with Kroll to make sure that we can live up to the expectation Dallas the city residents deserve. >> Appreciate that. Mr. Ehlers. >> Yes, thank you. Just to clarify something I know chief Chacon and a few others of executive staff have seen the final report, or at least the draft version of our final report. We had a final feedback session this morning with the chief. That report will be finalized no later than tomorrow, which will then be distributed to council. So just in case you were wondering, you know, why you hadn't seen the report yet, it just hasn't been finalized. But it will be coming tomorrow. We concur with what the chief said, with respect to where the

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academy is and the progress they made on the short-term and long-term recommendations. Those were recommendations we had submitted back in April of 2021 when we did our initial assessment report. We then added, as the chief mentioned, some additional preliminary recommendations in our interim report in October. As the chief indicated, the vast majority of the recommendations have been completed. We've independently verified a portion of those -- the implementation of those recommendations in the course of our role as independent evaluator. I think our report will have some nuance. There's still things that we believe the academy and APD needs to continue to work on, and

there's still much room for improvement. But they put together a -- you know, a really overall an excellent training program that lasted eight months and included

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a lot of enhanced community engagement, community participation, and expanded diversity, equity, and inclusion content and made a number of other changes addressing academy culture and so forth. They did it all under very difficult circumstances, time pressures, covid, and through it all, you know, ultimately, I think we have to commend them for doing an excellent job and graduating what appeared to be very impressive group of young men and women, 66 in all, that are now sworn officers. So we -- Dan Linsky is on as well, so we're happy to answer any questions that council has that you may have for us, and also once we've submitted the final report tomorrow, we're happy to come back at a future date as well to make a more formal presentation. >> Thank you, Mr. Ehlers, and thank you, Dr. Kringen. Chief, thank you. Your leadership and commitment

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to this effort to ensure that we have an academy that is in line with the values of this council and our community has been critical, and so the dedication, the support and resources that you've provided to moving forward with these recommendations is incredibly commending. So thank you. >> Thank you. >> With that, back to you, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Just a quick question before I turn it over to colleagues on the council. Chief, when this process started, you stood up and embraced the move to making reforms in how we do the police academy, and I think that was invaluable for the community. I like a process where at the beginning, we identify what it is we're going to do, explain why it is we need to do those things, and then we set about to do them, we monitor the work, and then we can report at the end on how we've achieved, and

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there's a lot of work that's been done. Looking back, do you think this was a good thing for the community to go through, for the department to go through, and if so, why? >> Oh, absolutely it was a good thing to go through. Do I like the pressures that mark talked about and how we got it done? You know, it could have -- it would have been nice to have had a little bit less of that pressure, but I certainly understand why the pressure existed and why we needed to do it the way that we did, and we did accomplish it. I think it's incredibly important because that was what we heard, that was what was voiced by our community, was that they wanted us to really change this mindset from one of a warrior to one of a guardian, and this is how we're accomplishing it. So, because I think that we have been successful, I think that you're going to see just an officer who is coming with a

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heart to, you know, even greater T serve our community and we've set them up for success. >> Mayor Adler: All right. Thank you. Colleagues, questions. Council member -- let's start with mayor pro tem. >> Alter: Thank you. And I may ask a few questions and then let other folks ask, too. But I want to start by acknowledging, chief, that you have leaned in to this process. I think it's been really important for you to own it, and I must confess I was a little concerned why we weren't hearing from Kroll on their report. Obviously, the report is not here, but I think there's value in you owning this and having to understand it fully and thoroughly to be able to present it to us and to be able to answer the questions, because I think it demonstrates your commitment to this work. You noted that it was sort of a herculean task that we put forward, and that your academy

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staff rose to that occasion, and I want to acknowledge all the work that has gone into it. But I also want us to recognize that we're not done. This process of rethinking our academy is one that we need to be continually engaged in, and there's still very much work to be done. We have done a lot and your staff and your cadets and your officers have made some significant changes, but I believe there's still important work to be done. So I do have some questions and I want us to -- you know, as we move forward, city manager, I think we need to understand that, you know, we're iterating and that's one of the things I appreciate about the chief, is his willingness to try something. If it doesn't work, we'll try something else. We don't have this perfect yet. I don't know if we ever will have it perfect, and there's whole areas of the curriculum that we need to acknowledge that have not been changed, were not changed for the 144th, have not -- some that haven't even been

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looked at, and important once like the Deas rahlation training wasn't fully changed, other pieces where they were. So even if we move forward, this is not done yet. This is a process of really, really big change that I think is going to be important. So I just want to be clear. I want to acknowledge the progress, and I have some questions for wherever we're going. So my first question is actually for Kroll. For either of the gentlemen who's with us. I understand that the unit review committee has shared their views on some of the progress, which we didn't hear today, and we don't have the benefit of your report. Can you share what you're hearing from the community review panel about their assessment of where we've been and where we still need to go?

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>> I'll take that, mark, if you want, and you can follow up if I don't hit it. The community review panel agrees the work has been done, but just as you say, much more is to be done, right? Especially, we focus a lot on cadets and we haven't gone through and done everything with the cadets, still working on the progress with that. But the bigger picture is the committee is concerned about ongoing training. What's the STO training like. What's the sergeant training like. What's the leadership training like. And how do we take a program like the tap program, which was designed to change law enforcement that traditionally didn't use de-escalation. It's legal, and here's the law, here's the training on how you put handcuffs on, here's the training on how you use a stick or spray. Law enforcement that was already

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doing those things trained officers to try and think of alternative solutions before they use use of force. How do we make it the foundation of all use of force and the trois actual tools are entrees that we teach, but hopefully used as a last resort. And there were some tensions with those. I think trying to figure out how to best work that together. The committee also expressed some concerns on the staff at the academy. The folks who were working with them to get some information are also challenged to do a lot of other things, and wear several different hats. And a need to maybe have additional staff resources to help make sure that they're not getting their Kerr loan a week or two weeks before classes are going on. Hopefully, you know, with a

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break between classes, they can move forward. There was some concern there that there has to be additional resources to continue the good work and that the work focused on more than just the cadets and the recruit classes. That's my takeaway, mayor pro tem. Mark, did I miss anything or anything you want to add? >> I would just say again, looking at the review committee, I think that there was a feeling that perhaps this committee did not accomplish as much as it would have liked. There are process issues and other things at the beginning of the process that really prevented them from reviewing and commenting on a large number of videos, partly due to decisions that were made earlier last year by prior APD leadership. Academy instructors were essentially forced to teach many forces in the 145th cadet class

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without instructional videos. And that negatively impacted some of the training. Cadets were very vocal about that as well. That being said, however, we did observe a lot of positive dialogue between committee members and academy staff. As they individually would look at videos at various sessions and so forth. The problem with the video review committee was that the review process really didn't enable them to fully understand the context and purpose of the training videos they viewed. Or precisely how the videos would be presented in class. They didn't really have the full context. And so about halfway through, maybe a little bit further, the process kind of shifted to focus a little less on video content and a little more on the process or what are the factors, what are the criteria that the community wants APD to consider when using training videos for

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instructional purposes. And I think there's a lot of positive work on that done, and at the end of the day, and I believe their last meeting is next week, but the process -- work was being made to develop a process, develop criteria, to develop worksheets that will guide instructors internally and supervisors on what training videos to approve for future instruction. And then moving that function into the curriculum review committee will allow the curriculum review committee to essentially be the community and outside eyes and ears and input into training videos. But they'll be able to do it in -- when they're looking at the entire curriculum of a class that they're reviewing. So they're going to be reviewing lesson plans, materials that are going to be presented to cadets, have an opportunity to talk to the instructors that will teach

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that class, and then they will be able to see whichever videos are part of that curriculum. So they'll see how those videos are going to be used in the context of a class. So I think that's going to be a much improved process going forward. That would be the overall view of that process and that committee. >> Alter: Thank you. It's my understanding the review committee commented on something like 21 courses. How many courses are there? >> The curriculum review committee I think did a full review of about 21 courses. Off the top of my head, I'm not sure what the total number is. Maybe Dr. Kringen or chief Chacon knows. I would say it's got to be at least double that, if not more. >> Alter: And the review committees -- were the changes made before the 144th was

