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[9:03:51 AM]

>> Alter: It's 9:03 on March 22nd. I'm mayor pro tem Alison alter. I will be stepping in for the mayor today and running the work session, so we will convene this work session. It's 9:03. On the dais with me is council members vela, Kelly, pool and Fuentes. And online we have councilmember tovo. I would like to start by recognizing councilmember Kelly for a few remarks about last night's weather.

>> Kelly: Thank you, mayor pro tem. Last night we heeded the warnings of weather professionals for the weather. Our neighbors in Round Rock, Elgin and Williamson county that we haven't seen in 10 years. As daylight comes today people are surveying the damage to their homes. Today like many of you I pray for the safety of all citizens. This is a time to help one another. Neighbors helping neighbors after experiencing a disaster. And it has already brought

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our communities together. I'm thankful to report that I spoke with our how district representative last night, several members of the Round Rock city council and with the Williamson county judge and sheriff. They know that Austin is ready to help when asked. I above all else am thankful that there were no life-threatening injuries reported and no loss of life. We are in this together. Thank you.

>> Alter: Thank you, councilmember Kelly. And city manager, I assume that we are working closely with our counterparts in Williamson county to assist as needed?

>> Absolutely. Thank you, mayor pro tem and council member. We have been coordinating very closely with our counterparts to ensure that we're able to respond as aggressively and effectively to this situation. Just this morning I was in communication with the city manager of Round Rock and really

assisting them in whatever they need to ensure that they have the resources to assess those damages and

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to take care of their residents. This has been an all hands on deck and we are fortunate that we have not sustained worse damage or fatalities that could have happened as a result of the storm.

>> Alter: Thank you. And I believe that mayor Adler is trying to get in online.

>> I do not see mayor Adler yet, but I will look out for him for sure.

>> Alter: Okay.

>> Tovo: Mayor pro tem? This is councilmember tovo. I just wanted to thank our city staff who helped get the word out in multiple languages and really kept the public informed about the levels of danger throughout the storm.

>> Alter: Thank you. I wanted to briefly go through what we're going to try to do for the run of show this morning. Mayor Adler is going to be trying to zoom in with us

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here in webex in a few minutes and we will take up the pulled items which includes items which he's sponsoring we will take care of item 55 and 57 and then move to the presentation from the office of violence prevention and then we will move into executive session. We will likely be able to take a lunch break depending on our timing, and mayor Adler has requested to try to be available for item 3 but is not available until 3:00, so that may or may not work, but we're going to see -- we'll see how the day unfolds and what the will of the council is. I will note that I'm now joined on the dais also by councilmember kitchen and councilmember Ellis. Let me just see if we have a sense of what may be going on with mayor Adler because he wanted to be here for

[9:07:55 AM]

these.

>> This is the av tech. I still do not see the mayor online.

>> Alter: I'm checking. Councilmember tovo or councilmember pool, did you want to lay out your concerns for 55 and 57? I'm assuming he will be on shortly.

>> Tovo: Mayor pro tem, I have some amendments. Take up the pulled items -- I assumed we would take up the pulled items after the briefing as we typically do so it will just take me a little bit to recap. I can summarize them, I can't distribute them. But I'll be on the dais here in a minute and can more

[9:08:55 AM]

readily then walk through some of the amendments that I'm going to ask my colleagues to consider for both of those two.

>> Alter: Okay.

>> Mayor Adler: Alison, I'll be in a car and I could come back on at like a quarter to 10 or at 10:30 -- at quarter to 10 or at 9:30. So I could do that too. I don't know how long the briefing is this morning.

>> Alter: Okay. Councilmember pool.

>> Pool: Thanks, mayor pro tem. I wanted to mention to the mayor if he is trying to be online specifically because of the item that he's bringing, I know I'd just like to note that the comments that I'm making are today at least specifically on the cryptocurrency resolution that's coming before us and I was not

[9:09:55 AM]

going to speak to the block chain item, which is what the mayor was leaning on, if that's any help to him.

>> Alter: Okay. How about we move to the briefing on violence prevention and if we need to go back for questions on that to allow mayor Adler to be available for an item that he is a sponsor on then we will do that. So good morning, Ms. Liles.

>> Good morning.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem and council. This morning we have an update on our office of violence prevention. This is a relatively new office but the work behind it is part of the way in which we engage our community through our department of public health and we are just fortunate to have some incredible staff that are leading these efforts with partnership in our community. I'm going to turn it over to acm hayden-howard who will

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introduce the topic.

>> Thank you, Spencer. Good morning, everyone. We are very excited about the office of violence presentation. You will hear from Michelle miles and as you can see she has been very busy. The office is really taking on this from a lens of public health, really working at this from a -- from looking at prevention and really trying to do things before they happen. We are really, really working with the community as well, and we have some really strong relationships with folks in the community and we're looking forward to really, really working on things that have been a few challenges in our community from a violence perfect. So I will turn -- violence perspective. So I will turn this over to Michelle miles. Thank you all.

[9:12:05 AM]

>> Good morning, mayor and council and city manager. My name is Michelle miles and I manage the office office of violence prevention. Next slide. The office of violence prevention seeks to advance in the right interventions at a time while building local capacity doing the work and addressing the interconnected aspects of

[indiscernible] Enhanced by public education and communication, all of which has been our focus as we are establishing the office. The office of violence prevention has been up for about two months with a budget of \$2.9 million. We have three budgeted positions, including mine, and two temp positions, all of which are filled. We have some youth contracts that provides school and community-based programming that serves at risk youth

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and their families through behavioral interventions and community art projects and areas most impacted by violation. Through our contract with long arms for life we provide gun locks and educate the public on the importance of gun locks for properly securing firearms to prevent unwanted injuries or deaths. Our safe gun storage save lives campaign is sponsored by non-profit organizations dedicated to educating austinites about the benefits of storing firearms safely. This campaign is supported by the safe gun storage save lives website, billboards and ads and sponsored by lock arms for life, the office of violence prevention, Austin police department, Texas department of public safety, the Travis county da's office and Texas gun safe. Ovp created the address or stress campaign to educate

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the public on how the stress response if left unchecked could lead to harmful behaviors and provide strategies designed to reduce stress levels. Education provided to the public through our address or stress website, radio, video and bus ads. Through our contract with the national institute of criminal

justice reform in collaborative ration with Dr. Chico template, both of which are national experts on violence reduction strategies, the Austin violence prevention project is designed to provide a gun violence reduction strategy recommendation which includes implementation of community violation intervention programming in target areas, a gun violence problem analysis designed to identify individuals that are driving and committing violent crime in our community. Austin is one of 16 cities selected by the Biden administration to participate in a peer to

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peer learning around effective community-based public strategies designed to reduce gun and community violence. Next slide, please. The office of violence prevention will be released two solicitations in April, both of which were recommendations coming out of the reimagining public safety task force. The first solicitation would be a community violence intervention programming which provides services in locations identified as hot spots to individuals who are at highest risk for gun violence by using trusted messengers to interrupt violent behaviors while fostering positive behavior and norm changes through outreach, case management and community engagement. With our community-rooted mini grants we're looking to invest in grassroots organizations who implement community-based strategies

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that create safety, healing and violence prevention. In collaboration with other organizations, we've applied to a couple of grants. We haven't gotten them yet, but we'll be finding out within several months if we receive them. The first of which is our firearms technical assistance project which is offered through the office of violence against women through the department of justice and is designed to develop a standardized firearms surrender protocol that cuts across jurisdictions in areas of domestic violence, and we applied to this grant in collaboration with Travis county, Texas, Rio grande legal aid and safe. In another project with the project safe neighborhoods, it was applied for in partnership with APD and is designed to reduce violent crime in an identified location. And ovp seeks to invest in

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deescalation train-the-trainer and training for community members. And ovp is constantly looking for grant opportunities as we build capacity to apply for those grants. Next slide, please.

>> Ovp is really invested on taking a public health approach to violence prevention, which requires understanding both the needs investing in the community's most impacted and using process improving methodologies to ensure scale is being obtained. All strategies must be tailored for the community to

ensure equity and positive impact. These strategies are designed to look at root causes and develop upstream solutions. Next slide, please. As the office of violation prevention is looking at addressing violence in Austin, in enhancing peace, we are looking at a social

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ecological model that we're called strategizing peace and works on Y at oak hill goals and outcomes for each sector of the when we're looking at centered awareness we're looking at interventions that instill knowledge and skills that enhance wisdom and reduce harmful behaviors on an individual level. Creating a foundation for equitable of the self and equitable to others. With our healing plus connection we know that we heal best within our relationships and these interventions will foster healthy relationship building. When we're looking at Thanksgiving communities we want to have inter-- thriving communities we want to have interventions for natural and structural supports for individuals and communities. And with our equitably safe city we want to provide policies, narratives and strategies designed to impact the community on a societal level and ensure equitable access to the homeless community to resources that are data

[9:19:12 AM]

driven, accountable with proven results. Next slide, please. Through our collaborations we are very dedicated to work across departments of known jurisdictions and with community. Through our grant applications, our initiatives with gives park, which is designed to work interdepartmentally and with community to design and enhance safety around gives park. We're also working with the Travis county da's office looking at joint funding opportunities and strategies to include the development of our violation prevention coalition. As we're looking at our I.T. And data infrastructure over the past several months we have met with several

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internal and external stakeholders as we are developing our data analytic strategy and looking for data development and access to software. We've met with national leaders to learn more about how to start teams and learn how they've been shown to reduce home sides when implemented. The office of violence prevention is dedicated to interventions and strategies designed to reduce gun violence which is shown in our work for the intervention programming, the gun violence problem analysis and the white house community violence intervention and the safe storage saves lives campaign. Our value proposition is that our actions will lead to impacts by investing in evidence Ann based

[9:21:14 AM]

practices, co-created with safety, we will create buy-in and build local capacity and continue support of violence prevention in Austin. Next slide, please. And that's the end of my presentation. Any questions?

>> Alter: Thank you, Ms. Miles. Before I open it up to questions I just want to note that this office of violence prevention grew out of a task force for gun violence prevention that I sponsored in 2019. A key recommendation of the task force which was charged with looking at how you reduce gun violence in Austin was to create an office of violence prevention and to take a public health approach to gun violence in particular. In the 2021 budget that we funded in the summer of 2020 I offered an amendment to create the office of violence prevention, which is the seed for the program, which is now fully staffed

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and funded at the levels that Ms. Myles mentioned. It is really important that we treat gun violence in particular as a disease and take a public health approach. This doesn't substitute for public safety approaches that complement this work, but it is really important if we want to address the root causes of violence and to ultimately prevent it. What I find particularly useful about this approach in addition to the public health approach is the emphasis on data, the emphasis on tailoring the programs to what we need in Austin and where we are at at the particular time in our discussions. I will open it up for other questions. I have several questions, but I will open it up for my colleagues first.

[9:23:18 AM]

Mayor Adler?

>> Mayor Adler: I appreciate that, mayor pro tem. Thank you for your leadership. And Michelle, thank you for the office that's been set up, appreciate that. What we're finding is in our city and we saw it again this weekend yet another violent episode and situation where we were -- we have abundance of police officers on duty. We've still had a violent end. Apparently it was two bodies that made the conflict. The cost of violence, the cost of conflict is increasing with guns on the street. Disagreements that used to be handled with fist fights are being handled with the pulling of weapons. So having an office like this is crucial. I wanted to thank publicly the Biden administration and

[9:24:21 AM]

Juli Rodriguez in the white house who asked me, yes, calling to see if we would be interested in being part of this [indiscernible]. The white house appreciates the support they're bringing to [inaudible].

