

# Austin City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript – 7/21/2022

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[10:10:08 AM]

Mayor Adler: Let's go ahead and convene this Special Called City Council Meeting. Today is Thursday, July 21st, 2022 were in City Council, Chambers. We have a quorum that are present. We're going to go ahead we have, five items today on our agenda. Four of them, deal with reproductive rights and access. One of them is a briefing dealing with, emergency responses to extreme, extreme heat and cold, as was posted on the message board yesterday. It's my intent to have us introduce the four reproductive rights and access issues, all of them together. I'm gonna to give anybody who wants it, the opportunity really quickly just to, to lay out those four, uh, items. And then we'll go to speakers as requested by the clerk before we take the break. Were going to begin with remote

[10:11:04 AM]

Speakers first, because that was the easier thing to do, and we'll do that up until, and then last we get to a high level, with respect to Covid at our health authority, asks us to, go back to dealing with in person speakers first. and then, so real quick brief layout of items. Then we'll get to the speakers. Speakers are going to speak for two minutes each, that will have us probably about an hour and a half. and then, we'll come back up to the floor all four items will be on the floor together. You can speak to any, or all of the floor. The hope is, is that we have a chance maybe to actually take the vote on all four items before noon. Let's see if we could get that done. We'll then take a recess. As Council member Vela pointed out

[10:12:05 AM]

There's a press conference at noon. It's also been noticed as a continuation of the Council Meetings, so everyone can attend that if they want to, we'll have lunch, the conclusion of the press conference, we will reconvene the meeting, hopefully just for the, briefing, and at the end of the briefing, that will be our, our

[10:13:04 AM]

day. Any questions about how we're going to proceed? Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: At the appropriate time, I just would like to be listed as a co-sponsor on items three and four. I'm already a cosponsor on item two. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Would the record clerk please reflect that. Yes. Ellis? >> Ellis: I would also like to be added as a cosponsor on item three. I appreciate you bringing that forward. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. The record will reflect that as well. At any point in the day you can go ahead and anybody can do that. Councilmember tovo? >> Tovo: I'll go ahead and do it now, too, just for the clerk's sake. If I could also be added as a cosponsor on three and four, please. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. So noted. All right. Yes, mayor pro tem? >> Alter: Thank you. I'd like to be added, I think I'm not on item three but I'm on item two and four already.

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>> Mayor Adler: Okay. If the clerk would please note that as well. Council member Fuentes the. >> Fuentes: I would also like to be added as a cosponsor on item three. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. So noted as well. Before we get to the public eakers would anyone like to speak to any of the four items? Councilmember Vela and then councilmember Fuentes. >> Vela: Thank you very much, mayor. I never thought when I was running six months ago for city council that I would be here offering a resolution to try and decriminalize abortion in Austin. It's an unfortunate series of events that has brought us here, but we know what the criminalization of abortion will do. It will drive it underground. It will not reduce the number of abortions. It will just endanger women,

[10:15:07 AM]

their health. And I do not want someone who tries to perform their own abortion or go through an amateur provider for abortion to fear seeking health treatment after something goes wrong. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to make sure that more people don't get hurt, don't get injured, and that they do not delay finding healthcare. Thank you to all of the cosponsors and to the dias, and I look forward to debating and the resolution and listening to all of the testimony. >> Mayor Adler: Fuentes? >> Fuentes: Thank you for the special called meeting. I joined council in response to the recent scotus ruling. Like many individuals throughout our state and country, we are heartbroken, we are angry, frustrated, and also confused.

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And so it's important that we, at the local level, step up and take action to provide protections. We know that criminalizing abortion does not mean that abortion will not happen. That it will go away. So it's important that we offer these ordinance changes and policies so that we do all that we can to fight back reproductive freedoms and for abortion access here in Austin. Item number one is an ordinance

change to our nondiscrimination policy. This is based on previous resolution that council unanimously -- or the council adopted back in may. So this initiates an ordinance change that is specific to nondiscrimination in housing and employment. And it includes the term "Reproductive health action" which I want to point out includes family planning, services, abortion, birth control, emergency contraception, sterilization. Many people are choosing sterilization given the dark

[10:17:08 AM]

times that we're in. Pregnancy testing, fertility related medical procedures, sexually transmitted disease, prevention and treatment. This is an ordinance change that will update the policy to include explicit protection against employment and housing discrimination based on reproductive health decisions. >> Vela: As I appreciate as I'm sure the dias does, councilmembers vela and Fuentes, bringing this meeting and bringing the G.R.A.C.E. Act. Obviously timing, I think it's really important that Austin city council be of record in support of reproductive rights and access. In discussion with colleagues, we've added items three and four to the agenda. Item number three speaks to