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taught, or after the courses were taught? And will the community recommended changes be made before the courses are taught to the 145th? >> My understanding -- and maybe Dr. Kringen can add to this. It was my understanding that with respect to the curriculum review committee, they tried to

review a number of courses before they were taught, particularly early on in the committee. Probably had to kind of rush the process a little bit, I think, earlier on. But the objective was to review those courses, provide input and feedback to academy staff and instructors and hopefully get that feedback into the curriculum, so that by the time the course was taught, that input would be addressed. I'd have to defer to Dr. Kringen on exactly to what extent those changes were implemented. It was our understanding, however, that as many as

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possible and were deemed appropriate by staff were implemented and that the process going forward would be to continue to take into account all of the input and recommendations of the curriculum review committee and further refining and revising curriculum going forward. I think the plan in place for 2022 is to take it a little bit slower so that there could be a little bit of a deeper dive by the committee looking at maybe fewer courses per month. But in more depth. And further in advance of when they're going to be taught, so that the recommendations will then be more fully considered than they probably could be when things are rushed. >> To add to what Mark was saying, he's correct that we made as many changes as possible before the classes were taught. At the last curriculum committee meeting last Wednesday, we had a discussion about having more accurate accounting for what the

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recommendations are. So we said we would go back through all of the curriculum. We have the curriculum that we did teach off of. It's posted to the drive so the committee can see it and they can see, you know, these are the changes, and then this is the different curriculum. But we understand that they want sort of more of a here is what the response is, here is what we've actually done, here's where you can link to the changes, which hasn't happened yet. So we said we would start working on that as soon as possible so that they can look at what the recommendation is. We also agree that in the curriculum committee meetings, the recommendations aren't as clear. So at the end of every single meeting, we'll recap what are the recommendations that they're asking for. A lot of times we've had the meetings where we've had a lot of fruitful discussion. We've landed on understanding what some of the recommendations are, but we want to make sure that we have a comprehensive list, so we can be able to answer out accordingly. >> Alter: Thank you. And for the de-escalation

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segment, is that only newly for the 145th; is that correct? Revised? >> I'm sorry, council member, do you mind repeating your question? >> Alter: I'm trying to understand the extent to which the de-escalation units were revised for the 144th versus the 145th, and I believe that the community review portion of it

happened after the 144th was taught that. But I'm assuming that that will be incorporated into the 145th. >> Yes, that is correct, that they had the information on the -- for the 144th, they received before the class was taught, but not in time for us to actually make any sort of revisions. So they will be looking over verbal communications and ikat, the de-escalation course, and those changes will be made prior to the 145th.

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>> Alter: Okay, thank you. The reason I'm bringing these up is because I think it's important for people who have not been in the weeds with what's been going on with the academy, a, to understand the magnitude of the changes that we're asking to have done, but B to understand there were a lot of process things that needed to happen. Not everything happened for the 144th class. And this is still very much a work in progress and that we as council still need to be mindful of what's going on. We need to have our oversight and accountability to make sure that this process continues. I believe that the pieces are there, in terms of the leadership and the commitment. I'm not sure about whether the resources are there yet, and that's a conversation we'll have to continue to have. But this is an ongoing process and I just think it's really important that we have that. I have several other questions, but I'm going to cede it over to other folks for now. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good.

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Council member Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you. Before I get started with my questions, I want to thank you, chief, for your leadership as we move forward with these recommendations and changes that will improve the cadets' overall experience, as well as their training for when they go out into the community to serve us. It is important to acknowledge that we didn't get to where we are overnight and that this is a continuing process. This is a culmination of many different individuals working together to make the Austin police department a bright and shining example of the standard of how policing should be done. You mentioned earlier in your presentation that this was the longest academy in terms of hours. How does that affect your department and what you will need to budget for in future budgets for the academies? >> I thought everything except in terms of what? >> What you'll need to budget. >> You said it was the most in terms of hours? >> Hours. >> Okay. We're still looking at a 32-week -- Dr. Kringen, if I'm incorrect, please correct me. We're looking at a 32-week

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academy for the full academy, and I'm getting the thumbs up from her. So we have had to, because of the things that we've been asked to increase, we've got to find time, what are we going to decrease. So there have been some tradeoffs in there. We did absolutely concur with the recommendations that

were made by Kroll. We saw improvements in areas where there was physical training, the community connect, instituting the additional courses around racism and bias, implicit bias. We don't want to increase the length of the academy at this point. Because that's just longer to graduate cadets right now. We certainly are going to meet the standards that have been set through the Kroll recommendations and can look in the future if we want to actually increase hours. I hope I'm answering your

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questions. >> That sounds fine. I've heard them refer to it's as though they're building a plane mid-flight. I'm concerned the instructors might feel overwhelmed. Do you see any unmet needs that may assist with this feeling of uncertainty for the instructors? >> Yeah. I'm going to tell you, council member, it's been incredibly tough for our feelings of uncertainty, anxiety from our staff members, just making sure that they're meeting the expectations. And even as we were going through the process and meeting with Kroll, you know, weekly, daily sometimes, to talk about how individual classes went, and the feedback, they've been incredibly receptive to that feedback and want to improve. You can see the desire there to really make this a world class academy. But I think when I talked about the resilience piece, for them it's this break that we're giving them right now. They're still working. They're still developing their lesson plans, but it certainly

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feels like they've got a little bit of down time right now. They're not actually teaching any classes. We're making the adjustments and the preparations for the 145th, because to mayor pro tem's comments, this is an iterative process. We are not done. And I can tell you when you receive the report -- and I'm sorry I referred to it as a report. I meant to refer to the memo that y'all received. So my apologies for the confusion. When you actually see the report, you're going to see that we did not get it perfect. There were bumps along the way. I think what's important is that when we experience those setbacks, how we responded to the setback to make sure that we addressed it appropriately, immediately, to make sure that we did not have a repeat. So I would say that the biggest thing right now, because I know what I need and some of the ones that are still pending are going to be around staffing.

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So making sure that we really get this rolling, I think is going to be the biggest thing that's going to help. >> I appreciate you explaining that. I've been told that right after our most recent graduation that just happened, several officers left APD to go work for other departments. Can you help us understand how much of an investment of time, money, and resources it is to train a cadet and any way you think we

may be able to prevent this from happening in the future? >> Yeah. So, we're not immune. Other departments have experienced the same issues. We're a world class academy, and to be able to get in the door, you're paid for it, and then right now, there is no retention mechanism that somebody could actually resign, and then go work for another department, having gained all the training that we provided for them. It's in the thousands and thousands, tens of thousands of dollars, everything from the time that resource invested to the amount of money that we pay them while they're in the

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academy is in the tens of thousands of dollars, and I think it's actually over \$100,000 to train one cadet. So what I would like to do is put a retention clause in there that would actually have them, should they decide to separate for anything other than an injury, they're not going to go work for another department, that there would be a repayment potentially of the time and money invested into each one of those folks. That might be an idea. >> Kelly: I'm glad that you brought that up because that was sort of where my mind was headed as far as a possible solution, but I didn't know how you felt about it. My last question is super easy maybe. Is there anything that was missing from the presentation that you'd like to elaborate on or daylight for us that we haven't brought up yet? >> Well, I think that I was not strong enough in saying that, you know, I'm very proud of the folks and the work that we've accomplished, but we're not

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done. And this is going to continue. To the mayor pro tem's point, I think that we cannot say that we've arrived. We definitely didn't get this perfect. There's still a number of different areas that we need to improve upon. We're going to be working towards those improvements. I'll be working collaboratively with the manager and with all of you, the stakeholders in our community, to make sure that we get this right. I want to be as transparent as I can, have really good reporting, and just -- you know, we're going to keep on moving forward. >> Kelly: I'm finished. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Council member tovo. >> Tovo: Thank you. I wanted to ask about what your general sense of some of the reasons people were leaving, or did leave. I imagine we're getting more detailed information, but I think I want to stop -- I want to start with council member Kelly ended. Is it accurate that there are cadets who finish the academy and then took jobs elsewhere? >> So I'm going to look back to