>> Thank you. I think the opportunities for some external funding particularly for the Biden administration but also in collaboration with the district attorney and the county are really powerful. Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: Thank you. And this is exciting to see we're at this stage and thank you, mayor pro tem, for bringing this forward and to you also mayor for the work that you've done. My question has to do with -
- I have two questions

[9:25:23 AM]

and I know you are -- not just getting started, but in your initial years and this may not be something you're focusing on yet. I did want to ask you about domestic violence. If you consider that within the scope of violence prevention, since that is -- there's a huge intersection within that and doing domestic violence and public health. So I just wanted to ask you if that was something within your scope or something that might be within your scope in the future.

>> You broke up a little bit there. I think you were asking about the relationship between domestic violence and the work of the office of violence prevention?

>> Kitchen: Yes, I wanted to see whether that was within your scope either now or in the future.

>> It is actually within our scope through the firearms surrender protocol grant that we applied for, we are looking to -- looking at the

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nexus between gun violence and domestic violence. And it's really designed to create this community-wide collaborative. It's not just with law enforcement jurisdictions. It's with people, individuals most impacted and organizations that are doing the work in domestic violence. And through that we will be building out a system looking at ways to support safety in situations that involve domestic violence. And as we get more rooted and established as an office and get to the data more we'll start looking at ways that we will design interventions to help prevent and reduce domestic violence.

>> Kitchen: At this point and just a quick follow-up. At this point the office -- I do think it's critical, the data analysis as the mayor pro tem mentioned, I do think that that is

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critical. So do you envision your office contracting for service provision or is your office more data analysis and initiating programs that others will carry out.

>> I do not envision us doing direct service. I see us working on the strategy level, working with community and contracting with organizations and supporting other organizations.

>> Kitchen: All right. Thank you. That helps me understand that. Then the last question, I notice that the safe neighborhoods initiative. So can you help me understand the scope of that? If your office is focused on data analysis and bringing people together and perhaps initiating or being a catalyst for the work that others are doing, how do you envision working with

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neighborhoods.

>> So in the project safe neighborhoods grant we're going to work with APD and community and neighborhoods, but we're going to do that by educating the community about deescalation and conflict mediation. So we're looking to infuse necessary skills in the community to get out there. So with the deescalation train-the-trainer training is designed to teach community members dissatisfaction techniques and give them the skills to go out and train others in the community to do deescalation so that way it has a ripple effect to increase the skills in the community. And increase the meaning of conflict education to pull and tie in other initiatives so that we can amplify the work so that the neighborhood or the area that we're targeting is the

[9:29:32 AM]

Charlie sector, which includes begins park and the goal would be to pull in other initiatives, let's say in given park, to work together so that we can provide these services and this understanding if within the community.

>> Kitchen: Okay, thank you so much. Appreciate it.

>> Alter: Councilmember Ellis.

>> Ellis: I appreciate this presentation. Could you give more elaboration on number one law enforcement, whether it's APD, sheriffs or constables and number two, groups like safe or survive to thrive that help victims of domestic violence as well?

>> So we're working through several initiatives through the application for the firearm safety protocol which right now is the initial grant is with the application with the Travis

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county, Texas Rio grande and save, but the goal is to include other public safety organizations and community because we believe that new collect -- working collectively from different angles we're able to address all violence to include domestic violence and as we build that's the arc of the work is to work and to move as one movement so that we can cover all our bases and have as much information as we can so that we can address violence. And in terms of working with law enforcement, we think it's really important because public safety is a continuum from prevention all the way to crisis intervention, which includes law enforcement. And all the way in between. And there are many opportunities where we can leverage our resources more collectively to reduce violence and have

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interventions when things have been identified, but where there is still opportunity to intervene before something moves to a level of law enforcement or the criminal justice system.

>> That's great. I can completely understand that folks that are either assisting domestic violence survivors or law enforcement officials have probably seen some stories where people may know well ahead of time that something may be imminent. So I think it's really important and I'm glad that y'all are looking out for those types of conversations. And I am also thinking about how we've done safe storage education campaigns and partnered with lockoffs for life which the organizations we've been working with are fantastic and really trying to make sure that they can get the word out to the public and educate people about safe, responsible gun ownership. So I know a number of us have sponsored and co-sponsored those initiatives along the way and I'm really glad that you're carrying those forward.

>> Thank you.

[9:32:37 AM]

>> Alter: Councilmember tovo and then Fuentes and harper-madison.

>> Tovo: Thank you for this important week. It's important to see the work that you're doing and it's going to be impactful as the mayor mentioned. Just this weekend we had yet another shooting in the district I represent, I'm extremely concerned about the rise of gun violence and thank you for your strong actions. We need to use all of the strategies that we can to confront that, including continuing to -- continuing to advocate for more sensible gun regulations at the state level. So I had two specific questions. Could you talk a little bit, as I talk about the work that the office of violence prevention is doing it's a little hard to describe some of the projects and some of the programs. So could you talk us through some specifics for something such as the Austin violence prevention project. What will that look like? What will be some specific interventions? And then I have a couple of follow-up questions.

>> So with the Austin

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violence prevention project, which is a contract with the national institute on criminal justice reform and Dr. Chico Tillman, it's really designed with a comprehensive plan gun violence reduction strategy. And that strategy has multiple facets. So one of which is the implementation of the community violation intervention, which is targeting programming in crime hot spots and it's really taking a public health approach to connect with individuals, provide them resources, to provide case management outreach resources, as well as community engagement. And the community engagement is designed to change [indiscernible] Around violence and to hold events and to really bring community together when it

[9:34:39 AM]

comes to gun violence prevention. And with the gun violence analysis, that will be done with the national

[indiscernible] Coming to Austin and working with APD. Sworn officers and data analysts to look at the qualitative and quantitative data at the individuals who are driving crime. They kind of say at the national institute that they're looking at people, not hot spots. To get a better understanding of the context of which violence occurs and who has a propensity towards violence. And then to work within a collaboration to have regular meetings, to do a gun review process, homicide review process. And then identified people and then route them into our

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community resources. It's kind of a planning process to help people stay outside of the criminal justice system and provide resources to them so that they [inaudible].

>> So director Myles, with the Austin gun violence prevention project actually fund some of the interventions or is it primarily funding the strategy work?

>> So that particular contract is funding the strategy.

>> Tovo: I see.

>> And then we have funding within our budget to fund the community violence intervention programming.

>> Tovo: I see. And could you talk us through a little bit of what some of the components might be related to the begins park work? And -- gives park work. And I'll embed my question so others have the

opportunity. We started talking about -- that I recall on council that we started talking about public safety and

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investing in programs that would help with -- have good public safety outcomes. We talked about it in terms of youth programs and we had a really interesting conversation at our council retreat that year and I brought up a program that Randy in the parks department had brought up with me. And it worked with youth and targeted communities that had high rates of youth violence. And we were able to fund that youth program and have been able to do so. So if you could talk a little bit about the Givens Park with specific interventions and what the components of that might be, as we talk about that, everyone in our community is concerned about gun violence and the recent shootings that we've had and seen. So I think it's really important that we provide them with some very descriptive examples of what this work looks like because I know when I say community based strategies that are taking place within the office of violence prevention, the next

[9:37:42 AM]

question is like what? If you could give us some examples. So if you could give us some examples of some of the components that maybe part of the Givens Park initiative and if you could also address the question of our youth programs. Are you primarily reach out to adults through these interventions and these different areas of focus or are you also kind of reflecting back on that strategy of working with youth and making sure that there are really healthy kinds of programs that offer alternatives for youth in areas where we're seeing rises in violence.

>> So regarding the Givens Park work, we are in the early stages so we are working cross-departmentally. So that is the office of violence prevention, with parks and rec, with APD. And we're pulling that team together. So right now Givens Park is doing a lot of revitalization, so as we are

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doing revitalization we're looking at strategies and interventions that can be used to help. So one of which will be the deescalation and conflict mediation on train-the-trainer training that we're looking to implement as well as through our community rooted grants there are some opportunities to provide interventions tailored for Givens Park. Because I mean, really when it comes to developing strategy, it's more about finding out what the community actually wants. And the way you do that is talking to community. So doing that research, talking -- working with APD, working with individuals and groups

who have eyes and has experience with what's happening with givens would inform the process. So while it's in the development stages, some of those strategies will

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involve, like I said, deescalation and training and conflict mediation trainings also and offerings.

>> Tovo: So it could be -- I'm sorry to interrupt. It could be both programming ideas as well as potentially physical changes to the space or other -- an array of solutions but you're going to work with the community to determine which ones are best?

>> Yes. So it will be multi-prong, like you said, changes to the healthy environment, offerings to the community programming, just offerings of community activities or different things to activate the spaces. We want to make those spaces welcoming or all for youth or children, for community. We want to make it a safe place. And live and -- and be the inspiration of givens park or Dr. Givens and just the importance of what parks are to our community. We don't want parks to be a

[9:40:44 AM]

place where people don't feel safe. And to your other question about youth programming, we do have some youth contracts that are focused in areas that are most impacted by violence and it does provide school income and community-based resources. And it doesn't just provide services to the child themselves, but it also offers services to the family unit to support the -- to take kind of a systems approach to supporting children and families. So we find that to be very important when it comes to prevention, whether it's on the prevention side or the intervention side. Now, what we're finding in Austin is a lot of crime, it's more targeted around that 18 to 35ish age. Those are the individuals that are trying -- that we're trying to identify. But in terms of prevention

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when looking upstream, investing in youth and families is really a central focus of the office of violence prevention, but also to a greater extent Austin public health. Austin public health is really rooted in identifying prevention strategies and services that can help support community. And to that end office of violence prevention as we're embedded within Austin public health, but we will work across -- not only across departments but in our department to leverage our resources and our collective [indiscernible] So that we can provide services to the community.

>> Tovo: Thanks very much. I think where you landed in your final comment is really interesting. To me this is also a lens. The work that you're doing, the prospective you're -- perspective you're bringing is

also a lens that we should see the programs that may not be directly affiliated with your office, but may be taking place in the parks and recreation or the library department. Manager, I would say in

[9:42:45 AM]

addition to the specific programs that are under the umbrella of this office, I think it's very important that there continue to be -- director Myles, I'm so glad that you mentioned that, that you continue to work with those departments to look towards those other kind of programming and activities and opportunities to see whether they can also help fit within this mission even if they're not directly affiliated with your department. So thanks again for your work and your innovation on this.

>> Thank you.

>> Alter: Council member Fuentes.

>> Fuentes: Thank you. I appreciate all the work you and your team are doing. It's certainly needed in the community and I'm so proud of the leadership from the mayor pro tem in creating this office and bringing this work forward. I do have a couple of questions. I wanted to highlight project safe. Thank you for laying that out and providing additional details for how that program will be embedded in our neighborhoods and also work to educate our community on deescalation practices. Certainly I'm excited to

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hear how that program goes and any data that is gleaned from that program and to see to the extent that we can expand it to other areas throughout our city. Of particular note on deescalation, I wanted to hear from you about your work with Austin police department. From my understanding our officers receive deescalation training as a cadet as they go through the academy, but perhaps there are opportunities to provide trainings to our officers throughout our career on updated deescalation practices. So I wanted to get your thoughts on any strategies that you're seeing that we should be considering as a council and how we can provide more deescalation opportunities and trainings for our police department and on or if you wanted to daylight any of the work or conversations with APD you're having about in.

>> I think deescalation training is crucial this.

>> I think deescalation training is crucial for everyone.

