AUSTIN WATER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE **REGULAR MEETING**
MINUTES **January 20, 2022**

The Austin Water Oversight Committee convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas and via videoconference from remote locations.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Chair Ann Kitchen	Council Member Leslie Pool	Council Member Alison Alter
Vice Chair Vanessa Fuentes	Council Member Paige Ellis	

Additional Council Members in Attendance:
Council Member Kathie Tovo

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kitchen called the Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

No citizens registered to speak

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approve the minutes of the October 27, 2021 regular meeting of the Austin Water Oversight Committee**

The minutes of the October 27, 2021 regular meeting were approved on **Council Member Pool's motion, and Council Member Alter's second, on a 4-0 vote with Council Member Ellis off the dais.**

BRIEFINGS

2. Austin Water 2021 Winter Storm After Action Report - Implementation Plan Update

Austin Water Director Greg Meszaros provided opening remarks. A special working group of the Water and Wastewater Commission assisted Austin Water in prioritizing the 2021 winter storm recommendations as outlined in a handout that was provided. Austin Water will give the Water and Wastewater Commission quarterly implementation updates and quarterly updates are also proposed for this Committee. Austin Water will be faithful in carrying out the 2021 winter storm recommendations as it has been doing for the 2018 flood event recommendations. Another handout was provided that outlined Austin Water's progress on implementing the 2018 flood event recommendations that are completed or underway.

Randi Jenkins, Austin Water Assistant Director of Customer Experience provided updates on customer outreach efforts including winter preparedness kit distribution and public messaging in six languages. Work has begun on integrating Austin's 311 system with Austin Water's asset management system to improve customer communications. In partnership with Austin Energy, Austin Water has begun issuing quarterly newsletters to tenants with Austin Energy accounts. Austin Water's service outage map has been enhanced with automated updates and more improvements are under development. Over 21,000 My ATX Water meters have been installed with a goal of installing 50,00 meters this year.

Stephanie Sue, Austin Water Operations Manager for Water Treatment Operations gave an update on completed critical repairs and winterization improvements for the plants and other infrastructure. Winter supplies have been stockpiled such as sand, deicing materials, treatment chemicals and heaters, along with items for employee safety and extended overnight shifts. New protocols and technology have been implemented to maintain higher water storage levels during plant maintenance activities.

Anna Bryan-Borja, Assistant Director for Business Services outlined a series of significant revisions to the emergency response plan that include new provisions for extreme cold conditions. New criteria are in place to activate the incident management team and the public information officer role on the team has been elevated. Incident command system training is ongoing across the department. Expanded alternative water supplies now include two new potable water trucks and enhanced vendor contracts for rapid response water shipments. Additional emergency management staff are being hired with one position dedicated to improving coordination with the City's Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) department.

Shay Ralls Roalson, Assistant Director of Engineering Services described capital projects that have been accelerated to improve water system storage, water pressure and electric resiliency. Other resiliency projects include ongoing pipe replacements to reduce leaks, new elevated storage tanks, and a reservoir being rebuilt that will come online in a few months. An aquifer storage and recovery project being planned will store water supplies underground. Several electric resiliency projects are in progress for drinking water plants, pump stations and the wastewater system. Ongoing collaboration with Austin Energy is underway to update critical load lists and develop additional backup power strategies. Austin Water is on track to submit a required emergency preparedness plan to TCEQ by March 1, 2022 that will identify strategies Austin Water will implement to maintain emergency operations through an extended power outage.

FUTURE ITEMS

3. Identify items to discuss at future meetings

Council Member Alter requested a briefing on plans to reduce wildfire risk for treatment plants, water supply to fight fires and potential water service outages due to fire as well as preparations for flood impacts to Austin Water facilities and water quality lands. Chair Kitchen echoed the request for briefings on wildfire and flood planning from Austin Water's perspective. Chair Kitchen requested regular updates on implementing the winter storm after action report recommendations. Vice Chair Fuentes requested a briefing on the service extension request process, including the history and potential future challenges. Vice Chair Fuentes also requested updates on the My ATX Water meter rollout and the Customer Assistance Program.

ADJOURN

Chair Kitchen adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m. without objection.

Link to meeting video and presentation: January 20, 2022 Austin Water Oversight Committee Meeting

The minutes were approved on this the 23rd day of February, 2022 on Vice Chair Kitchen's motion and Council Member Pool's second on a 4-0 vote.