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my staff to see if they can provide information on that, because I don't have information on that, council member. Dr. Kringen or chief Johnson, can you advise? >> I don't have exact numbers. This is Katherine Johnson, assistant chief over recruit ING in the academy, but I'll be happy to follow up with you. >>

Tovo: Is it accurate that there are examples from our recent graduates who are not now -- >> I'm not aware of that yet, ma'am. >> Tovo: Thank you. If you could follow up. >> I'm not either, council member. So when council member Kelly said that, that's taken me a little bit aback. I'm not going to say that it's not correct. But we need to investigate and I would want to find out myself the reasons behind that. >> Tovo: Absolutely. And I'm really concerned if we don't have some kind of -- what did you call it? >> A retention clause? >> Tovo: A retention clause. I mean, that's so standard in so

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many fields. So thank you for bringing that up. Is that something that would require -- would be required to happen through our contract negotiations that are happening right now, or is that something that we can change -- that you can change without any further action? >> I don't think it would require any contract negotiation, because they are not contract mos until they graduate. So I think that it would be a discussion with hr and city legal to determine how we make that happen. >> Tovo: I would say if you need any action from the council, I would support having that happen just as soon as possible. But that seems to me, before our next cadet academy, something I would certainly like to see in place, especially given, as you raised, council member Kelly, thank you for raising that issue, there is substantial investment and expectation for those who are completing that academy. So, thanks. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Tovo: And there's a lot here to go through, and I will likely have other questions, but I did want to talk for a minute about the explorers program.

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I'm very supportive of youth programs. That one I don't -- I'm obviously familiar with it, but I wonder when -- I'd like you to speak a little bit about whether you are investigating other kinds of these programs, do we have any evidence or has there been any data or analysis of that particular program and what kind of outcomes there are in terms of -- I assume it was started in part as a recruitment, as a diversity recruitment program way back when. And so, you know there are other ways of achieving that, too. I know the fire department for a while had a high school academy, which was I thought a really neat program because it happened in one of our high schools, and students that participated were getting high school credit as well as participating and getting experience, and I'm really interested in seeing that kind of a program at least be explored. I think there was value from what I experienced in interacting with the explorers through the years, but it doesn't mean that's exactly the right youth program for

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achieving our aim. Sorry, that's a lot of commentary. But I guess what I'm interested in knowing is when that program was last evaluated, what the intentions and purpose were when it was created, have those

changed over time, and what other kinds of initiatives have you explored that might fill that mission as well or better. >> Sure. I'll tell you, council member, I share your sentiments. It was a valuable program. That's why we were doing it. It really connected young people to the profession and taught them what policing was all about. It was that real job application that we're talking about, so that they kind of get a flavor for what police work really is all about. Unfortunately, because of the staffing issues, we've had to move those folks back to patrol. What has been -- I had to -- we

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had people getting ready to start our explorer program, which we referred out to other agencies, whether it's the sheriff's department. I know they're doing it in Williamson county and some other departments that still have an active explorer program so that they can still have the experience. But of course, we want them here. We want them really getting an idea of what the Austin police department is all about. We still have the pal program. We've had to trim that down as well. And we run that on an adjunct basis, we bring back our pal officers that have the pal training for special events, when we have a pal activity. Whether it's boxing or field games or whatever, it provides that really good interaction between our youth in the community and the police department, and that continues. So that is one of the areas where we continue to have that. The other area where I'm hoping to kind of help to fill the void

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a little bit is with regards to the internship program that we're talking about and getting folks that -- yeah, they're not quite as young, and I really do like getting to them when they're younger like that to get their interest going. But still having an opportunity to get them interested in the profession. >> Tovo: Thank you, chief. I appreciate that. I think what I'm asking really is, you know, there's been tremendous changes in how we, writ large, the community delivers youth programs. And what we've learned about youth programs over the time. I'm not sure how many changes have happened in the explorers program through the years that reflect kind of our understanding of what are the most effective sorts of youth programs. So I think what I'm really asking -- maybe it's a conversation outside of this one here today, I understand that it's not going on right now and that you have a goal of reinstating it. I guess before you reinstate it, I really want to understand is that the best use of resources for the youth program, or would

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we be better off looking to the school districts within our community and seeing if there's a partnership that might be as effective or more effective. But I think it really takes -- I would encourage a step back and say why were we doing this program, was it about recruiting future officers? Was it about building

relationships with community? Those are different models that we would want to conform I think pal is about building relationships. So when we were trying to determine whether or not to continue the fire academy, which I wish we had done, but it was primarily recruitment tool, as I understood it, including -- I mean, it obviously had other benefits to the participants, to the youth participants, but it wasn't netting a lot of new recruits into the fire department in part because of some of the obstacles, contractual obstacles in prioritizing those graduates. So I think there's a lot of opportunity here. I'd like to see a really good strong youth program.

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I just don't know whether it looks like explorers program or looks like something else and I would want to be deliberative about that and have some analysis and some conversation around that. >> Yes, and I had some officers that did this program, very passionate about it, and can provide kind of, you know, the evolution of the program, because it did change over the years. And what its goal is, what its mission is. >> Tovo: Thank you, I appreciate that. I've had an opportunity to meet lots of them through the years, including at the blue Santa delivery and they seem enthusiastic and can talk compellingly about why they're regarded as valuable. I don't mean to suggest it's not. I just want to better understand that. >> Absolutely. >> Tovo: Did you have any first -- kind of first round impressions of why -- what were the primary reasons that cadets left the academy this year? It did go from, you know, down to 66, which I was a little

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surprised to see. Or would you prefer to wait for the analysis? >> Well -- no, I mean, you're talking about the 34 that separated during the academy? So, it kind of ran the normal spectrum of reasons why we have people that leave. Everything from academic failures to not being able to pass the physical requirements, to sometimes personal reasons to -- you know, we even lost one very late in the academy during role play, when we realized that they were not up to the task of actually employing all the skills. They had passed the exams and they had the knowledge base, but the application is different. So that's why we spend a significant part of the academy doing different types of role play, whether it's traffic role play, criminal law role play, having them employ those skills. We realized even as we worked with in individual that the individual was not rising to the task of being able to do the

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work. So we had to separate that person. So there's a variety of reasons, and I don't know if any of my staff want to add, Dr. Kringsen or anyone else, want to add about -- and I can certainly break it down. We have all that information is broken down. >> Tovo: Yeah, I remember maybe seeing some in a previous

conversation. I would be interested in how it compared to previous academies. It seemed a little higher than some previous academies, but I may be remembering the data wrong. >> Yeah, not the highest we've ever had, but certainly on the higher end of the scale. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Council member Ellis, and then council member kitchen. >> Ellis: Thank you. I also would be in support of some sort of retention clause. I don't know if that elevates to council needing to weigh in on that. That may be something that can happen administratively. But if we're counting votes on this idea, I think after all the work that goes into training and recruiting and getting people through the classes, it would be nice to know that there is a commitment to serve this city.

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As far as the -- I think you're calling it a transfer class. So I don't know if you're going to call that the 145th, or if it would have a different name. But how do you see these in progress items that you're working on hindering or helping that transfer class. Which for those who haven't been following along, is essentially people who are trained officers from other regionalities that can come here and just get caught up to speed on what rules are different about Austin and Texas. So, do you see that helping or hurting any of your plans for that transfer class? >> Yeah. So we're referring to it as the transitional officer program, or the T.O.P. Program. No, I don't see it hurting that class, because the same -- essentially what we've done is trimmed down a lot of the different courses because they've already demonstrated a proficiency in those particular courses. But we're still delivering the same course work that has been through the same vetting process

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that the regular class has been through. Don't see it slowing that class down. >> Ellis: That's great. Not every city is going through a process like this, so I would want to make sure that all the officers that are coming through and graduating are up to the roles and responsibilities that we've been setting forth over the past couple years. I appreciated getting to attend the graduation of the 144th cadet class. There were a lot of smiles that day. It was great to see everyone's family excited about their journey into public safety for the city of Austin, and even some of them have siblings in the department, and it was great to see a sister officer put a pin on her sister and to see them joining that together. So that was a really great moment. >> Thank you for coming. >> Mayor Adler: Council member kitchen. >> Kitchen: Thank you. This is very interesting and really appreciate your investment and commitment to this.

