



AUSTIN WATER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING
February 23, 2022**

The Austin Water Oversight Committee convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas and via videoconference from remote locations.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Chair Vanessa Fuentes	Council Member Leslie Pool
Vice Chair Ann Kitchen	Mayor Pro Tem Alison Alter

Additional Council Members in Attendance:

Council Member Kathie Tovo

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fuentes called the Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

No members of the public registered to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1. Approve the minutes of the January 20, 2022 regular meeting of the Austin Water Oversight Committee**

The minutes of the January 20, 2022 regular meeting were approved on **Vice Chair Kitchen's motion and Council Member Pool's second, on a 4-0 vote.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

- 2. Discussion and possible action on recommendations to Council for Council action on issues related to the February 5, 2022 boil water event**

Chair Fuentes provided a recap of Council's prior sessions regarding the February 2022 boil water event and written communications from Austin Water. She noted that the Committee just received additional written responses to Council questions. Austin Water Director Greg Meszaros confirmed that these latest responses would be distributed to the full Council. Austin Water will also provide sensitive information regarding critical infrastructure during a closed session of Council, planned for March 1. The report from an ongoing investigation will also be provided to Council in a few weeks.

Austin Water Assistant Director of Environmental, Planning and Development Services, Kevin Critendon provided a presentation on the role of the Ullrich Water Treatment Plant in Austin Water's distribution system. Assistant Director Critendon and Assistant Director of Engineering Services, Shay Ralls Roalson responded to questions. Austin Water Assistant Director of Customer Experience, Randi Jenkins provided an overview of recommendations regarding proposed water utility bill credits, wastewater averaging adjustments and leak adjustments.

Chair Fuentes presented a draft resolution to explore a few different mitigation options to address boil water event impacts. First, the resolution seeks options to address adverse water bill impacts experienced by Austin water customers. Second, the resolution would explore the potential of reallocating existing funds from within the Austin Water budget to invest in the utility's infrastructure. This reallocation would be in lieu of billing adjustments.

Austin Water Director Meszaros noted that in addition to infrastructure investments, keeping the resolution language flexible by also referencing Austin Water's operating budget could allow for recommendations to reallocate operating funds for such items as enhanced training or addressing staffing vacancies. A friendly amendment from Mayor Pro Tem Alter was accepted by the Committee to further clarify the resolution. At Council Member Tovo's request, the Committee agreed that Council Member Tovo could be an additional resolution co-sponsor. **On a motion by Chair Fuentes and a second by Vice Chair Kitchen, a recommendation to submit the resolution to the full Council passed on a 4-0 vote.**

BRIEFINGS

3. Director's Report:

- a. Upcoming recommendations for Council action**
- b. Innovations, events and awards**

Austin Water staff did not present a report.

4. Emergency Preparedness Plan as required by Texas Senate Bill 3 adopted in 2021 in response to Winter Storm Uri

Austin Water Assistant Director of Engineering Services, Shay Ralls Roalson provided a briefing on Senate Bill 3 requirements that Austin Water completed by November 1, 2021, related to designation of water and wastewater infrastructure for critical load lists. She also described features of Austin Water's emergency preparedness plan for power outages that is nearly complete. Senate Bill 3 requires all Texas water utilities to submit this plan to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) by March 1, 2022.

5. Federal Water and Wastewater Funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Austin Water Financial Manager, Christina Romero provided a briefing on the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that was signed into law by President Biden in November 2021. This act includes \$2.9 billion that the Texas Water Development Board is estimated to receive over 5 years to expand their existing Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan programs. Manager Romero provided a summary of drinking water and wastewater projects that Austin Water is funding with current Texas Water

Development Board loans. These represent \$266.6 million in loan commitments and \$197.7 million in loan closings so far, yielding \$34 million in present value savings to date for Austin Water customers. Austin Water is considering another \$550 million in additional projects for future Texas Water Development Board loans, including a major aquifer storage and recovery project.

FUTURE ITEMS

6. Identify items to discuss at future meetings

Chair Fuentes requested an overview of the service extension request process and a briefing on Austin Water's purple pipe (reclaimed water) program. Chair Fuentes also noted that Mayor Pro Tem Alter requested a briefing on wildfire mitigation strategies. Vice Chair Kitchen requested an update on the status of the entire Water Forward Plan, as scheduling permits.

ADJOURN

Chair Fuentes adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m. without objection.

Link to meeting video and presentations: [February 23, 2022 Austin Water Oversight Committee](#)

The minutes were approved on this the 31st day of March, 2022 on Council Member Pool's motion and Mayor Pro Tem Alter's second on a 4-0 vote.