[9:44:47 AM]

I think when we're escalated, we don't make our best decisions. This is why one of the things that the office of prevention is leading with is with address your stress, as well as the deescalation and conflict mediation. I think there are many opportunities in many different contexts for us to deploy these strategies so that we can have cooler heads, while we're in heightened situations. I'm having deeper conversations about de-escalation training

-- I have not had that but I would love to have those conversations to learn more about what APD is doing and see how we can help with that. So we're looking forward to our continued partnership with APD and we're looking forward to any kind of -- any way that we can be of support and help APD, but as well to help our community so that we can all be safe and we can behave in ways that we can

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feel proud of.

>> Fuentes: Thank you, and certainly I want to support you in those conversations and we'll be following up with you later this week about that. The other question I have, in light of the recent downtown shooting that we had over the weekend, you know, I know that office of violence prevention is very focused on neighborhood level strategies, but I'm curious, are there strategies out there throughout the country that are particularly specific to areas of high activity, like our downtown area that you're seeing being implemented? Any models that we should be considering? Just wanted to get your insight as to what else and what more can we be doing to prevent these type of incidents from happening in our downtown area.

>> I think within our downtown area, I mean, we have this -- I mean, we live in Texas, and Texas is a very gun supportive culture. And at the office of violence prevention, we're not anti-gun,

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we're pro gun safety. And so I think leaning into more pro gun safety practices to change norms around violence, to do things in terms of educating, like the bar area and the entertainment area downtown about de-escalation, I think that would be very important. We can do collective messaging, which is what we're doing with our address your stress campaign to kind of get the word out about the importance of managing stress levels so that it doesn't lead to violent conflict. I mean, that is really the intention of that strategy. Or it leads to behaviors that can harm others. Because no matter what, when we're heightened, it can lead to not making the best judgments. And so any opportunity that we

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can front load this information in the public, front load this skills set in the public and to include not just with the public, but within our own structures within the city and within the business community, I think we can help reduce violence and so that's what we want to lean in to. And we're also doing continued research to look at different strategies that can be utilized in areas such as downtown, and the rest of the community.

>> Fuentes: Thank you. Certainly, I really appreciate you addressing the address your stress campaign. I think that's going to go a long way in the community and I certainly will help in sharing that out to our district 2 community in southeast Austin. The last thing I wanted to ask you, and I really appreciate that it's part of your

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presentation that you included your fiscal year 2022 focus for creating the programs and really setting that strong foundation for us. So I'm curious, can you let us in on what your outlook will be moving forward. You know, what are the areas that you really believe that we need to continue to build out and support and/or strengthen as we strengthen our office of violence prevention?

>> I mean, as we move forward, I think we need to -- it will be very important for us in the investment area moving forward. One area I would love is trauma recovery centers. Trauma recovery centers provides more than just psychotherapy services in community. It provides services to individuals who are most impacted by crime. It provides case management, assistance to legal services, housing services, and they're rooted in community. And they provide -- they can provide services at no cost.

[9:49:59 AM]

And I think if we had trauma recovery centers in Austin, it will help communities heal and restore, so that's one area of focus that I would like for us to lean into. And then also really looking at our data. I keep going back to data is really important to be able to identify the interventions and to invest in families. And youth. Because a lot of youth are very stressed and families are very stressed, and when we have this environment where people are underresourced and overstressed, it can lead to violence and harm. And I think it's really important for us to invest in our children. I don't like to call kids youths. I think oftentimes, people

[9:51:00 AM]

scapegoat young people, and I say young people can't vote. Young people can't sign their excuse from school. They can't do any of those things. But when it comes to violence, they bear a big brunt of the blame. And I think for us as adults, it is our responsibility to ensure that we create safe systems, we

resource families, so that kids can be -- feel safe, you know, so they don't have to resort to harm, or so that they can relax and be kids and engage in the things that kids engage in. So I really would like us to kind of focus on investing in families and youth.

>> Good morning. Director stirrup, Austin public health. I wanted to add on to what she said. The data collection and the work that the office is undertaking will be very important as we

[9:52:02 AM]

structure our investments. And so as we look at our youth contracts, as we look at our -- sorry, Michelle. As we look at our contracts that serve young people, as we look at our domestic violence contracts, how do we inform those solicitations so we know what the city is buying and how do we structure those performance measures so we can come back to the community and kind of make those linkages of the work of the office, how they impacted city investments, and what the effect on our community was. And so as we continue to round out that strategy, that's where I see us really coming into fruition in '23, informing our social service investments, and also being a convener in community and providing technical assistance to those other agencies that are doing this work, and serving those populations and providing that support.

>> Fuentes: Thank you, Ms. Myles, for all of your hard work and what you're doing.

[9:53:02 AM]

I wholeheartedly believe in the mission and the programs that y'all are offering and providing on behalf of the city of Austin, and Ms. Myles, I couldn't agree with you more about the trauma recovery centers. I thank you for highlighting that. Colleagues, that is on the agenda on Thursday for council consideration. And as you so eloquently laid out, it is worth our investment as leaders of our communities to invest in safe systems and trauma recovery centers are part of that systemic change that we need, and part of that work of investing in families and providing critical services to everyone throughout our community. And so just want to express my gratitude and look forward to council's consideration of trauma recovery centers on Thursday.

>> Thank you.

>> Alter: Council member harper-madison.

>> Harper-madison: You'll have to forgive me. If there's anybody on the line whose allergies are, like, on

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[9:54:04 AM]

right now, raise your hand. Ten. I mean, everything, all the stuff. But this conversation is not just important to me by way of the calls I get from my constituents. So, one of the things I do is I go and sit in the laundry rooms and income restricted housing developments. I want project mamas to know they have somebody. So I go and I sit in there and just hang out and we chat it up. Excuse me. But then I have to come back to y'all and I have to talk to the various department heads and have refined, sophisticated conversations, right?

[9:55:13 AM]

But then y'all say things like, man, Ms. Michelle Myles, you being able to be so concise and so clear about the need. So, all my people just got a bunch of money because they got their income tax returns. They was hood rich for two weeks. \$8,000 gone. That fast. I mean, it's like it never happened. And I just don't feel like we're having that conversation, and it really hurts my feelings. I promised myself I was never going to cry on camera ever again. But I will say, during the course of this conversation, if we're not having the conversation about all the people just got their income taxes, they're buying cars they

[9:56:17 AM]

can't afford. Your 02 censor goes out, then you can't get inspected, then you can't get registered. Now you riding dirty. You already got warrants. Come on, guys. Like, I just feel like we're not

-- why I can appreciate the more refined and sophisticated than I am. I'm learning. But I'm feeling that way about us not having real conversations about all these things that affect people. So the guy who shows up at his baby mama house because she just got the income tax return, but he said I'm going to claim that baby. She said, I'm going to claim these two and you do that one.

[9:57:20 AM]

I don't think we're having real conversations and it bothers me. I think the conversations should just be inherently more genuine and more candid, honestly. I think, you know, I had the opportunity to sit on a panel the other day, and I said, covid hit us all. Winter storm uri hit us all. It was a shared, communal problem. But poverty, nah. Nothing about that. Problem. We are the most income segregated city in the nation. Y'all, if we don't start saying that, and if it doesn't hit us all, then that's a problem. Because if you're not poor, if

[9:58:21 AM]

you don't have to look at the per unit item income costs, the piuc, most people don't look at that, because they don't have to. I would like very much to take this opportunity -- thank you, chair, for allowing me a little extra time. Guys, if we don't start looking at how deeply embedded our income segregation is the root cause, the rich people, the fix is in. Watch "Trading places," I dare you.

>> Alter: Do any of my other colleagues have comments or questions? Council member vela.

[9:59:26 AM]

>> Vela: My comments -- I really do appreciate Natasha's comments that, you know, poverty, stress drives kind of panic and bad decisions. And it's really, I think, difficult to address violence in isolation outside of the kind of broader social factors that really push people to the edge, and sometimes over it. My question is the shooting on sixth street. I don't want to dwell on that too much, but it's the second mass shooting on sixth street in under a year. I can't exactly remember when the last time was. It was very recently.

[10:00:27 AM]

We went to see James Mcmurtry at stubbs. We were ten, 15 minutes outside of the shooting. We left probably ten, 15 minutes outside of the shooting. I never saw more police than I did on Saturday night. They were out in force. No question about it. But it's disappointing, I guess, concerning that despite a massive and very highly visible police presence, they had the barricades up. You know, they were in the middle. You know, they had the horse patrol, the mounted patrol out, extremely highly visible, lots of police officers. You know, probably not 30 yards from that kind of group of police, you know, that was an exchange of gunfire. So it just -- it makes me despair a bit in terms of, you know, clearly the strong police reaction like that is not a

[10:01:28 AM]

strong police presence. In and of itself is enough to stop this and we have four people injured. Almost at the same time, in south beach. In Miami, three people were injured in a very similar situation. Just anecdotally, my understanding is that south beach and ocean drive and that's where the famous kind of art deco buildings are, the real night life spot in Miami, is having the same issues that 6th street is having, where, you know, it was once a very -- still is a very popular entertainment district, but the levels of gun violence in south beach are very high and there are increasing concerns with violence in other

entertainment districts across the country. So any thoughts on just kind of shared solutions? I know Miami -- I believe Miami beach imposed a curfew right after the shooting in response

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to it. Again, just, what are you seeing, if anything. You know, other cities with popular entertainment districts, how are they handling -- and again, I know the office of violence prevention goes beyond kind of just the entertainment district, but just considering what happened on Saturday night, any kind of national trends, ideas, responses that y'all could speak to?

>> In terms of national trends, as you pointed out, there is a national trend of violence increasing. You know, even in light of police presence. I mean, like I mentioned before, address your stress, the de-escalation, the conflict mediation are designed to be utilized to be used so that we can have that skill set within the community and those services. But in terms of, you know, what we can do together as a community to address violence, it is through that collaboration of working together and looking

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at different aspects of safety that goes beyond policing and that really is designed -- it's not just in the moment, there's a lot of planning that has to happen in coordination and collaboration to help build within community, within our business district, within the culture of Austin attitudes around anti-violence, right? That we're just not going to accept it, right? Like, not here, not now. Violence is not tolerated. We're going to safely secure our firearms. We don't address -- deal with our disputes in this way. But that's going to take time for us to infuse that within community. It does require us to work on that level, person to person, not just with law enforcement, but with community groups, to help come up with those solutions, to be able to listen.

[10:04:33 AM]

Because that was -- as council member harper-madison said, there's a lot of structural things that are related to what's happening. There's structural racism that has baked into the cake these disparities that we need to address. Not only experiencing portfolio

-- poverty, but just being not invested in as communities, which has historically been the design to control black and brown bodies, population growth, and access to resources. And so through this work that we're doing, we are wanting to infuse the community with resources and create the structures so that we can undo those things and decide as a

[10:05:33 AM]

community that -- I think we can all agree with this, that, you know, there's good things that happened in the past, and there's some not so good things that happened, and we want to learn from those good things and amplify it, and be able to infuse that within all aspects of community, especially in communities that have not been included in that process through the mechanisms I mentioned earlier.

>> Vela: I appreciate y'all's work. I think the guns, the widespread availability, I know -- if I'm understanding the law correctly, you can open carry on sixth street. I just think that's absolutely unacceptable and a recipe for disaster, but I know that's out of my control. Thank you very much for the information.

>> Alter: Thank you, council member vela.

[10:06:35 AM]

I think the office itself was informed by what we learned from other cities around the country, both when the task force came up with the idea and then when we put forward the amendment, and also in the design and how it's building off of best practices from other places, and I believe that council member tovo's resolution that we passed the other week with safer sixth street is also informed from what we learned from how you address violence in other entertainment districts. Did you have a real quick comment then, and then I have some questions as well.