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gender equity in this issue, reproductive responsibility, all too often unfortunately falls to the responsibility of women which means not only the physical responsibility but the mental and psychological burdens associated with that. That's something that is not just or fair, so this is something that speaks to making sure that the wide range of reproductive responsibility and options is something that is discussed and made available. The studies indicate that when the wide range of services are available, more equitable and just awareness and assumption of responsibilities is something that happens. What we're talking about real

[10:19:12 AM]

specifically is greater knowledge vasectomies. It is something that is 95% reversible, by the way. But for those people where that's something that that works, it creates a greater and fairer sharing of that responsibility. And so this is something that we have added in item number three. All four of the men on the dias stepped forward to sponsor. Whoops, there aren't four men on the dias, so we appreciate councilmember pool being one of the initial sponsors of this, and appreciate other colleagues also joining -- joining in. And then item number four, this

[10:20:14 AM]

deals with the la gist tick call support for women that are speaking abortions. As we know, this city council has taken action to try T ensure that our residents have equal access to that healthcare in equal measure, regardless of financial position. When our state passed a law that prohibited cities there from providing direct support for abortion, we then moved to a place where we offered logistical support for

women in our community. The state then passed a law that at least put into question whether or not cities could provide logistical support for women that were seeking that

[10:21:17 AM]

measure of care in cities where that care was, in fact, legal. Ms. Morgan, there was a legal question submitted to the legal department asking if that was something that was legal for us to do. The response came back from legal department saying that none of the service providers that we were offering that service through were continuing to offer that support. Didn't quite address the legal question of whether or not -- if there was one, whether we could, in fact, continue to fund that. It seems to me that offering support for our residents to be able to receive healthcare treatment in states where that healthcare treatment is, in fact, legal and is otherwise provided for as part of our

[10:22:19 AM]

health plan, where that treatment is legal is something that constitutionally should be protected under interstate commerce clause among other areas. I would imagine that's going to be a debated issue -- and this last item asks you to look at that and come back to us during the budget process as we take a look at the insurance coverage that we have as employees. So I think that those are the items that are in front of us. Anybody else want to say anything before we get to the public discussion? Councilmember Renteria? >> Renteria: Yes, pertaining to item three, I just want to let me male colleagues and my male friends, I want to let them know that 49 years ago I got a vasectomy because I didn't want my wife to be on birth control

[10:23:20 AM]

pills. And back then we didn't know what side effects those pills would have on a female. And there was a lot of report about cancer with birth control at that time. So I didn't hesitate a minute. I went ahead and got my vasectomy. I recommend everybody that don't want to have children, males that don't want to have children, to go ahead and take one because you can reverse it. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember pool? >> Pool: Mayor, I had to step off the dias briefly, so you may have already addressed this. But if not, could you let everybody know about the press conference that we're going to have these particular resolutions later on this morning? >> Mayor Adler: And we did address that. We're going to try to get -- see if we can get the vote on all four items. We're going to call them up to the floor all at the same time, see if we can take that break at noon for the press conference. Noticed as a council meeting so all of the councilmembers who

[10:24:21 AM]

wish to, can attend. And then we'll have lunch and then come back and, after that, for the briefing. Should be noted that councilmember Kelly is not with us today. She's having some previously scheduled

surgery at the time of this special called meeting. It's something that was scheduled months ago, and we're certainly all wishing her the best today as she goes through that. Clerk, if you will go ahead and call the speakers, beginning with the remote speakers. Everyone has two minutes. >> My hand is raised, actually. Councilmember harper-madison. >> Harper: No worries. I know we're going to have briefing about this subject matter later on today but for folks who don't get the opportunity to stick around all that time, I think it might be prudent for us to start meetings

[10:25:22 AM]

like this on days like this when taken the opportunity to remind people about heat advisory warning is scheduled until 7:00 P.M. Just some general best practices. Top three, stay hydrated, stay inside where you're able to and find shelter should you start to feel sick. I heard an ems professional say something earlier. It was an easy, quick, easy, see something, call something, cool off, something like that. I'll find out exactly how they said that. I just want to remind folks to take care of themselves today. The heat is really, really no joke. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you for that. All right. Let's go ahead then and move to the remote speakers. >> Clerk: The first speakers speaking on items one, two, three and four the Jordan Middlebrooks. >> Hi, council. I just wanted to say thank you for having me here to speak with you all virtually and for taking the time to have this special