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I wanted to drill down a little bit on the mental health training. Just more specifically -- and I'm not certain if this is the appropriate place for training. You know, as part of the academy. But I'm wondering

how and if during the -- this initial training of officers, there's a discussion of the innovation that you all are engaged in with Austin cares, in term of the -- you know, which is becoming or is nationally recognized in terms of mental health option in the 911 call center. So my question is, do you include in your training that particular program, and then related to that is, it's related to that and other things also. AI and with regard to the use of telehealth. Where and how does that training occur, and is there a training element for these new officers related to that.

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>> So part of the question, and I'm going to refer back to my staff to provide some clarity, but I can tell you the crisis intervention training that every officer goes through, you know, essentially they have all received the same level of training. And so they all are qualified coming out of the academy to be able to handle mental health calls, are trained to level that is required by t-cole. They have not received the telehealth part. So to this day, I still have incumbents that have not received the telehealth part. The telehealth right now is still in just three sectors in our city as part of a pilot program, and we're trying to increase the use of the telehealth program. I know EMS is as well. And so we're kind of working on that jointly. So that part I can tell you, they have not received in academy. With regard to the Austin cares and the change that was made, Dr. Kringen, can you advise if that part is taught in the academy yet?

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>> I'm going to be honest, I can't cite curriculum that quickly. So I'll have to get back to you on that. I'm trying to pull it up currently. Not that I know of off the top of my head, but that doesn't mean that that isn't actually factually true. >> So we'll get back to you on that one, council member. >> Kitchen: Okay. And I understand, of course, that you all are developing curriculum and this is a relatively new program. It's been in the works for just a few years. But my thought is that it's -- so part in parcel of mental health response, that in training on CIT, and mental health response, I would hope that all of our officers are familiar with what we're doing through Austin cares. So, yes, just let me know what y'all's thinking is, if it's not part of the curriculum now, what your thinking is in terms of making sure that all of our officers are familiar and trained with how that response works. Because I'm understanding, of course, the CIT training is

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important, and it's important for everyone to have. And I'm understanding also that, one of the reasons for that is so that officers are prepared to respond. So, I think they also need to be prepared to respond and understand how the 911 call system is working. >> Absolutely. >> Kitchen: Telehealth, of course, is another issue. It's much newer. So, that would be something that I'd love to talk with you at some point

about -- you know, about how that will roll out in the future. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Council member Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Thank you. And to pick up the thread that council member kitchen had just started. You know, I was able to visit the training facilities, which is located in district 2, and see firsthand the cadet academy in progress, and I can testify that we certainly need to consider doing some updates to our facilities, and I think as you mentioned, having expanded and new facilities will help us train officers, current officers, and so to the extent that that is a need, I support it, and would like to be

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involved in those conversations. Because as you mentioned, this is a world class cadet academy, and I want to make sure that our facilities match to that level, because we are doing some pretty transformative work there. Kind of along that line, you know, we know that we are transitioning from a warrior-like training program to a guardian style program. Just wanted to get your thoughts, chief, on how that cultural change is going, because I know it's not easy to quantify. But would just like to hear from you on the progress with that format. >> I'll tell you, doing that in the academy for brand-new folks coming on and setting the culture is much easier than changing culture within the department, which has existed for a really long time. And that is something that I am still working on. So, I'm not sure whether you're asking solely in the aspect -- I don't think you are -- about the

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academy, but as a department overall, how are we moving the needle when it comes to culture. It's about having really hard conversations, so we're doing that right now through our leadership training. We've employed -- and this is where -- on one of the recommendations, we're actually employed with a training module called the deeper way, which is about emotional intelligence. It's about really understanding yourself so that you can be a better leader. And we looked at servant leadership. And I've rolled out -- I've talked about my vision for the department building a culture of leadership. So, looking at that, the tough conversations that we're having in the ground water analysis courses, which is not been universally accepted by our employees. There's been significant pushback. And so, I feel like it's my job to push through and to make sure

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that we continue on that path because it's the right thing to do. So, it has not been -- it's not as easy certainly as it is in laying out the rules and the expectations for brand-new cadets, as it is for my officers that have been operating in a manner for a number of years. And we're asking now to make a significant -- you know, a shift in the way that they think and the way that we operate. I'm going to keep on

continuing, and I'm committed to doing the work. >> Fuentes: Thank you. It's very encouraging to hear and I appreciate that. I just wanted to offer my comments on today's presentation. I really appreciate having this update as to the progress that's being made and to see if the majority of Kroll's recommendations have been implemented, and knowing the commitment that you have as leader of our department to ensure that the community will continue to be involved in the iteration of the cadet academy. I think that's a very important and critical piece for us in

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this re-imagining. Also looking at the data collection. Thank you for touching base on that and committing to improving our data efforts. As well as our diversity efforts. I was thrilled to hear about the 30% by 2030. Of course, would love it to be a little higher, but certainly know that's a good benchmark to improve our gender diversity. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem. >> Alter: Did you want to go first? >> Mayor Adler: I'll go after you. >> Alter: Okay. Thank you. So, chief, I wanted to ask about the standard operating procedures for the training academy. I appreciated sharing those with me, and perhaps those should be shared with the whole council. I wanted particularly to better understand the standard operating procedures with respect to the director of the academy. One of the challenges that was highlighted I think in the interim was some resistance and

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a need to clarify the authority. So, can you explain what has been done in the sops in that regard? >> Certainly. So, part of the issue was not having it clearly defined, expectation for staff on Dr. Kringen's role as the division manager. The recommendation was to install it into our standard operating procedures, and I brought the language so that I can read it to you verbatim exactly what it is that we put in here. So, under her job description -- and so this goes to every single employee that we have in the division. Curriculum, course materials, and instructional techniques utilized in training must be approved under requirements established by the division manager. Any and all requests from the division manager to any training staff, team member shall be treated with the urgency -- with urgency and completed in a timely manner consistent with the division manager's request. Requests from the division manager to training staff will be treated and acted upon as if

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they were given by the commander over training. So, the division manager is on an equal footing with the commander over the training. They essentially co-lead the training division, and the training division manager is a direct report to the assistant chief. That was important to make sure that we really -- that everybody understands the role that Dr. Kringen is playing in this effort, and how important it is, and

that she have the authority to be able to make the changes that are necessary out there. So we have essentially articulated that in policy and that has been -- that has been verbalized to all of the staff. >> Alter: Thank you. I think that's substantial progress. If the commander and Dr. Kringen disagree, how does that get resolved, if they're not able to resolve it themselves, which obviously would be the first choice. >> Yeah, just like we would with any other potential disagreement between, say, two different

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commanders, they escalate it to the assistant chief, who will make the ultimate decision. And so chief Johnson is the chief over that division, and former training commander. >> Alter: Thank you. And then on a slightly different tact, for page 23, it talks about records management and special reporting. And it talks about release of training records. And obviously, there's things that you need to keep confidential for individual cadets and their particular records. I'm a little concerned about the language for lesson plans and what that means for the curriculum review committee. Is that included mostly to allow lesson plans to be shared with other law enforcement as opposed to limiting who those can otherwise be shared with? So can you help me understand the focus there? >> I'm actually going to turn to Dr. Kringen on this one.