>> Tovo: Thanks, mayor pro tem, because I wanted to speak directly to the issue of sixth street. So in the safer sixth street part one that we passed in July, council member Fuentes, you asked about whether there are strategies that we can look to from other cities. We actually initiated -- in initiating the safer sixth, we asked our staff to develop an interdepartmental team to create a night life strategy -- excuse

[10:07:37 AM]

me, a night life management plan, which is exactly that, looking at best practices around the country for how people are managing the entertainment district. And also, the office of violence prevention wasn't stated as a party in that interdepartmental team that has been working and meeting, and so I do have a follow-up question about whether

-- you know, whether and how integrated you are into that process that involves the police department and public works. I also just wanted to let my colleagues know, in the safer sixth street part two that we just passed, we did ask our city manager to -- the first being what legal options we have to take action, legal action against establishments where there are repeated histories of violence. This is something that the Houston mayor has rolled out in trying to work out a plan to confront the increasing violence in their city. And so I've asked our -- we all

[10:08:40 AM]

did, actually, in passing my resolution, we asked our city manager to brief us on legal options that we may have to take against establishments. I've also asked -- I've had various conversations through the last months about what options we have for addressing the issue that you mentioned, council member vela, which is the presence of guns on sixth street, ability to open carry. I know there's at least one option I think we can consider, and I've asked city legal to set up a time for us to talk about that as well in executive session. I think it's well overdue. Because every -- you know, we have had several -- two mass shootings now in the last year, as you mentioned, less than the last year. There have been questions again about whether or not it's time to consider reimplementing a curfew on sixth street for individuals under 18. I know when we discussed this over the summer, it was quite controversial. At the time, there was not agreement on the dais, and at that point, the data from the

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Austin police department did not suggest that it was warranted. I did ask for -- having received a communication a few weeks ago from Apa president Ken kassiday asking us to consider it again, and he cited an incident that happened over the weekend with two juveniles who had illegal guns on sixth street. I asked our police chief to tron data again, whichrun the data again, which he has done. I share that with you, council member Kelly, because you had an interest with it and I can certainly share that with other colleagues as appropriate. He indicated that the data hasn't really changed and the data does not support the reinstatement of a juvenile curfew on sixth street. So I did want to just address that, because I know it continues to come up. Having said that, I am really committed to exploring every legal option we have to consider ways, and I think there is an innovative strategy that would be legal, to reduce the presence of guns on sixth street. I also think we need to continue to support the work that you're

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doing, director miles and your staff, and the work that our police department is doing. They've got several initiatives under way, as I understand, to continue to address the presence of illegal guns in our community.

>> Alter: So, I have a couple questions for Ms. Myles. You know, as we originally envisioned the office of violence prevention, you know, one element was to learn from other cities who implemented offices of violence prevention, had taken this public health approach. One part of it was to learn from others. The other part, though, was to be really strategic and data-focused on what are the problems in Austin. And take a very targeted approach to how we were going to prevent violence to drive change in our

community, treating the violence as a disease, but, you know, following this public health, being very specific to our community. So, that is why in part, you know, the first sign of efforts are about the strategic

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planning, the engaging of the external consultant, so that when we are making investments, that we're making them in very strategic ways. The plan all along was to roll out a gun storage program and to have youth programs in the interim as we were targeting using this data as we move forward, and obviously, the pandemic has extended, and we are now fully staffed and that is all great. But I wanted to ask if you could speak to kind of where things are at with respect to the strategic planning, with respect to the data analysis, and what you're learned thus far about the particular profile here in Austin. And obviously, there are shared characteristics. In many cities, violence is increasing across the country, regardless of police staffing levels, et cetera. So can you speak to what we've learned thus far, understanding that that process is still under way, please.

>> So what we've learned thus

[10:12:44 AM]

far, the individuals that are driving violent crime in Austin are really folks that are about 18 to 35, 36 years of age. They're concentrated in certain hot spot locations within Austin. So there's the north Lamar Jordan acres area. The St. John's area. The pleasant valley Riverside area. So that younger folks, they're predominantly males, and in Austin, we don't really have a significant gang problem. A lot of the conflicts seem to be interpersonal conflicts. And so that's why our

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investments, like the address your stress and different things, are looking at ways we can address interpersonal conflicts and provide the resources within community as well as our community violence intervention programming going to those targeted locations, targeting individuals who are highest risk. So those are individuals who have been involved with the criminal justice system, have witnessed or experienced or have someone close to them experience being shot and people who are involved in groups who are engaged in activities that can lead to violence. So based on that preliminary data, this is why we're taking the interventions that -- utilizing the types of interventions that we're utilizing right now. And as we learn more about the data, that information will drive further aspects of violence prevent, like with

[10:14:45 AM]

domestic violence or child abuse and things like that as we build up the office, but right now, for us, the community violence, the gun violence is really important to address. And really getting down into the nitty-gritty as to what are the root causes of that.

>> Alter: What is the status of that contract for the data and strategic planning? In terms of when it will be completed.

>> That's really being formed right now. There's not a contract for strategic planning per se. That's something that we're doing in-house that we're going to do with community and across jurisdictions to do that strategic planning. Regarding the contract for -- with the national institute of criminal justice reform, and Dr. Chico Tillman, they have submitted some reports and landscape analysis, some initial analysis of Austin crime data, what we're currently awaiting on

[10:15:46 AM]

is our gun violence problem analysis. And additional landscape analysis from the national institute on criminal justice reform. So when we have those, all of those different deliverables from that contract, it's going to result in a comprehensive gun violence prevention strategy recommendation. And this contract is for this fiscal year and it will end by September 30th. So we should have that comprehensive strategy by then. And then regarding the community violence intervention, we're rolling out a solicitation in April. And we're hoping to have that contracted by August 1st to be able to provide that community violence intervention programming into targeted locations within Austin.

[10:16:47 AM]

>> Alter: Thank you. That project coming back at the end of September misses some of the budget process, so I do hope that we will find a way to set aside resources to implement that comprehensive gun violence - reduction strategy that's building off of these external studies and the community work so that we are able to move forward with that and not have to wait until the next budget cycle. So I wanted to add that. We deliberately placed the office of violence prevention in the department of public health, but that wasn't to mean that it didn't need to work hand in hand with law enforcement and council member Fuentes asked some great questions, that I wanted to dig a little bit deeper about the partnerships with law enforcement and APD. Who is the main contact at APD, and can you tell us more about how that relationship is

[10:17:49 AM]

working? And how APD has been able to support your work and vice versa.

>> So, we're working with APD, and right now, I contact assistant chief Henderson to link me to different contacts within the department. We are working to connect to do that so that we could do our gun violence -- our gun violence problem analysis, which is really important and crucial to the work. And so we're working to make those connections right now. So as we're a young office, we are working to really look to our key contacts within APD on the data side. My contact there is Jason Matsen. He is a program manager on the

[10:18:51 AM]

crime analyst side. And so we're also working to develop an mou between the office of violence prevention at APD for data that's more sensitive, and then for data that's de-identified, we are freely able to access that data so we can look at the analytics on that.

>> Alter: Thank you. I know that you're targeting some particular locations that have been identified as high violence areas. How are you connecting with the community, or rather, how does community connect with you? And if some are writing about where we're at with the office of violence prevention at this point in its history, how would somebody who is looking to contribute to our community efforts to address violence as disease take a public health approach and build it out of the

[10:19:52 AM]

community? How would somebody who wanted to be involved in that process or want to help identify a challenge in their community connect with your office?

>> Right now they can connect with us directly. They can contact me by email. My email is michelle.myles@austintx.gov. But in terms of working with the hot spots, the goal is not just to have the community violence intervention programming that we're releasing the solicitation for. The goal is to pull in all the stakeholders within community to identify those stakeholders and work with them to leverage the existing resources and relationships, to co-create the work to be led by community and to be supported by the office and the resources of the office, and not just within the office of violence prevention.

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Other city resources, other county resources, resources for health systems or wherever. So we're really looking to have

-- to take this co-created process. We don't want to be heavy handed. I mean, that's not the point. The point is co-creating. The point is multi-disciplinary

-- the point is community rooted. The point is to really meet the needs with the community at large.

>> Alter: One of the ways we'll be most successful about this is if we bring in other units of government to help as well. I know I was able to participate in an event that the district attorney had done to talk about their own investments in violence prevention. And one of the things I've done is put in a liaison to our office of violence prevention.

[10:21:53 AM]

You talked a little bit about the grant that I believe we're still doing work beyond the grant and that process of putting that together was helpful. Can you state sort of the challenge and what we're doing about it?

>> So in term of the firearm surrender protocol grant, we're anxiously waiting to see if we'll get it approved. And the earliest it will be notified will be in April. Right now, we took a pause because we were doing a lot of work, working with Travis county and Texas Rio grande legal aid to kind of -- to develop the grant application. But also to carry forward. So we decided to convene. The cross-jurisdictional work

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around that firearm surrender protocol. With the relationship with the Travis county D.A. And the liaison that has been appointed who is amber Goodwin, a known national expert in violence prevention work and gun violence reduction work. We have scheduled meetings where we have discussed various strategies that we can see in this internally together, but then to expand out throughout the community and across jurisdictions. One of the things we're looking at most importantly is shared funding strategies. We had a meeting just last week to look at different grant opportunities related to community violence intervention strategies through the department of justice and through a national -- through the CDC. And then we're going to decide different projects that we can, you know, develop and then request funding for.

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And then also we're discussing the developing the violence prevention coalition and who are those initial key partners will be, and then to start those meetings, and then pull in people cross-jurisdictionally as well as within community to have those conversations on how are we going to work as a community to address violence in Austin and who will be the leadership team and how will we have this implementation team, not just from the leadership level, but all the way down through on the work group level, down to the ground level, and up through the top again, so that we can have communication through grass roots all the way up to leadership and from leadership all the way to grass roots so that we have that conduit of exchanging information, knowledge, and informing the work, and measuring the results

[10:24:59 AM]

and the impacts of that work in a way that's impactful for community.

>> Alter: Great, thank you. Do any other colleagues have questions? Council member Kelly, and I think you'll be the last one, and then we'll move on to the pulled items. Thank you.

>> Kelly: Thank you. I don't have a question so much as a comment. I wanted to follow up on what council member tovo had mentioned about the juvenile curfew. When I was at Washington, D.C. At national league of cities, I had the chance to speak to our youth council and ask them to possibly come up with some curfew alternatives or ways that we could possibly deter the youth from being down there. They have a lot of insight and experience because of their age, and so I thought that might be appropriate. I'd love to loop you in on those conversations.

>> Tovo: Thank you, council member. That sounds great. I look forward to that.

>> Alter: Great. Well, thank you, Ms. Myles and our folks from public health. This was a really important conversation. Thank you, city manager, for putting this on the agenda at my request.

[10:25:59 AM]

Look forward to all of the amazing work and the efforts to prevent violence in our community. Thank you. I believe mayor Adler is back on the webex, and we will move now to items 55 and 57, and these were pulled by council member tovo. Is council member pool coming back? Do you know?

>> Tovo: I think given the mayor's time, I'll start with number 57. First of all, I just wanted to thank you and your sponsors for bringing this forward. I think it is a very interesting resolution. I believe that Katie is distributing my amendments, my suggested amendments.

