



DRAFT

**AUSTIN WATER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
March 31, 2022**

The Austin Water Oversight Committee convened in a special called meeting on Thursday, March 31, 2022 at Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas and via videoconference.

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 Paige Ellis Council Member Kathie Tovo

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fuentes called the Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

No members of the public registered to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1. Approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022 regular meeting of the Austin Water Oversight Committee**

The minutes of the February 23, 2022 regular meeting were approved on **Council Member Pool's motion and Mayor Pro Tem Alter'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 recent interactions with staff regarding the February 2022 boil water event since the Committee last met on February 23, 2022. Austin Water sent a memo to Council on March 22 in response to resolutions from the Committee and Council regarding reinvestment alternatives to issuing a goodwill billing credit. Additionally, Austin Water provided investigation reports to Council on March 29. On March 30 the Audit and Finance Committee discussed the execution of the Austin Water external audit.

Austin Water Director Greg Meszaros introduced Austin Water Treatment Operations Manager, Stephanie Sue, who gave a presentation on the findings from Austin Water's investigation reports and corrective actions. She described Austin Water's advance preparations for anticipated winter weather. She then provided a detailed timeline of the events that occurred over three shifts at the Ullrich Water Treatment Plant that led to the boil water notice. She discussed actions Austin Water has taken to address investigation findings and reduce future risk, including increased remote monitoring, enhanced process automation where feasible, procedure clarifications and expanded training. She also described additional action items and ongoing improvements underway for all three of Austin Water's drinking water plants.

In response to the February 23 recommended resolution from the Committee and the March 3 resolution from Council, Operations Manager Sue outlined Austin Water's March 22 recommendations to seek Council approval to modernize procedural software and add 16 FTEs to expand water treatment plant supervision, increase core staffing, strengthen regulatory support and enhance staff training. Director Meszaros discussed the funding impacts of these recommendations.

Questions from the Committee and guest Council members were addressed by Operations Manager Sue, Austin Water Assistant Director of Business Services, Anna Bryan-Borja and Director Meszaros. Committee members noted additional information needed, including timelines for further improvements, progress updates, and how Austin Water's operations compare to other utilities and industry standards.

Vice Chair Kitchen made the following motion with a second by Council Member Pool:

The Austin Water Oversight Committee supports Austin Water staff recommendations for Austin Water to seek full Council approval to add FTEs and modernize software in lieu of billing credits, as outlined in a memo to Mayor and Council dated March 22, 2022, and recommends Council approve this proposal when Austin Water brings this as an item for Council approval.

The motion passed on a 3-0 vote with Mayor Pro Tem Alter off the dais.

Chair Fuentes then introduced Robert Goode who attended the meeting. Mr. Goode will be serving as Austin Water's new Interim Director as of April 11, 2022. Committee members welcomed back Mr. Goode and expressed appreciation to Director Meszaros for his 15 years of service with Austin Water.

FUTURE ITEMS

3. Identify items to discuss at future meetings

Chair Fuentes reminded the Committee that at the prior meeting, a discussion of future items included an overview of Austin Water's 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 previously requested a briefing on wildfire mitigation strategies. Chair Fuentes announced that the Committee members were scheduled to tour Austin Water's Ullrich Water Treatment Plant on April 15, 2022 and that Council Member Ellis was welcome to attend.

ADJOURN

Chair Fuentes adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m. without objection

Link to meeting video and presentation: [March 31, 2022 Austin Water Oversight Committee Meeting](#)