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I want to make sure that we're answering your question appropriately. Dr. Kringen? >> Alter: Page 23, section 9d, number 2. On page 23. It says the lesson plans may be released to outside law enforcement agencies when approved by the cadet training sergeant or the cadet training lieutenant. When approved by. >> Yeah, and I think this was really older language prior to the curriculum committee. And so the way that I see it is that within the curriculum committee, we decide what are the classes that we want to review, and we release them to the curriculum committee. And so I've never been denied a request to release curriculum to the curriculum committee, and so

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we're trying to map out for 2022 what we'll be reviewing and then we will provide those lesson plans. So I don't see that this is necessarily inhibiting that. Because I can just do a direct ask for it. >> Alter: Okay, and if they wanted to share, if they had a concern and shared with it the council office, they're not violating something, for instance, if they were to share that curriculum with us? >> If curriculum committee shared it with y'all? >> Alter: Yeah. >> No, I think we actually for the most part sort of see it as the curriculum -- well, we prefer that it stayed within the committee, we don't necessarily have a non-disclosure or anything that allows them to not be able to share it. >> Alter: Thank you for clarifying that. I understand that a good chunk of the academy is actually

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t-cole mandated training. How has t-cole responded broadly to this process that we've been undergoing and what is your assessment of changes that might happen at t-cole down the line? And I don't know if that's for the chief or Dr. Kringen or the commander. >> It's probably best answered by either Dr. Kringen -- and as a matter of fact, I was talking with Kroll about this very issue earlier. >> Alter: Whoever is best. I'm not sure who would be appropriate. >> Sure, so I'll start it off. Is that we've had a lot of conversations with t-cole. They've come out to the academy, they're extremely interested in understanding what we're doing out there. And in the end of 2011, they revamped their basic police officers class to 720 hours, so they upped the number of hours. But they had a small window of time, I think ten days where they were willing to accept

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comment. So we actually took all of the feedback that we received from the curriculum committee, and then tried to figure out which ones were actually doable, and then sent it off to them. And they said they'll spend the next couple of years looking at this as sort of a template on some of the things. We also have talked to them about sharing the things that we change. We recently changed our lesson plan format to be able to have the content on one side, and the active learning on the right-hand side, looking at kind of moving towards best practices on how to actually do the active learning components and to make sure that the instructors have that delineated in their lesson plans. So we'll also be sharing that with their training coordinator that they hire, and they're also hiring about maybe five or six curriculum specialists as well. So I see that they were probably going to make some substantial revisions to their state curriculum over the next couple of years, which is really great.

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I'm hoping that our relationship means that we'll be part of the process. >> Alter: Thank you. I think that's a testament to the importance of this work and the need to be looking at training in new ways. I'm glad you mentioned the active learning. My last two questions are focused on that and I'll ask them together. When is -- there was a note that there was resistance from the existing staff to co-teaching. Can you explain how that's being addressed? And then I had an opportunity to speak with one of the folks from outside, and they did comment that, you know, the cadets were great, but it is really difficult to learn in an environment when you're doing some tough topics, when you have 100 people at once, it is not the best scenario to be lectured at. It's challenging within the environment to have some smaller groups that might be better for active learning. So can you speak to how we might

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be trying to create opportunities for smaller interactions. >> Sure. I'm going to answer the first part of your question, and then turn it over perhaps to Dr. Kringen on what availabilities or possibilities there might be for, you know, breaking the CL -- breaking the classes up to make them a little bit smaller. With regard to the co-teaching part of it, it is -- I think that is part of the -- that's probably part of the culture. And the fact that officers feel that -- you know, to a large extent, I do feel it is appropriate for sworn staff to be in the room explaining principles and they hear it directly from officers. It's impactful. But at the same time, that doesn't mean that you can't have folks that are subject matter experts in a particular area to come in and help co-facilitate the material. And so this again is an area where, while there might be resistance in the end, I think

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that we are -- we're working through that resistance to find even more people that are able to co-facilitate those. And then I'll turn it over to Dr. Kringen to talk about -- you know, the tough part is the time constraints and the number of instructors that we have. That is a limiting factor, I can tell you that. But I don't know to what extent we have to be able to split the classes up and maybe, Anne, you can speak to that. >> Yeah, the nice part is that we have, in the larger classroom that they do teach in, there is an artificial role that can be utilized, so if we wanted to split the class up. But that does go back to staffing, as chief was talking about. So for our community engagement sessions, we are going to actually make sure that we're splitting the classes up so that we can do active learning, and we're going to start drilling down to making sure we think about what are the classes that need to be in smaller sizes,

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because I think you're absolutely right, having 100 cadets in one room with one instructor teaching, or trying to figure out if we can do like a T.A. Model, where someone can help with the active learning components but facilitating in that way. I think also, the unfortunate part, as chief discussed, we might have smaller class sizes for the 145th anyways. So we'll be looking at how does active learning activities translate to perhaps a class size that's as small as 60. >> Alter: Thank you. And I misspoke. I do have one last question for the city manager. I do believe that, you know, it is appropriate for us to move forward with the next class, with the proviso that this is a work in progress and we still have more investments in this learning environment to make and in the broader training. But I'm not fully clear on the process to get us from there --

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from here to there. So if you could clarify that. >> Thank you, council member, or mayor pro tem. And certainly this is another step along that journey, and we will continue to provide updates to mayor and council and to the community as we make additional improvements. As Kroll mentioned, we'll be issuing that report shortly. They will be available, should there be a need for that presentation. We'd like to probably have them come back at a future date. As the chief said, pending any further questions, we'll be proceeding with the commencement of this next class. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. I have a question for Mr. Ehlers and Mr. Linsky, and then I'll come back to the chief, I think. The whole country had real serious conversations about policing that were really focused and elevated during the summer of George Floyd killing.

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These conversations occurred all over the country. In looking at how other cities reacted, and what other cities try to do, there was kind of awfully wide range of what different cities did in different places. In this city, we took a look at that moment and said that we wanted to have a city where not only -- were people safe, but everybody in the community felt safe. And we recognized that that required us to change how we did things. And as the chief was talking about earlier, required us to make cultural changes. Institutional changes. Which are much harder than the changes where you're just making a change in a budget, or a change in movie dollars or starting a new program.

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We want to change how we think and how we react in ways that will ripple through, takes time, and it takes leadership. Last year, we were talking about having another cadet class starting here in March. There was a warning at the time that came from Mr. Ehlers and Mr. Linski at the time where they said they weren't ready for that yet, but they can continue to work with the academy to see if they could be ready to move forward with that. And I appreciate the report and everyone's effort. That indicates now we can. But my question is, can -- are there other cities that you know of reacted in the same timeframe we did, that are trying to do something that is equally

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disruptive, I guess, or changing at a cultural and institutional level. This work that we can be looking to as we're going through this to see how they're faring with the same thing. Are there other cities doing this kind of base cultural institution work in the same or a different way? >> I'll take the first stab at that. You know, probably in the last three months, I've been on two webexes where police leaders around the

country are having these conversations about, you know, how do we take -- one was about a thousand police officials were on talking about the success of ikat. Lewisville has had some success. The good thing about the ikat training is that it's actually

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it sounds like a good program, and sounds good when you hear it. But the data and the research from the academics don't back it up. For example, the dare program. It seemed like a good program for cops to get in front of kids and schools and talk about the danger of drugs. And the research actually shows that it actually enhances kids' desire to go try stuff because they were trying to figure out what it was all about. So ikat has just recently been peer reviewed and tested again by academia as showing results where there is actually decreased uses of force. There are dozens of departments around the U.S. That are trying to bring ikat in. Probably one of the premier departments that has been doing this type of work, even before George Floyd is in New Jersey. They completely got rid of their police department, Camden

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county. They got rid of their police department, rewrote the whole program, rewrote contracts, and then focused on a community-based initiatives. And they had some amazing results for it. And folks are trying to replicate that around the country. Police chiefs all have one characteristic. They are all willing to go out and steal good programs from other agencies that are out there. I can tell you, we've received some calls from folks saying, hey, what are you guys doing in Austin? How do we take that and do that here? I had conversations with the Michigan state police about they want to bring a civilian director to the academy to look at curriculum and do what you guys are doing at the academy side of the house. So there's a number of folks that are out there. One of the conversations we had with chief Chacon and assistant city manager this morning was the possibility of presenting what has happened in the last