[10:27:01 AM]

At least one of my suggested amendments I think you've picked up in your version. And there may be other points of overlap as well. But over the last week really since this was posted, I think all of us have been getting some feedback on it and some suggested changes. So these are the amendments that I have worked on with lots of assistance from some really great community members, including Mike Segal, who once upon a time worked at the city of Austin, and Mike Lewis and I believe they all worked with some national folks who focus on this issue as well. So great thanks to those communities members. Mayor, I think the easiest -- I don't believe that it's been distributed yet, so I'll talk you through what some of them are. In the whereases, I have suggested adding two amendments. The first speaks to decentralized autonomous

[10:28:02 AM]

organizations. And the second does as well. I don't know if it's helpful to read those, which I can certainly do. Later in the whereases, I have added -- suggested adding amendment that talks about exploring what the environmental impact might be, because certainly, one of the concerns that I think all of us have heard from those who are writing is that block chain technologies do use considerable -- have considerable energy consumption, and so investigating what potential environmental impact those might have I think is appropriate. And then the second whereas that I'm suggesting adding toward the end asks our manager to also explore innovations in some other really innovative public finance opportunities, public digital opportunities, such as public banks, public payment platforms, and local complementary currencies. You have picked up -- I believe it's in your version as well --

[10:29:03 AM]

an amendment in the be it further resolves talking about including support for organizations and projects that use open source cooperative democratic privacy preserving non-profit and otherwise socially oriented business practices. So thank you for that. And then I have added a be it further resolved that prioritizes those, just to really emphasize that those are the kinds of strategies that we want to be exploring. And then there's sort of a bigger issue. So your resolution, as I read it, would initiate -- well, let me just say that in your third be it further resolved where the city manager, you have directed the city manager to create -- let me just make sure I have the language exactly right. You had said the city manager is directed to support the creation and development of block chain

[10:30:05 AM]

technologies and you added and financial innovations, which I think is very consistent with the amendments that I've suggested and some of the additional language you added in your version 2. I also suggested changing the city manager is directed to support the creation and development to the city manager is directed to study the creation of. I think that's a little bit more consistent with the stepped approach, the phased approach that we typically take, and that would allow for a report back sometime in the appropriate future prior to actually moving forward and create them. That provides a check-in from the council. So, I'm sorry that you don't have this in front of you quite yet I don't believe.

>> It was just sent.

>> Tovo: Oh, it was. Thank you. That gives you an overview and I'm certainly happy to answer questions. As I understood your resolution, I think it's very in line with both the original resolution, but also the revisions that you made in your version 2. So hopefully those will all be

[10:31:06 AM]

friendly amendments.

>> Alter: Mayor Adler.

>> Mayor Adler: I appreciate that, council member tovo. I think that the same amendment that you're making were also amendments that were also brought to my office, probably other council offices as well. So we have one resolution in front of us that talks about blockchain, the development of blockchain technology and applications within that kind of technology. The other one focuses on crypto currency, which is one such type of application that develops on blockchain. And I think that there's some confusion amongst people, because this is all new, and it's all new to all of us, where those two things are being -- if

[10:32:07 AM]

there's any necessity for increased power for blockchain technology uses, I think that's associated with the crypto currency because of how they bind the coins associated with that. It is a technology that the city started taking a look at four years ago. When working with the city, we applied for a Bloomberg grant. Eventually got another grant, but the idea was to use the blockchain technology so that people who are experiencing homelessness would have control of their personal records so that they obviously were not carrying them around all the time, they would go into a clinic, and the clinic that they would go into wouldn't be able to access all of their records because of hipaa requirements, or the concept was, what if we

[10:33:08 AM]

use this block chain technology to be able to give these folks ownership and access to all of their records wherever they were, whatever office they might walk into. The amendments that you have had, and parts of those amendments that we thought were appropriate and valid, we've incorporated into the resolution. I think that these are technologies. The applications associated with blockchain technology, we really don't know yet, to a large degree. We have those kinds of uses. There's the helium that is using blockchain technology right now to have a decentralized wireless coverage system that's set up in some of our small cities.

[10:34:09 AM]

That's a real interesting possible application. Our city came up with a notary equivalent in the blockchain area that probably should be -- but the blockchain technology would enable, for example, an artist who doesn't have an agent, an artist who is trying to get either investors in their art or in their careers, the ability to be able to do it in a way that is not easily done today, an expensively done today. It would enable somebody to be able to invest in them without having a broker, so there are connections to be made. These are technologies that just might be developed. We don't know what they are or what they ultimately will be. There's a meeting of blockchain

[10:35:09 AM]

that's going to bring 10,000 to 20,000 people to our city this summer. I'm excited at the prospect of what block chain is. Some of the amendments that you have picked up that we looked at and didn't pick up I think are pretty early in the process. We want to develop the technologies and encourage people about the community. That's what Austin does. We have creators and voters, and with this technology, we have the opportunity to see what kinds of services it could bring or what kind of uses. So it's more than just studying at this point for a value determination. It's having our city participate and create a hackathon with the technology that our city has developed with respect to say hey, what are the possible applications in this technology.

[10:36:10 AM]

So with respect to item 57, it's not asking for a study. It's asking for our city, as we do, to be a receptive place for people that are trying to develop the technologies for new applications. So I hear that, and perhaps we can talk offline. I don't know that we have exhausted our quorum or not. If not, we can take it to the message board and I can go through why it is that -- what has been suggested and not all of the amendments that I think have been brought to many of our offices, if not all of our offices. There's not

really a value judgment yet I think to be made with respect to blockchain technology. It's just a new technology. And I think people are trying to find ways that can be employed and used, and Austin has -- we have lots of people in our

[10:37:15 AM]

community -- that are being developed and should be part of that. The technology itself is not good or bad or right or wrong. It's just a new technology. And we need to participate in helping to develop what those applications or protocols might be built off that technology. We can decide later from value judgments of what we use or don't use, but we're just not at that point yet.

>> Alter: Council member tovo.

>> Tovo: Yeah, thank you, mayor, and again, thank you for bringing this forward. As you may remember, my staff has been involved with your staff in those meetings about using blockchain technology for individuals experiencing homelessness to create ways for them to access their personal identities, and I completely understand and I'm supportive of looking to the ways in which we can use this technology to really make people's lives

[10:38:16 AM]

better. I don't -- hopefully, when you see my amendments, you'll see that none of these are inserting a value judgment of any sort. Again, I think they're very in line with what you've just described. It also doesn't interfere with the paragraph that you have, the be it further resolved, that directs the manager. You've directed the manager to consider supporting participating or organizing the creation and development of blockchain technologies through hackathons, accelerates. I didn't amend that paragraph at all. You've asked the manager to consider doing that and facilitating that. I think that's appropriate. It's the paragraph before, where you are -- where you were a little bit more prescriptive than was consistent with your subsequent paragraphs, and that's where I've asked -- and perhaps study is not the appropriate term. Maybe there is something in between. But I think we need a check-back before we're asking the manager

[10:39:19 AM]

to create and develop, you know, the whole long list that is included there. Many of them, I think, will be very useful. But you would have them actually developing and creating some of these things, including public banks and complementary currencies, which I'm super supportive of exploring, I just don't know that we're ready at this point to go ahead and create them. So I would like a check-back, even if it's in two months, a check back in on that. But I don't -- I think that you may be at your quorum,

but if not, I'm happy to to discuss these with you further. And again, I think the other -- I think the other amendments are very in line with what you have here and are not -- certainly not taking it in a new direction.

>> Mayor Adler: Well, let me see if I can reply on the message board if we are quorumed out. I hear what you're saying and I

[10:40:19 AM]

think I know what it is that you're trying to do, so let me respond at least on the message board to the amendment that you've proposed.

>> Alter: Thank you. I want to take comments on 57 before we move to 55. Were you comments on 55 or on 57? Okay, go ahead.

>> Pool: Since the mayor is here, I'll go ahead and talk a little bit about 57, the block chain item which I was going to hold until Thursday, but since you're here, I'll go ahead. My single concern today on blockchain is its lack of a central authority. It's a ledger. It may be tamper evident and tamper resistant, but that is all that it is. It's a digital ledger. So there may be some unique uses for this or for the city to promote its use, but at this point, given its relatively

[10:41:19 AM]

recent entry into data storage or other digital arenas, I'm really -- relating to the city adopting it or using it. So I very much want to hear from our financial office staff, and any other experts among our professional staff on these particular technologies before I'm willing to take any specific decisions around adopting either of these items. I do want to speak specifically to the crypto currency piece too next, if you'll come back to me on that, or let me know if you want me to go ahead and talk about that now. But both of these are intertwined, as the mayor has indicated. It can be difficult to pull them apart and separate them in ways that people can understand. These are very new technologies, and there's a lot of skepticism and questions around their

[10:42:21 AM]

concern that there is an interest in this trusted institution, which is the city of Austin leaping ahead to adopt something that even the mayor of Miami I think had found that his initiative in these arena did not work out well for him at all. Mr. Suarez, I think, has backed away from his leadership on this issue. And I know you had mentioned him, mayor. I think I had read that in a recent article. So that's my feeling on 57. And when we get to 55, I'd like to weigh in on that, too.

>> Alter: I think it might be good for us to separate these for a moment, because I think some of the issues may be slightly different and it's confusing enough as it is. So I don't want to kind of wraparound. I wanted to give council member kitchen a chance, and then mayor Adler, you can respond, and then council member Fuentes.

>> Kitchen: I just have a specific question and a comment

[10:43:22 AM]

on 57. And it might be something the mayor can respond to or perhaps a city manager. I wanted to speak to the -- you know, I know that our staff did a lot of research with others in the community around the use of blockchain for homeless individuals. You know, blockchain has been around for a number of years now, and there's been a lot of efforts in the healthcare community to consider how blockchain can help with the challenges of sharing healthcare information more readily. So it's very important for us to consider and take the next steps from what we started with regard to that analysis. What I would like to know, and I'm just behind the curve on this, and mayor, you may know, or maybe city manager, if you could tell me where to see a report of the results of the work that our innovation office

[10:44:22 AM]

has done around blockchain for homeless individuals. That would be helpful for me. I do recognize it as important innovation, and with a lot of potential, I'd like to inform myself more on what we've learned to date.

>> Sure, I can speak to that. I do have Daniel on the line. We'll give you any updates that we've provided to the community and to council so you have that at the ready as well before Thursday.

>> Pool: Thank you. We don't have to take that time now, unless others want to do that. But I'm intrigued and was intrigued when that analysis was begun. It's certainly -- for our homeless population, you know, housing is what is the key for individuals. But sharing -- more readily

[10:45:25 AM]

sharing healthcare information is also a key point, so I'd like to understand what implications are possible from the work that we've done.

>> Alter: Mayor Adler, and then council member Fuentes.

>> Mayor Adler: And I appreciate the opportunity. Just to be really clear, I've gotten a lot of inquiries about items 55 and 57, all of which seem to go toward the question of whether or not you should be adopting these technologies to be used. Neither of these do that. Council member pool, I share some of the same concerns or hesitations that you do, and I want us to learn about them. So that we can know. But the first one doesn't have us adopting any technology.

[10:46:30 AM]

It just says in our city, which is the city where new ideas go, they become real, it's a city that has a lot of developers and creators present. As a city, we're going to work with organizations to make this a good place for people to do research and development. It doesn't have us adopting or using any technology for any particular purpose. So it's in keeping with I think who we are as a city. I pushed back at some of the people in the community that are trying at this point to turn it into a debate about whether we should be adopting these technologies for particular uses, and I agree, council member pool, that we're just not in a place to be able to do that. We have to not do that.

