



COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT AUSTIN WATER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: February 23, 2022

Agenda Item #: 2

Agenda Item: Discussion and possible action on recommendations to Council for Council action on issues related to the February 5, 2022 boil water event.

Vote:

On a motion by Chair Fuentes and a second by Vice Chair Kitchen, the vote passed 4-0 with all Committee members present: Council Member Vanessa Fuentes (Chair), Council Member Ann Kitchen (Vice Chair), Council Member Alison Alter, and Council Member Leslie Pool.

Original Sponsors/Department:

Chair Vanessa Fuentes and Vice Chair Ann Kitchen

Summary of Discussion:

On a motion by Chair Fuentes and a second by Vice Chair Kitchen, Chair Fuentes presented a draft resolution and led discussion. The resolution would direct the city manager to explore a few different mitigation options to address the impacts from the recent boil water event. First, the resolution would direct the city manager to provide options to address adverse water bill impacts experienced by Austin water customers. Second, the resolution would also direct the city manager to explore the potential of reallocating existing funds from within the Austin Water budget to invest in the utility's infrastructure. This reallocation would be in lieu of billing adjustments.

Austin Water Director Meszaros noted that in addition to infrastructure investments, keeping the resolution language flexible by also referencing Austin Water's operating budget could allow for recommendations to reallocate operating funds for such items as enhanced training or addressing staffing vacancies.

A friendly amendment from Council Member Alter was accepted by the Committee to further clarify the resolution, in response to the comments from Director Meszaros.

Direction:

The Committee requests to send a resolution to the full Council for consideration, for recommendations regarding Austin Water billing adjustments or budget reallocations in lieu of billing adjustments, in response to the February 2022 boil water event. The City Manager would report back his recommended actions and bring any necessary ordinance changes back to the Council beginning with the March 24, 2022 City Council meeting.

At Council Member Tovo's request, the Committee agreed that Council Member Tovo, who is not a member of the Committee, could be an additional resolution co-sponsor.

Recommendation:

On a 4-0 vote, the Committee requests to send a resolution to the full Council for consideration, for recommendations regarding Austin Water billing adjustments or budget reallocations in lieu of billing adjustments, in response to the February 2022 boil water event. The City Manager would report back his recommended actions and bring any necessary ordinance changes back to the Council beginning with the March 24, 2022 City Council meeting.

At Council Member Tovo's request, the Committee agreed that Council Member Tovo, who is not a member of the Committee, could be an additional resolution co-sponsor.