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year-plus in Austin at the iepc conference in Dallas in the fall, to showcase kind of, hey, this is what we've done, this is the investment the city has made. This is what worked and what didn't work. I can send the chief, you know, a number of other -- the names of different agencies that have been on these calls and having these conversations. I don't know that anyone has invested as hard. And I don't know that it's gotten as much buy-in from the community and from the police department. Everyone's trying, and the main focus a lot of the departments are doing are trying to bring in the de-escalation training, how are we dealing with people in mental health crisis, how are we dealing with transient folks who are

struggling with housing issues, and how do we deal with veterans who might be dealing with some post-traumatic stress disorder issues, who sometimes are winding up in our engagements with police

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officers. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. Ehlers, I don't know if you have anything to add to that. >> No, I agree with everything Dan said. I think the one thing that maybe sets Austin apart to some extent is the proactive nature of the initiatives and the holistic nature of how it's been approached. I mean, certainly, it's -- you know, obviously the academy is taking -- you've been taking a look, and with our assistance and working in cooperation with the city and stakeholders and an ebd, making, you know, really just a completely, you know, comprehensive holistic look at how you train cadets and how you include the community in that training and how you, you know, make de-escalation the default mechanism. But in addition to that, you're also looking at many other aspects of the police department, and our recent phase

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B efforts and looking at use of force and arrest and stop data, and how to have better reporting mechanisms and how to increase your diversity through better recruitment, promotion, and so forth. These are very comprehensive, holistic measures that you're taking. Other than perhaps cities that maybe under or have been under consent degrees, I don't see too many cities doing it as comprehensively as Austin has. >> Mayor Adler: I appreciate that, because that is consistent with my observations and my conversations with peer cities around the country. Three big takeaways for me here today. The first one is that there's still a long way fortous go. But second, we've also done something here that is true to the goals that we set two years ago. Making real institution and culture change is not easy, and that you've talked, chief, here

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today about some of the difficulties and how it's easier to do with the connect class than with the force than been there for a whole. And I had the opportunity to be with the cadet class at one of their first days when they were out meeting the public in the park, and then with my colleagues to be with their cadet class on their last day. I have such great expectations as does the entire community, that this is a cadet class that will help move our whole force to a new place, to take a force that is already one of the best, if not the best in the country, and make it even better and even stronger in a way that makes an entire community feel safe. And we're doing the hard work. I appreciate chief. I think you and I are going to be on a phone call with the white house later this week with a handful of other cities, and then the conference, the united

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States conference of mayors. I think you and I will be there together again in Miami in a couple weeks. I think this community should feel proud of the efforts that's ongoing and the work that's being done. Real transformative work is not easy, and I hate it every time, I cringe every time I see in our political world we live in today this getting reduced to a conversation about delaying cadet classes as if there was no benefit in delaying a cadet class. Certainly, there is cost associated with that, because we have now more unfilled vacancies than we would have if we didn't delay the cadet class, and we're working now to remedy that situation. But at the same time, we weren't ready to have the classes go forward, and that's part of the disruptive nature of this. Hopefully we can reach that equilibrium point here quickly with filling our cadet classes

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and filling our force with people that are buying into a culture and a philosophy that really does have everybody in our community feeling safe in our community. So >> Thank you, mayor >> Mayor Adler: Anything else before we move on? Council member harper-madison >> Harper-madison: I have a couple of things. I'll be brief. You mentioned media literacy and I was hoping you could expand on that -- what her actual accomplishments are. While I can appreciate people are well known but I want to make sure there's some tangible success that we can hopefully, you know, duplicate here in

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Austin. As an extension, I want to make sure I understand when you say "Media literacy" -- are you saying media content we produce for educational consumption? >> Yes, that's correct >> Harper-madison: Okay. It got me thinking about how frequently I wish things were communicated differently as they come out of the department and go out into the public, and so I -- that's what I was thinking about. I guess that's more of a Pio issue, which I'd like us to continue that conversation. I think sometimes we miss the mark with how we communicate things when it comes out of the department, and I'd like us to improve on how we communicate things to the general public. I think it was Mr. Elers who said while he can appreciate that we've made great strides, you said there's still much room for improvement.

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I'd like for you to elaborate on that. If you could even, you know, to be succinct -- bullet points. We need to do this, this, and this. That would be helpful for me. >> Sure. Well, so I think -- and we'll have obviously a lot more in our report hopefully tomorrow that you can look at which will have more explanation for some of this, but what we mean by "Room for improvement." Couple things. The overall quality given to the 145th cadet class was excellent but it at times suffered from training -- cadets were occasionally faced with complex topics before receiving material.

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So this was true when talking about deescalation and use of force -- it was a constant theme in how community engagement programming was presented. We found in many cases instructors made little or no attempt to make connections between some of that programming and the broader learning objectives of police training. Now, to its credit -- and we point this out in the report and it was talked about a little today, the academy has recently revised standard operating procedures to ensure a process of continual improvement. It will include quality improvement, course instruction, while increasing deescalation and community expectations. For example -- just having the standard operating procedures in place now that clarify the role of an authority of the

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division manager. And the role of the training supervisor who works under the manager. These are crucial, we believe, to sustaining the reform efforts going forward and making it more likely to happen. So -- and even with scheduling coordination, for example, that was an issue I think APD, the academy fully acknowledged was a problem in the 144th but they've addressed it going forward in the 145th. They've already in planning out had more coordination between learned skills unit and cadet unit, supervisors and instructors, to make sure the course foundation materials were going to be taught before the more complex subjects and that the scheduling was really thought out and planned and not as rushed because I think to some extent when they put together the 144th schedule, there was a feeling they had to

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kind of rush the process a little bit. And so I think those things have been addressed. We've had, you know, things like the chief mentioned, co-facilitation of course content -- having outside instructors come in. We've been big proponents of having to see more outside subject matter experts coming in, particularly in diversity/inclusion. But also in law related classes, for example. So the academy has recently hired a part-time community engagement specialist who is working to identify additional

outside instructors such as law professors to help come in and teach some of the law-related classes -- or co-teach. That's in process and I know

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Dr. Kringen can speak to this more as well. This is not surprising in a police department that that's the case but I think given the leadership being shown by the current commander, division manager, chief Chacon -- it appears they're moving in the right direction and they have processes in place such as the revised standard operating procedures that will address that issue. Other cultural issues, we do point out in the report -- we had some concerns about some of the messaging that was taking place. Cadet surveys showed about midway through that in some of the performance accountability or collective discipline sessions there was allegedly mocked the re-imagine process and made comments to cadets. That was addressed by academy leadership midway -- leadership

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midway through. There was an incident later on that caused some concerns, but on the whole I think these things are being addressed. That being said, you know, we'd love to see more positive messaging in academy facilities -- just, you know, whether it's procedural justice or community oriented policing-type messaging on the walls of the academy -- banners, whatever. There's a banner in the gym that has a problematic us versus them message. Probably the most prominent banner in the facility. It was a gift from a cadet class years ago but probably not the right message the academy is trying to present. There are cultural things. There's aspects of a military-style academy some. These are things that can be tweaked and worked on and I

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think are being worked on by the leadership in place. >> Harper-madison: I appreciate those responses. I do look forward to see thing report and what some of the gaps are. I think because it has taken so long thus far that I want to make certain we are putting the necessary, you know, resources in place and, you know, to the mayor's point, I'm so happy to get -- finally get this report because there were real costs to halting cadet classes. I don't just mean financial. There were a lot of us who took a lot of heat. So recognizing that the foremost experts in the country, that other states are calling our little bitty city in Texas to ask how did we do it, what did we do and just remembering how hard it was in that time. I don't feel vindicated so much as I feel inspired. I really feel proud. You know, I feel proud that we