[10:47:31 AM]

55 doesn't say we should use crypto currency for anything. It says we should be taking a look at it so that -- I mean, heck, if we decide we're not going to, we should better be able to explain why we're not. As you indicated, a lot of conversations with mayor Suarez in Miami. A big push in that industry and vertical for us to adopt an Austin coin as Miami adopted a coin and other cities are taking a look at. But I think before we shoulder

-- should ever consider doing anything like that, there's more development and research, and that's all that 55 and 57 do. I think they were both carefully written so as to not have us adopting, but just looking at them. And that's all that they're

[10:48:33 AM]

doing. I think it's really important for us to be involved in the conversation.

>> Alter: Council member pool would like to respond to that.

>> Pool: I think that's great, mayor, if that is indeed the intention, and I think with the amendments that council member tovo is bringing, that that may be closer. But I do read on page 2, both the be it further resolved, the city manager is directed to ensure that city involvement and efforts served to promote equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in this technology ecosystem, and be it further resolved, the city manager is directed to support the creation and development of blockchain technologies that

benefit austinites in city government with applications that could include, without limitation, those related to, and then you list six things on page 2 of 4, and crypto currencies is number

[10:49:34 AM]

five. So if we do make the edits, I think it will be important to make the edits with the amendments that council member tovo is suggesting in order to remove the specific direction of supporting the creation and development of these two initiatives so that we can, in fact, do the important investigative work and study in advance. Thanks.

>> Alter: Thank you, council member Fuentes.

>> Fuentes: Thank you. I just wanted to comment on the amendments provided today on version 2 and by council member tovo, both items 57 and 55 mention us also taking a look at public banking. I want to offer my support for us looking at what it would take for us to have a city-owned public bank. We know that for many in our community who are underbanked and unbanked, having an option that is safe, reliable, cost

[10:50:36 AM]

effective, is necessary in our financial system. So just want to draw attention to that piece. I'm very pleased to see this as part of the consideration and look forward to receiving more information about what it would take to bring a public bank to Austin.

>> Alter: Thank you. I have a question on P 57. Just trying to really understand the be it resolved portions. I understand the last three be it resolved. Again, I'm hung up on the difference across these where it doesn't say consider. In your mind, mayor, what does the third be it further resolved, which is the directive to support the creation and development mean, and together with the prior two, what direction are we giving to our city staff beyond being open to currencies and when there's an

[10:51:36 AM]

idea explore it?

>> Mayor Adler: The set of protocols has been built on

[indiscernible], and there is an infinite number of possible other alternatives. And really, it's saying to the city that participated in hackathons or contests that our staff can participate in meetings where the technology is being discussed. And I think as we start out, we don't know where it's going to end up and we don't know what the limits is of this new technology. It's being open and being

[10:52:36 AM]

supported. It's not asking for any additional budget allocation to be that. It's just recognizing that there are potentials and possibilities here, and our city should be encouraging the development, this technology is where it's being addressed.

>> Alter: So it's communicating an ability to engage in conversations and explore those and see whether there are relevant applications as the opportunities arise and perhaps creating some conversations to explore that based on problems that we're trying to solve?

>> Mayor Adler: Sure. And to recognize that it's not like at this point you can go out and say, well, show me all the applications and I'll tell you whether or not we're interested in those applications.

[10:53:36 AM]

Because many of the possible applications have yet to be developed. So this is really taking a step back and saying, this is a unique and new technology, and our city should be participating in the development of that to see how it can be used, what opportunities exist. And our city, as we know, council member tovo's office is involved. There's the Prague conference that's coming up this year that I hope the city staff has the opportunity to be able to attend or watch or learn. Would be great if we participated in hackathons, where we would say okay, here's a city problem. Can anybody figure out how to use this technology to address this city problem. In a world where that application might not exist today.

[10:54:37 AM]

It's really early in the process, and let's be open to in inviting what the possibilities might be.

>> Alter: Thank you. I wanted to get some of that clarification for our staff, in terms of -- that's what you've explained to me, when we talked briefly about it, and I just wanted to make sure we had clarity on the level of commitment we were talking about in terms of resources here. I wanted to ask Mr. Collada a question, or the city manager. Just wanted to get a sense if you have enough clarity on what this number 57 does in terms of next steps, or if you have questions that we need to surface now to help this resolution be most successful.

>> I'll start, mayor pro tem. Really appreciate the ability for the mayor to provide that additional context in this discussion. And because you were breaking up a little bit, mayor, if there's

[10:55:38 AM]

anything you want to clarify on the message board, that would be helpful before Thursday. I'll turn it over to Mr. Collada, who will be leading these efforts from the city.

>> Yes, mayor and council members. Thank you. I appreciate the additional context, and I think that we have all that we need to do our work and understand the direction of the resolution as an exploratory and an open -- you know, creating openings and understanding where potentials may be. So, I appreciate that direction.

>> Alter: You know, part of the reason that I'm asking, you know, with respect to the resources is that we have some really basic technology challenges that we have not mastered, like electronic time sheets. And human capital management system. And so I do worry about us going too far into blockchain and these fancy things when we have some real basic technology

[10:56:42 AM]

challenges that we need to be focusing our energy on, and I'm comfortable if this is an open invitation to explore and participate in conversations and be able to seize opportunities and not to sort of shut the door, you know, briefly, but there are some real just basic technology things that we're not as a city adept at. So I think that's important. Council member kitchen, and then council member Renteria.

>> Kitchen: Thank you, and I think this conversation and clarifications are very helpful. So thank you, mayor pro tem, for that. And mayor, I want to say thank you for bringing this. I do think it's important, our city is a city that is a hub for technology and for creative thinking. And these are technologies that we need to understand. And we need to also understand

-- mayor pro tem, I would just

[10:57:42 AM]

say that sometimes our basic problems, it's newer technologies that can help us answer them. So there is potential with some of this new technology. Blockchain in particular is interesting, that could help us be more up to speed on how we operate, so that we're not as paper-based. We a number of years back brought an initiative to examine the level of what was going on in our city from a paper-based, and the innovation office did an analysis with our I.T. Department to develop a process for considering, as well as a list of all those activities we needed to address. And I do think that -- I agree with mayor pro tem, that we need to be addressing those. But I don't see that as counter or at odds with considering these new technologies. In some ways, they can be helpful for us in doing so.

[10:58:50 AM]

So I do hope also that -- and we'd like to understand, city manager, where we are on that project that was initiated a number of years ago. Because it is important that our city processes be as efficient as possible, and that means that they should not be paper-based. And, you know, the time sheets is one example of that. But there was a whole long list of things. But we also went through -- as part of that initiative, we worked with our community, because we have so many resources in our community. And work specifically with the local technology experts to help us as a city address some of those issues. So we need to continue to do that. So I see this as complementary, not as at odds, and I don't see it as taking away resources. But I do want to emphasize, as the mayor pro tem did, that we do need to make more progress on

[10:59:51 AM]

advancing the use of technology for greater efficiencies in our city operations.

>> Alter: I wholeheartedly agree that we need to further that and, you know, part of the reason I was asking the mayor to clarify was to better understand what, if any resources were involved so that our staff had that information. Council member Renteria.

>> Renteria: You know, this technology could be very beneficial to city of Austin. We've been working on trying to get the time sheets done for six years, and we haven't been able to meet that goal yet. So it's very concerning. But, you know, with blockchain, you know, you basically -- your transaction is permanent. No one can go in there and delete it. So that's a good thing. The bad thing is if somebody gets your key, they could wipe

[11:00:53 AM]

you out. So that's another concern. But it seems like that we ended up getting that grant in 2017. Is there anyone on the staff that can tell me what kind of advancement or research or what have they been doing with that grant? Has there been any progress? Or is there a report that they can give us that they can give us that can explain some of these transactions and how it worked out?

>> Yes, council member, that was through our office in the innovation office, and we issued

-- we received that grant through the Robert wood Johnson, and we will be putting together a package for you all that has the full results of that. There was an investigation in building a prototype of what that platform for helping people experiencing homelessness secure their vital I.D. Documents, what

[11:01:54 AM]

it could look like. We did use blockchain technology for a specific piece of that application, not for the entire application. And it does have a very specific and important use there. There was also a lot of other I think really sound advancements, and designs that we put together outside of the blockchain space, that are complementary to help with that challenge of people experiencing homelessness, but also, you know, anyone that is vulnerable to losing or needs to secure other documents. So we're happy to provide an update there that will also give a bit more foundation and commentary on where we got in our previous investigations. All that work is -- should we find partners or want to do so ourselves.

>> Renteria: Will we be able to also use this for time cards and

[11:02:57 AM]

other -- I mean, you're looking at transactions which the utility department and our payroll and all of the payroll and employees have written. Can this technology help us on that front?

>> The work that we did through the grant did not specifically focus on time keeping and time sheets, and I don't believe it would be easily adaptable to that application, but there may be others that could be.

>> Renteria: Well, I heard during the conversation that you could make payments to utilities. Is that something that you're looking into also?

>> On that grant work, we didn't look into making direct payments or transactions, it was just the ability to display and share documents. There are also other

[11:03:58 AM]

technological solutions out there also that people can make transactions on.

>> Renteria: Okay, and that's what you're going to be looking into if you get this other grant? It seems like it's so far been grant-driven, and it seems like there's a possibility of getting another grant to even do more research.

>> We're not seeking another grant at this time in this space, but I believe, you know, these resolutions pass, these will be in areas that we'll be looking into potential and exploring those spaces and understanding these spaces better.

>> Renteria: Okay. That's my only question. Thank you.

>> Alter: Thank you, council member. Someone had their hand up. Council member tovo?

>> Tovo: Yeah, I just want to summarize, that as I hear the discussion, and mayor, I hear your Adler what your intent is, I think that is one of the sources of confusion about what exactly we're initiating here.

[11:04:58 AM]

Mayor pro tem, you raised this as well. And so, again, mayor, I would say if you don't -- if the language that I've proposed to that doesn't work, then perhaps you can look at some language. But we have another situation on our -- that arose from a resolution that directed the consideration of multiple properties for potential cultural use, and that led to an understanding amongst some in our community that we had initiated and committed to a use for one of those buildings. So I think the language that we used in our resolutions is really important. And so if we can work to get some language in that paragraph that really captures what you intended, I think that would be good. Because right now, I think it does go further than perhaps you intended it.

>> Alter: Any other comments on

[11:05:59 AM]

57? Okay, let's move to 55. I don't know if council member Kelly, you wanted to start, and then council member tovo and pool.

>> Kelly: I can certainly start. Thank you all for considering taking up this resolution. So my initial thoughts after speaking with the crypto currency community was that it would allow more flexibility for us to consider accepting crypto currency as a form of payment for municipal taxes, fees, or penalties. There are other applications of crypto currencies that could benefit the city of Austin. But before we go down the same pathway that cities like Miami or New York did, we really need to set the foundational tone for if it's even something we can do here at the city. So that's why I brought forward this resolution. I know council member pool, earlier you had mentioned some skepticism and questions that you have. I share a lot of that also, which is why we didn't move forward with the resolution to adopt a specific type of coin over one another without first

[11:07:00 AM]

doing the research here that I asked for to move forward. I believe that this addresses those. I want to learn from what the other cities have done, and with the city of Austin being such a technology-driven city and so innovative, I believe the first step to doing that is to pass this resolution and get information back, and then at that time, we can as a council really decide how we want to move forward. And if this is something that we want to adopt based on what we know. I like that it doesn't commit us to adopting crypto currency as a form of payment in the city of Austin, but gives us that information. And then also, I

saw your amendments, council member tovo, and while I completely understand that it would be valid in the be it resolved to

[audio drop] And maybe Anne you can help me with this as city legal, if it's germane to the posting language of the current

[11:08:01 AM]

resolution, or if we would have to change that. And my question is because it does bring another element to the resolution. So I would almost prefer if we made the amendments or accepted the amendments in your whereas statements, and maybe move forward with a separate resolution for a public bank, because that is something that we can look into. But I'm just not sure if it's with the posting language correct.

>> I'm happy to take a look at that by Thursday and I'll get back the you before there.

>> Kelly: Okay, thank you. Council member tovo, I didn't know if you wanted to speak to the -- thank you.

>> Tovo: Sure. Yeah, thank you, council member Kelly, for your exploration of these technologies and for bringing this forward, and thank you for your consideration of the amendments, which like the ones that I've proposed for the one that mayor Adler brought forward, were also coming from

[11:09:01 AM]

the same group of community members and possibly a few of my own. I'd have to go through and nail that down. One thing I do want to -- I appreciate your question about the posting language. I know that these have been replicated to some extent in number 57, and so we are capturing those. I think overall, to kind of step back on this issue a little bit, you know, as I heard from community members over this last week or so, there's certainly a lot of interest in exploring new technologies and understanding them. I think the concern really arises with what -- with what we are doing as the city of Austin if we seem to be affirming the usefulness of one without looking at the others. And so that's how I understood the feedback that we also consider some of these other forms of interest, like public banks, like complementary currencies. So to me, it does seem to be important that they move forward

[11:10:02 AM]

together so that we're not giving priority or more validity to one form versus the other. So, for me, it really was important to have this be it further resolved in the same resolution so that we're not saying --

you know, we're onboard with crypto currency necessarily, because at this point, I think it is entirely exploratory. So, that's my rationale for trying to include it, if we can. And thanks, again, for your consideration of the others. I did want to point that both whereases, both resolutions that we're discussing have a whereas about Miami and New York, and I've highlighted it because I haven't yet come up with language and maybe some of my colleagues on the dais might help me out with this. I think if we're going to cite those as two cities that are researching the use, I think we need to more fully explain what their experience has been. As I understand it, I think it was the Miami mayor who lost a considerable amount out of his paycheck using -- I'm sorry, new

[11:11:04 AM]

York. Maybe Leslie can fill me in. But the experience hasn't been, I would say, an unqualified success to put it mildly. And so I have concerns about including that passage in either resolution without really fully explaining -- without handling it differently. So that's why I've highlighted it, but haven't come up with any language yet.

>> Alter: Council member pool, and then Fuentes.

>> Pool: Yeah, I also pulled this to make some comments specifically now on item 55. And I do appreciate council member Kelly's focus on invest getting and analyzing these forms of currency. And I do note that item 55 does not adopt the specific city uses, so I thank you for making those adjustments. I wanted to give a brief overview of my two specific areas of concern on the crypto

[11:12:05 AM]

currency fiscal concerns and environmental and economic concerns. On the fiscal matter, while staff can certainly explore and gather more information, it's the lack of oversight and accountability for these currencies that I see that is very troubling. And I don't see that changing any time soon. I do think we should look at that to see how the landscape is evolving. I continue to believe crypto is too volatile a form of currency to risk taxpayer dollars or employee retirements. Crypto is unregulated. It's not just unregulated, it's also unprotected. There's an element for me of gaming involved here that leaves me really uneasy. Crypto is a form of payment or investment

[audio drop] Safeguarding the community's revenues and the city's treasury.

[11:13:07 AM]

With regard to environmental and economic concerns, and this is the area where I first was alerted to the downsides of what seemed like a pretty fancy frothy bubble in the tech community, the

environmental cost of a crypto plant runs specifically counter to our climate equity plan goals. I would urge the city and the analysis in the investigation of this to look at where those mining operations have taken place and look at the amount of electricity that is consumed and the impacts on the areas where they have been built. It does not appear at this point to be a pretty picture. And other communities have found crypto currency isn't the windfall that they had hoped for, and those were the experiences in New York and Miami that a couple of us and

[11:14:08 AM]

myself have noted today and that we've read about in the newspaper. So I do have one question for staff. I'd like to know going forward what Moody's or Standard & Poor's think of crypto currency, particularly from municipal governments. I think this would be a really important aspect to dig into with these questions. And I too am interested in the public banking idea or any other alternatives to crypto and blockchain solutions that have as a name to help working families with a safe and reliable store of value. There is absolutely a need for that. As councilmember Kitchen has pointed out, the need to have access for records for people who don't have your standard conventional access to records, filing cabinet being an actual physical one or in the cloud or on a phone somewhere. That issue remains and

[11:15:08 AM]

that's been an issue for decades and it does need to be resolved. So what other Progressive alternatives to crypto and blockchain solutions might be out there that do have the aim to help working families have a safe and reliable store value.

>> Alter: I forgot to write down who was next. I think it was councilmember Fuentes, Kitchen, Harper-Madison, Kelly.

>> Ellis: I was in that list too.

>> Alter: Ellis. I think were you -- I think it was.

>> Fuentes: And then Ellis and then Kitchen.

>> Alter: Thank you for the clarity. We'll do Fuentes, Ellis, Kitchen, Harper-Madison and Kelly. And forgive me if I get it wrong.

>> Fuentes: Thank you. I just have a brief comment.

[11:16:08 AM]

Just getting back to the conversation about whether it is proper to include public banks as part of the resolution. I believe we need to have that conversation together and it should be part of our conversation so I will be particularly interested to hear what our city attorney shares with us whether or not it is germane. And if not, then councilmember tovo, I hope that you consider bringing that back as a standalone resolution and I would love to join you in that effort.

>> I also agree with that. I'm very curious about that conversation and hope that it's either seen as something we can discuss on Thursday and include in these resolutions or that we could have that conversation moving forward because I think it's really important. My thoughts on the crypto currency conversation are that I still want to have the information, but I understand the gravity of understanding how to be the best stewards of our public tax dollars. So I'm not sure that I'm

[11:17:11 AM]

convinced that's the best use of our dollars until it's a bit less volatile. I would hate for us to be trying to manage our budget in a way that makes it very difficult to understand that we're going to be able to pay the employees that work so hard for our community and be able to meet the needs that are required by holding a good bond rating capacity and being able to issue bonds moving forward as a city. So whereas on 57 I think it is very germane to be having these conversations about what technologies are out there, how can we make sure that the best technology is something that the city of Austin is using as a city that drives innovation and courts technological advances. I think that's really important for us to be having this conversation since they're both fact finding missions. I think that's okay for us to be asking for this information and having it come back to us especially as much of the time and resources put into these will be staff time and not

[11:18:13 AM]

necessarily reinvestment of public dollars. But I know going through multiple budget cycles that we are often times look at where is half of a full-time equivalent employee's annual salary going to come from. So I would hate for us to be in a position as a city where we haven't been responsible stewards of public tax dollars. I think that's first and foremost the biggest commitment to the community. I look forward to having the conversation come back, but very uncertain about the application of city dollars and city tax collection being something where the dollars don't add up from week to week. That's largely very concerning to me. But I do look forward to having the information come back so we can evaluate that once we have the information at hand.

>> Kitchen: And I agree. I think that what's relevant here is that this is -- it's

[11:19:16 AM]

a fact finding study is the words that are used and I thank councilmember Kelly for styling it this way. Really we need to understand. I think we owe it to this community and ourselves to understand this technology, and it's also -- but it's also very limited and is deliberately limited. There is no compensation at all of investing city dollars, and certainly not considering pensions or anything like that. That is deliberately not included. And the focus is simply on whether or not it makes any sense at all in this environment or at some point in the future accepting crypto currencies as payment. That also has the kinds of implications and concerns that people have raised. So of course we would not want to do that without understanding whether it was -- whether we were

[11:20:17 AM]

introducing any risk to our financial status as a city. So of course we wouldn't want to do that. We need to understand this information. I think it's important and as others have mentioned there are a lot of issues and questions out there right now, so councilmember Kelly has included an item that lists those issues and specifies that we need to understand as part of the fact finding study things like the impact on financial stability, security issues, equity and inclusion issues, consumer benefits and risk, and environmental impacts. So as well as the items that councilmember pool mentioned what does moody's think about this, that's important. So I think that from my perspective this is a fact finding study about a piece of information that's important for us as a city

[11:21:17 AM]

to understand and it's limited to that. And before we ever took any steps down those roads -- that road, there would have to be a lot that we understand. But I think it's timely to take a step in the direction of understanding the situation.

>> Alter: Councilmember harper-madison is next and then Kelly.

>> Harper-madison: You want to wrap it up --

>> Alter: You want to wrap it up. So harper-madison, did you want to speak?

>> Harper-madison: Yes.

>> Alter: Harper-madison, did you want to speak? Before I offer the mic to councilmember pool, I have -- so I'm sort of -- I'm comfortable with the notion that we might want to consider how we accept donations of crypto currency living in Austin with folks who have that and be able to use donations for city uses

[11:22:25 AM]

potentially. I'm not really sure that I need a fact finding study that I need a financial risk or there are risks for using these payments for processing. So there are also trade-offs of time and so I wanted to ask Mr. Coleta, that I'm assuming the information office would be charged with being the first step or perhaps since Mr. Van eenoo with the financial office, if you were to try to do this by three months, by June 16, what would you have to give up in order to get that done? I'm trying to understand what the trade-off is. He have.

>> Thank you, council member. We do have a lot of capacity in the innovation office to do this work, although we certainly would have to balance other work that we are currently doing in areas

[11:23:29 AM]

such as homelessness, reimagining public safety, access to green jobs, and many other topics. There would be a rebalancing there. We do have resources, however, to I believe do our part of this work over a three month period.

>> I'd like to give you until Thursday or if you want to put it in the q&a, I would really like an answer, like give you a little bit of time to think about that because I'm not questioning whether you're capable of doing it in terms of the staff capabilities, but somebody has to be doing that instead of working on reimagining public safety or instead of working on homelessness. And I want to better understand what those trade-offs -- because I don't know that anything is going to be resolved sort of in this space between now and three months to change my mind that there's a huge amount of risk or that there are these environmental

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implications. That being said, to be able to say that we can donate Bitcoin to the city that we could comply to to help our homeless or reimagine public safety, that I would be much more comfortable with accepting. So if you can provide an answer in q&a and/or present it to us on Thursday, whichever you decide with the city manager, is the most appropriate way to help us understand what the trade-offs would be, and whether the timing of June makes sense given the landscape of what you already know, that our innovation office is going to be much more current on this topic than I am for sure, but you can tell us, you know, what that time frame would be for you to produce that. The other question I had is the same one I had before. Is there any greater clarity that you need on what this resolution does to be able to implement it if it passes?

>> Yes, thank you for that. To me it's clear from the

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fact finding standpoint. We'll of course be working with the manager and understanding which other departments and expertise that we want to bring in. There's certainly a lot of aspects of this that we would want additional inputs on that, but I do believe it's clear the type of work and fact finding we're doing here. Thank you for asking that.

>> Alter: I want to ask that I'm hearing a lot of hesitancy of using this for payment because of the risks and environmental pieces. Again, we have to make choices and it's fine to make a symbolic statement about what we should or shouldn't be doing, but there are consequences of how our staff spend their time and the type of products we get back and their utility and we need to be mindful of the things that come across our agenda as to how we approach that.