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stuck it out. We did what was right and we made it this far and we're only getting better. So that feels great and I really look forward to getting more information about how we're going to keep getting better. Not just saying words. I think someone said the action action earlier. I can't remember which colleague said that. We need to act. I don't want to keep talking. People got tired of us talking and talking, so I appreciate seeing action come to fruition. I have a few other questions. I think these are for the chief. To your point about the make-up of the men and women in uniform, the fact that so many of them are veterans. Council member kitchen brought up the mental health component earlier but I want to ask it from a different perspective -- from the perspective of how are we taking care of the veterans? And I have questions around suicide prevention, types of

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therapies they have access to, alternatives to standard western medicine. I want to -- I'd really like to dig deep into -- and, you know, maybe this is a question for public safety committee. If we can't address it, you know, today substantively. But those are some of the questions I have around mental health and specifically as it pertains to the veterans' community. >> Thank you, council member. I'll be glad to brief it out more fully in a public safety or commission meeting. The work we've done over the last four years in the area of employee wellness is remarkable. We have increased -- we've created a full-time peer support unit that is -- and created a process for employees to really reach out for mental health services without fear of, hey, am I going to lose my

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job if somebody finds out. The process is anonymous. I can tell you -- I've spoken with the folks. I don't know the names and it's better that I don't know the names but I know the story -- I know some of the stories, and I can tell you we have saved lives. You know, heard officers telling the story that they were this close to ending it. And that now they are -- we've had some officers that have come forward and are, you know, telling their story in various -- you know, like had one at our last in-service training that told an impactful story and really it's about, you know, taking care of ourselves as employees. Glad to brief that out and do that for you in a future meeting and bring the -- kind of the experts in the department on that. >> Harper-madison: I'd appreciate that, chief. Just to that point, when -- some of the things I would like you to have prepared -- the conversation over crisis mapping, for example. Those objectives are to assess

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and improve community crisis care systems and services. While that specifically talks about veterans who are not police officers, I think it applies outside of specifically talking about -- or veterans who are struggling. Another objective is to strengthen partnerships among military and civilian stakeholders, in which case I have questions about what agencies are we working with -- department of veterans affairs working with our local veterans commission. There are specific commissions -- I think it would be prudent for us to have their partnership as we move forward. There was another one. Interagency protocols around suicide prevention. What do we do? How do we spot the symptoms and signs and how do we intervene

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subsequent to recognizing the symptoms and signs? I'm not asking you to answer that now. Those are some of the things I would like to dig into when we bring it forward to public safety. I'll talk to my co-chair and other members. Another question I have -- I appreciate you said the thing -- you talked about a better way. You talked about you want to build a culture of leadership, I think is what you said. One of the questions I had is about leadership and professional training. I think you more or less said what your intention is but I want to know what the practical application of your intentions are. >> That is a little deeper conversation just talking about because isn't like I don't see it of a perspective of we're going to give leadership classes and call it a day >> Harper-Madison: I'm listening but the sun keeps

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following me. I'm going to move. >> No worries. It is about making sure we are talking the walk and not only are we providing the leadership opportunities for our employees but that importantly we are providing mentorship for our employees and they are able to achieve their goals within the department. Whatever that goal might be. So we're in the process now of professional development work sheet for our employees department wide so supervisors have an idea of their employees and what their career goals are and that starts the mentorship process and providing formal training -- a deeper way is one of the courses we're using now. But other looking at leadership command college and some of the things we have not been delivering consistently for higher levels of leadership -- that we're bringing those back and giving our folks the right tools to be successful in leading the department. It really -- you know, if we

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build a whole department of leaders, then servant leadership becomes -- you know, it becomes real and this is the way we're interacting with the public and that we're walking the walk. >> Harper-Madison: May I bring forward an item that offers some direction about coming back to council and giving us more information as those efforts develop further. So there's that. I echo my colleague's sentiment around

the retention clause, but it also got me thinking about incentives for retention, and I wonder what that looks like. >> So currently the only incentives -- I want to make sure I understand the question. You're talking about incentives to bring new employees into the department, correct? >> Harper-madison: That's

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recruitment. I'm thinking of sticking around, incentives to retain employees within the department. >> We did some things last year that we're talking about replicating moving forward, including finding ways to retain employees specifically that are eligible to retire and allowing them some financial benefits that we worked out through the sick-leave program in return for essentially a promise they were going to stay on the department one, two, or three years more past their retirement -- when they were eligible. We continue to talk about, you know, the vast majority of the rest of the department, which is not eligible to retire and how we're going to be able to retain them. You know, I think that financial incentives are one things and I recognize that they're important, but I think it also is about creating a

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work place. You know, we talk about culture. We talk about, you know, how we show up every single day, that they -- you have people who want to show up here every single day and they look forward to coming to work. That is another area I'm putting quite a bit of effort into right now. >> Harper-madison: I appreciate that. Also think -- and this might be my last question. You made reference to the transitional officer program. Can you expand on that? Maybe I didn't quite hear the entire explanation. >> I didn't explain it very much. Essentially we're looking at officers that work for other departments. The department has to be of a certain size. Can't be a six or seven man department. It has to -- they have to have been a peace officer for a certain amount of time. They still have to meet the same qualifications as a regular, you know, cadet would -- as far as their

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background, history, and all the other things that are important. We do look at their, you know -- their internal affairs history with their current department and make sure we're -- the person who's supplying -- we really want them to come on to the department. But we are looking to incentivize and that is one of the ones we offer a financial incentive for the top program to bring other officers over here to Austin. >> Harper-madison: I appreciate that. You know, that brings about one of the questions that we were asking early on, which was, you know, how much research did we do about officers as we were recruiting them? And if I remember correctly, there was a clause where there are certain types of

offenses that aren't detectable after a certain amount of time. I'm not sure exactly what that's called but I hope in our observation of internal

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affairs, records, and admin records I hope we don't say we did a deep dive and not acknowledge we looked at everything we could. Is that the kind of thing you generally disclose or is it something you could add to how we report on our future successes with the transitional officer program? >> With regard to, you know, their internal affairs records, it depends on whether they're a civil service city or not because a lot of time chapter 143 will cover that and the admissibility of us having visibility into it -- we will -- even in those areas where they have civil service will obtain a signed consent form from the applicant that we can show to the department that they're coming from to say this

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individual has agreed to -- for you to disclose all of the material for us. So we do our very best to dig into those records >> Harper-madison: I appreciate knowing that and my hope is that that's a requirement -- that you have to sign a consent form if you would like to move forward with our department. >> It is >> Harper-madison: I think I had -- one second. One note that's on my notebook. Talked about that. I think I heard Dr. Kringen talk about Ta centers or using the Ta center approach. >> Using a -- >> Harper-madison: Technical assistant. >> I'm thinking teaching assistance. Having a main instructor and someone available to assist

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them in active learning so if they need to divide in this smaller groups or what not they could do it. At larnl Eric Eric -- larger universities you have a professor and -- >> Harper-madison: Right. >> We would employ a system that would allow them to have it feel like a smaller classroom >> Harper-madison: I'm glad I asked because I completely misunderstood what you were saying. I thought you said technical assistance -- having a rep -- we had the conversation about how to respond to mental health crises. Having someone from integral care be a part -- direct part of the curriculum, talking about how to deal with people with disabilities. Hopefully someone from the Ada community would have that direct relationship with the training academy. I think we spoke briefly about -- I think chief spoke briefly about some of the modules that are just more weighty and having subject

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matters come and help with that. I thought when you were saying "Ta" I thought you were saying technical assistant, to make sure the curriculum -- is aided in being taught by experts in their fields as you're teaching that module. >> Yeah. We use the term "Cofacilitation" for that same concept. So you're exactly right, is that we want to make sure we have community partnerships and we have the right people in the room to sort of assist on, you know, how this may happen within a practical atmosphere. And then we still have community engagement hours where we'll have, you know, individuals from the community coming and talking to the cadets. In contrast to the way we did it for the 144th it wouldn't just be primarily lecture but also engaging in kind of more