[11:26:33 AM]

I know councilmember Kelly wants to go last. I think councilmember pool, tovo and was there anyone on this side or on the screen? >>

>> Pool: I just wanted to generally send a really strong, sincere note of appreciation to the folks in our community who have reached out to me and those on the dais with their very serious concerns about these issues. It's clear to me that our community takes seriously this topic on all sides of it. And it really does feel like a uniquely Austin moment that we're having this debate, that we're having it in a reasonable fashion and that we're acknowledging there are many sides and facets to the conversation, the discussion and the debate. And on Thursday I will probably be a little more

[11:27:34 AM]

specific on the people who have weighed in to help inform my responses and to flesh out my understanding of the concerns, and it's just this is how this city operates. This is a really good distillation of how we address hard issues and try to bring the best minds to the table to have the discussion in a collegial and collaborative fashion. And I know that we will come up with a very strong solution once we get through the conversation this week. And I just thank all my colleagues for the tenor of the discussion and for the mayor bringing the blockchain item and councilmember Kelly bringing the crypto currency item. Both of these topics have been the subject of much conversation and debate within our community and it is time for us to elevate it

[11:28:34 AM]

to the dais and have this conversation. Thanks.

>> Tovo: So I noted when councilmember pool was discussing the environmental impacts of crypto currency that the amendment that I had suggested for 57 is not -- I did not -- I left out of 55. So councilmember pool, I don't know if you want to bring forward a separate resolution or you want me just to bring forward the other one. I don't know how we resolve that. Either way is fine. But I do think if 55 passes it should have that amendment that talks about that it tasks our manager at looking at environmental impacts of crypto currency.

>> Kelly: That's actually on line 40 actually.

>> Tovo: I apologize.

>> Kelly: It says issues related to Bitcoin or other crypt tow currency protocols and financial stability, security issues, equity and inclusion issues, consumer benefits and risks and environmental impacts.

>> Tovo: Thank you for bringing my attention to that. And then there were some --

[11:29:35 AM]

thank you, councilmember Kelly, for including those elements in there. When I was looking through it again I didn't immediately see that. Several people have asked questions about public thanks and we've had a discussion about this. I don't know whether it will fit in the posting language for 55, but I would note that those are some of the additions that both the mayor and I suggested for 57 and so that might be the better way to explore it. But one example is the bank of North Dakota. North Dakota I think is one of the only states that actually has a public bank but it does get back to this may help us address some of the questions that we discussed awhile back, possibly before most of us were on this dais. About who we use as the bank for the city of Austin at that time. And I forgot who among my colleagues initiated the conversation, but I know my office has followed up with staff about it. We asked about whether or not the city of Austin could use a credit union for our banking and the answer to

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that question was no after a lot of conversation and discussion, but this is -- I think this is an exciting area to consider for all of those reasons because it also helps us think through whether that would be an option for answering some of the questions we had long ago about who we bank with and how we might better use our banking institution to really help meet some additional community needs. Obviously it's a huge undertaking and maybe beyond what we can do in the city of Austin but I think it's a worthy conversation to explore.

>> Alter: Councilmember kitchen, did you still want to speak?

>> I don't need -- I appreciate what everyone has been saying and I agree with that. I just wanted to when staff comes back and lets us know your timing, if you feel

[11:31:35 AM]

this timing is too tight I would like to understand if more time would be helpful because it's important to be realistic about what it will take for you to do this analysis. So I just encourage you to be -- think through how much time it will take. I think what's important here is we have the information coming back to us and within a realistic time frame. And we also understand that we have to understand all the aspects of it and it would take a lot more discussion before we implement something like this. I want to reiterate what I said and on others have said. I think it's important to take this step to do this fact finding study and I trust that our staff and city manager that you will think through what is realistic in terms of the time it will take for you all to do that and you will let us know and I will trust your judgment on that.

[11:32:42 AM]

>> Alter: Any other comments or thoughts? I did have one question just to flag for the city attorney. I might bring some direction on 57 with respect to some other technologies that we're not doing so well on. So I'm going to want to talk to you about whether that

[indiscernible] A better direction or amendments because I really do believe we need to make sure that we're addressing things like timesheets and websites and we have capital management basic technology before we enter too far afield or at least know what the problems are there for that. Councilmember Kelly.

>> Kelly: I appreciate everyone's comments on the resolution. I think I have a better idea of where we're at on Thursday. I wanted to mention specifically to councilmember pool that the updated version that I was able to get co-sponsors for on this resolution differs in what we had originally

[11:33:42 AM]

discussed before you let me know you couldn't be a co-sponsor. So I really appreciate you talking about it now. As far as mayor pro tem's comments about the innovation office, I would like to know if this isn't a feasible timeline for coming back to council, what would be? And also I would like to say that perhaps we should consider this a a council as a whole if we're putting too much to staff on all the resolutions that we're bringing forward, not just this one. I think that overtaxing staff is something that we need to be very cautious of. So thank you.

>> Alter: Councilmember Kelly, I agree with you and I've often wondered whether we should do a moratorium on resolutions a little while and have a little bit of breathing space, but when I floated that I've not seen much support for it are

[11:34:45 AM]

there any comments on the agenda that we need to address because my intention is we will go to executive session and not come back out other than me closing the meeting at some point. I'll talk about timing in a second, but I want to see if there are any items to pull or any comments on items on the agenda outside of executive session. Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: Just a head's up for everyone. There's been a memo requesting postponement of item number 63 which is the vmu 2 item. There may be some -- the reason behind that has to do with technicalities around public notice so I'm up -- I've been checking with legal to see if we can go forward. If we are able to I would like to. If not it would be postponed until April -- whatever that next meeting is. So that's just a head's up for folks that we're having the -- we're doing some double-check to go see if it has to be postponed.

[11:35:47 AM]

>> Alter: If it doesn't, if you could make sure that we know.

>> Kitchen: I'll talk to legal today. I've asked legal already and I don't know if they've had a chance to look at it or not.

>> It will be postponed.

>> Kitchen: So legally it has to be postponed?

>> Yes.

>> Kitchen: We have no discretion?

>> That's correct.

>> Kitchen: Thank you.

>> Alter: Council member Fuentes.

>> Fuentes: I had a question regarding the downtown Austin community court. Councilmember tovo is that being postponed or is that still on the agenda?

>> Tovo: So council member, I can't answer that question. I know we just got a memo today with some information comparing the two buildings that we asked. I'm not sure, you know, what the conversation -

- I know the mayor and I have a conversation tomorrow with some individuals and I'm not sure, colleagues, where you all are with this question. So I'm sorry that I can't answer that question.

>> Mayor pro tem?

>> Fuentes: Is it worth us having a conversation today

[11:36:49 AM]

about the court?

>> Tovo: I haven't yet had an opportunity to read the memo that we just got this morning so that's certainly going to inform my thinking about it. And I would say without the mayor on the dice I would prefer waiting for that conversation.

>> Pool: And I may be able to help with some information on this. I have talked with the mayor about postponing items 13 and 14 and he had indicated that he intended to make that request, but he's I guess out of town and so I'll make that request on his behalf and anybody else's who is interested in having it postponed. And I think that that should be all right with you, councilmember tovo, hopefully.

>> Tovo: Again, this is -- I think this is a conversation that we need to have as a council. Certainly if there is a motion to postpone it.

>> Yes, there will be.

>> Tovo: Yes, I will

[11:37:50 AM]

certainly support that. I think that it's important to recognize that the downtown Austin community is a [indiscernible]. I appreciate you asking. Yes, I will -- if the mayor is making a postponement request, I'll certainly support that. Thank you for that info.

>> Pool: As a backup, you can put me on as the request for it, but he and I discussed it yesterday. Thanks.

>> Staff is available to walk through that memo. I know it was just issued yesterday evening so if there is a space or time or a desire from council we stand ready to walk through that information that was provided to you recently.

>> Kitchen: Are you talking about on 63?

>> No, on the downtown community court.

>> Alter: So if there are no other items. It looks like we have three executive session items, which I'll go through when I say we go into closed

[11:38:54 AM]

session. Then the possibility of coming back for a further discussion about the municipal building and the downtown Austin community court, items 13 and 14, to continue that conversation if folks decide they want to do that. I don't really know how long the executive session items are going to take. I would propose that we take a break until 1:00 P.M. And convene remotely for executive session and work our way through that. The mayor had hoped to be there for the third executive session. I know I have to leave at 4:00, so I don't want to push too far with that, but my guess is that by the time we get in there and get settled and take the other two items we may be at 2:30 anyway which is when he gets off the plane and he can dial in remotely.

[11:39:56 AM]

And if there is a desire to take up the municipal court maybe we can do that after that. If people want that presentation I'm going to let people have a few minutes to decide whether that is something that they want presented since that was raised. So I'm just saying that that is the only thing that as of this point we might come back out for after executive session if it is the will of the council. I understand that some of you don't want that, but we have to let folks digest that and they can let me know if that's something that two of our colleagues want to have later. Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: I just wanted to suggest if it works for people to maybe shorten our lunch period so it's not an hour and 15 minutes, give or take, but closer to maybe 45 minutes, if it's okay with people. So maybe we come back at -- instead of 1:00, maybe we come back at -- 12:30 would

[11:40:57 AM]

work for me. If people need more time, maybe 12:45.

>> Alter: So councilmember kitchen, I was trying to accommodate trying to have the mayor there for the third executive session which is why I thought it would be easier not to go in and out of executive session, but just take a break. Ordinarily your method would be more efficient, but given the topic, I wanted to try to see if we could make it so he could participate in that discussion. To the extent possible. Otherwise we'll have to have it again and I don't think we're -- I don't think we'll have time and I don't think we're noticed for it for Thursday. For the third executive session. Okay. So we are going -- councilmember tovo.

>> Tovo: One other suggestion for the presentation on the dacc if there's going to be a move to postpone it on Thursday, we could also do the presentation on Thursday and have the conversation on that day, which gives people an opportunity to see the

[11:41:58 AM]

memo, have additional conversations. I'm agnostic except that I also have a short time frame where I can be here today and it sounds like we're going to be pushing right up into it with moving the executive session until later. So I certainly want to be there for the conversation about the dacc and again I'm -- I would say the mayor probably does as well. I'm not sure about whether he would be able to participate in that presentation. Later in the day.

>> Alter: Okay. Is that something that --

[indiscernible]. I'm not hearing that there's -- I'm hearing there are folks who don't want to do it. You're giving me too many options here.

>> I'm fine with us having that presentation on Thursday if that's more efficient to ensure that the majority of the dais is available for that conversation.

>> I'll reiterate in the meantime certainly review the memo that staff sent and reach out with any additional questions, put them on the q&a because

[11:42:59 AM]

staff is still moving this forward and has the items for consideration on the council's agenda and we stand ready to answer any questions until that time.

>> Alter: Okay. So then we will plan to move to executive session for the three items starting at 1:00. And if everybody can be on time and we will move through those and, you know, we'll do our best that the mayor can be present for some of the executive session item 3, but that will allow us to move through our material. So are there any other comments before I go into closed session? So let me read the script. The city council will now go into closed session to take up three items. Pursuant to section 551.071 of the government code, the city council will discuss legal issues related to e1, Wiley scooter cheat haam et Al versus the city of

[11:44:00 AM]

Austin, mayor Adler et Al. E2, Jennifer virdem versus the city of Austin. United States district court for the western district of Texas, Austin division. E3, Acuna, et Al, versus city of Austin et Al. 201st judicial

district of Travis county Texas. Is there any objection to going into executive session on the items announced? Hearing none, the council will now go into executive session. It is 11:44. Just a reminder to my colleagues, if you go down there, there's water damage so be careful that you don't slip. And there's also water in the executive session room.

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>> Alter: Are you ready for me. We've concluded our discussion of legal issues related to items be 1, e2 and e3. I'm mayor pro tem Alison alter. Today is March 22nd, 2022. The time is 45:03 and the -- 4:03. We are out of closed session. In closed session we discussed legal issues related to items e1, e2 and e3. I think that's what I need to be saying. Thank you for bearing with me. With that at 4:04 on Tuesday, March 22nd, I adjourn the work session of the Austin city council.