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participatory activities with the cadets. >> Harper-Madison: Forgive me. It's come-home-from-school time. Something is happening. Thank you. I think I heard what you were saying about cofacilitation -- I think that answers my question. I think the one other question I had -- Chief might have answered it when he was answering somebody else's question. And then I don't know that anybody answered my question about René Hobbs and speaking to instances of success -- other cities where there was measurable success. >> I can speak to that. I've been working with her a lot leading up to the contract because I wanted to make sure her experience -- she was recommended. She's out of University of Rhode Island. She's known for thinking of

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media literacy in education. One of the things I discussed with her is this is very unique. No one in the country has done something similar to the video review company. I remember reading that report when I was still at my academic university job, saying this is well done and interesting but we haven't seen this type of work before. So she's making sure that she is going to talk and meet with some of the community members from the previous video review, that she sees how our processes go into play so she understands how we translate what we would see as media literacy and a greater scope to what we're doing here in Austin. So she's going to come out to Austin first to talk to the instructors, to talk to police officers about specifically their job, to also look at some of the body-worn camera footage and some the things -- to diagnose what our needs are. And also another aspect of her

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contract is a professional paper to really be discussing how we're doing this differently. So we wanted to make sure there was a deliverable in line with being able to report out, you know, what was the success

from this particular training. >> Harper-madison: Thank you. I appreciate it. I was jotting down some notes. That definitely answers my questions along those lines and I really look forward to that process -- the recruitment process -- you know, getting that contract done as soon as possible. I also wanted to make note, I think it's a brilliant idea that we're talking about producing our own videos. I think it just makes sense that we have, you know, austin-specific training material. I do wonder because I have seen what the cost of producing film and editing film -- you know, I do wonder, do we have the capacity within the city to have it stay in-house? Are we going to have to get a film crew and the whole bit?

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What does that look like practically? >> You know, that's a great question, council member, and as soon as I have the answer, I will be glad to provide it. I think -- we're brainstorming here and really trying to come up with some good, innovative ways -- that made sense to me when I heard that idea. I'm in full support of it. We have atxn here. They're very capable but they're tasked with other things and may not have the capacity. We may need to go out. We'll examine that and I'll be glad to report out in the future. >> Harper-madison: I would appreciate that. As you make that report and make that analysis, I wonder if something to take into consideration is some of the members in the community who are so committed to seeing us be successful -- we have a city full of artists -- musicians,

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film makers. I wonder if we have the capacity in the community. I appreciate the importance of it, but I wouldn't -- you know, I would be very curious to see what that number would look like if we did have to go outside the city to produce that video -- or series of videos. The scope sounds like it could be a big number. >> We'll keep you and the city manager apprised as we move forward >> Harper-madison: I appreciate that. I appreciate all the work done on this journey of reimagining in Austin, Texas. It's been two years. The insights have been invaluable. I'm truly grateful that -- council member alter -- mayor pro tem alter's point about appreciating the willingness to try it, the willingness to pivot. You know, that really does require commitment. And I appreciate that

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commitment. I think we can only go up from here. I appreciate that, you know, you're excited about how many of those findings and recommendations have been accomplished but recognizing we still have so far to go. I don't want us to toot our own horn too loud. We should all appreciate the accomplishments but I don't want to get complacent. We checked off a bunch of boxes but added a bunch of boxes. I want to be careful we don't get ccomplacent. We had a debate about how to determine -- it continues. I see it on social media. How to determine how many police officers a city

need. This experts says this is the way to come up with the formula. Another expert says the opposite thing. You have organizations that represent police departments that say, no, that's not it at

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all. I want to make certain that as the debate continues, you know, that we -- that we all take the opportunity to -- at the very least -- meet one another in the middle. Our voters overwhelmingly said no. You're not going to give me an arbitrary ratio of how we get officers to residents. What they didn't say was that we have enough police right now. I think all of us recognize we're short staffed. That's a fact. Not on opinion. I think it's clear we need to fill as many positions as we need that we budgeted for. I think it's clear we need to fill those positions responsibly. To your point, you said it was hard. You did recognize that it was necessary. Change is hard and growth is hard, and I hope we keep going through the necessary pain to do it right and responsresponsibly. I want to make sure we don't forget as a council we voted to

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put the pause on cadet classes for reasons, multiple reasons, for a lifetime of wrong in law enforcement reasons. We opted to be the city to get it right -- to get it right, really right and I feel so proud we're moving in that direction. We had -- you know, we had some allegations we had to address. And that was one of the things that made it so nobody could deny how necessary it was that we move forward with this process. I think -- you know, subsequent to hearing those reports about cadet academy and how they're being trained, you know, I really -- I also, you know, to my colleague's sentiment -- it really did feel good, you know, watching those people ascend the stair and take their families up the stairs with them and seeing the pride in families' faces. I want them to be proud. I want all of us to be proud of

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them. I think a lot of what we've seen is promising. We could not have gotten there without collaborative, collective leadership. We -- without a doubt. We owe our community a ton of gratitude. They have poured so much of themselves into this process -- even folks who had to get beyond feelings of frustration and frankly anger. And keep on -- continue with the process and dedicate their time, their effort, their energy, their integrity, and they're still doing it. So to the community, I mean, the biggest thank you from my colleagues and I that we could possibly offer from the city of Austin. We all owe you a debt of gratitude for continuing to do the hard work. A lot of folks on a volunteer basis. That's a big deal. In my minds's eye, this is the path to a safer Austin. I'm so glad we're sticking to

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it and I look forward to the future. I look forward to seeing what the Austin police department looks like when I have a big, fat grand baby bouncing on my knee. I'll smile big because I'll know this council was part of making that happen. I think we owe ourselves a big pat on the back and keep forward doing the work >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, 4:30. Council member -- mayor pro tem? >> Alter: I wanted to build off something council member harper-madison said. You were talking about the need for improving background checks, et cetera. That jogged my memory back to when we were -- where the work for the academy started. It started long before George Floyd. That resolution -- I had an

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amendment that asked for this process to yield recommendations from our evaluator on to how to do leadership training that would benefit the organizational culture as well as improving background checks and screening. I would ask that the city manager and chief look back at that amendment and see if there are other pieces to this process that we need to incorporate into our next steps because I think there are some other pieces just looking back at that, but I think that's -- there are real opportunities to invest in our police officers while on the way here that are important for achieving our goals. And I will leave it there and thank you, mayor, for letting me mention that >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. And with that -- council member tovo? >> Tovo: Apologies. Could we have a standing agenda item of topics we want to cuss

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at our next work session. One is the conversation we have had about having a work session -- I apologize. This has nothing to do with APD. Were you about to wrap up >> Mayor Adler: Go ahead >> Tovo: You had done some good direction in last year's budget related to human resources doing a -- resources doing a study of council -- market research around council staffing salaries and whatnot and I had spoke within you and I believe with the manager as well about getting -- getting a conversation going with hr and municipal service folks. I won't go into it because we're not posted. I don't think it's a long discussion but I think we need to provide direction to staff. I don't know if it needs to be an ifc. If we could embed that in the next work session, that would be good. On the day of our council meeting and the inclement weather and the school districts were for the most

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part closed, I mentioned I wanted to talk about improving a policy that if most of the local school districts are closed,, if it's not an emergency reason, we not have our meeting either. I don't think that's a long conversation. But it's something we can probably do as a discussion rather than as an ifc >> Mayor Adler: I think we can do those. I agree we'll be able to handle those without an ifc >> Tovo: Can we do that as a future work session? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. We'll do that >> Tovo: Am I in trouble? We'll talk about that off the dais >> Mayor Adler: Just list that -- give people an opportunity to discuss things they want to discuss. With that then, at 4:35 -- lot of good work done today. Lot of good staff briefings. Manager, thank you. 4:35. This meeting is adjourned.