[10:26:25 AM]

session. I very strongly support the G.R.A.C.E. Act and also the accessibility of contraception for both women identifying, men identifying, cis gendered, trans, or however they identify, and so I'm very glad to see that our city is taking action on that and I'm hoping that we can increase the level of accessibility of contraception so that abortion doesn't have to become an option. And also that we can decriminalize abortion as much as possible. I think the G.R.A.C.E. Act is the first -- is a great first step and I'm also curious to see what else might be in the city's control or in our control as a municipality. So thank you all for taking the time. And I will go ahead and waive my time. >> Clerk: For item number two,

[10:27:26 AM]

Sarah barber. >> Hi, council. Thank you for having this special session. I'm a resident of district four and I support the G.R.A.C.E. Act. I could go over many topics and how this recent transformation of laws changes everything that I've known, such as how this dehumanizes people's bod bodies to only function only, autonomy and family planning, violation of individual's privacy, how demotes people with a uterus to an inferior group, defringesn other issues like medications for unrelated illnesses simply because a person has a uterus, how this is not based on scientific or medical standards, infringes on other people's religious freedom. But instead I'll focus on the financial implication and repercussion for city and state. What kind of a financial strain is this city and state willing

[10:28:26 AM]

to experience? What kinds of financial strains is state law going to put on an already exasperated care system and judicial system? What doctor is going to practice in the state or city when they must choose between patient's health and going to prison? I work at UT. How many students will UT and other higher education institutions in this state and city lose because they fear about -- because of their fear about medical care or criminal repercussions? Anti-choice legislatures are already putting forth a slate of proposals for next session including allowing das from anywhere in the state to prosecute violations if a local da refuses to enforce abortion laws. Where does this city council stand on this matter and how will these radical proposals change the nature that G.G.R.A.C.E. Will operate in the city? Thank you for your time and thank you for bringing up the

[10:29:26 AM]

G.R.A.C.E. Act. >> Clerk: Item two, Connor Brovy. >> Hello. Thank you, council. I appreciate the time. I just wanted to make a quick comment. I am strongly for the G.R.A.C.E. Act as well as the other items for logistics. One of my outside concerns that I'm not sure will be raised today with Austin ISD, looking to update sexual education curriculum in the relative near future. I'm aware not only about Austin but areas outside of Austin not having proper sexual education for kids k-12 which may in fact increase the risk for unwanted pregnancies. So I'm hoping that this would kind of afford a prediction barring any insufficient sexual education decision made for the independent school districts. So just wanted to note that.

[10:30:27 AM]

Thank you. >> Clerk: Item two, Elaine that Seldandenspaws. >> Thank you. I appreciate your efforts. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to speak on this issue. I'm similarly very much in support of the G.R.A.C.E. Act. I was -- I grew up in planned parenthood basically because my mom was heavily involved. And I have been volunteering for a long time. It's been an important part of my life as well as the lives of people who are close to me who, without the access to fair and affordable reproductive care, they wouldn't have made it to the point that they are today,

[10:31:29 AM]

including friends who, you know, are people who are interested in conceiving but, in fact, have issues that prevent them from being able to carry to term who discovered that during the experience of going through pregnancy, without the opportunity of being able to access these forms of healthcare, wouldn't be here today with me. I really appreciate that we are taking this first step forward, away from the things that are happening in our supreme court, and I hope this can keep moving forward. Thank you. >> Clerk: Item two, Samantha Douglas. >> Hi, my name is Samantha

[10:32:30 AM]

Douglas. Thank you for having this meeting. I do support the G.R.A.C.E. Act as well. I just have three quick points as a community member and one professionally. As a member of the community, the majority of people support the right to choose what's best for their health along with their healthcare provider which includes medical abortion. Second, me and my husband would like to have one more child. But to be honest, we're scared knowing how common miscarriages are and they don't always come to completion naturally. I certainly do not want to die in order to have a third child. And I know that healthcare providers are scared to offer medical -- medical care for fear of being prosecuted. My obgyn providerractices in Travis county so I was in round Rock in Williamson county. Third, I think that if Austin city council supports the G.R.A.C.E. Act it will help them to contact to follow in your

[10:33:30 AM]

footsteps. And then professionally, I am a certified genetic counselor. I provide educational healthcare to patients that want to know the risk of inherited disease. I speak to patients who live in Austin. I know that there are many wanted pregnancies that are not compatible with the life of the baby once it's Borns. As I'm sure you know, pregnancy is not a health neutral event it can be very dangerous for the mother and I'm worried about my patients' ability to access safe abortions that are in line with their family planning. So thank you very much for listening and thank you for calling this special session. >> Clerk: Mayor, that actually concludes the remote speakers so I'll move over to in-person. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Clerk: The first speaker in-person is item one, Cecelia wood.

[10:34:43 AM]

>> Good morning. My name is sees Celia wood. I'm a resent of driblght district 5 Andi've lived in Austin nonstep since '92 and a great deal of time between 1976 and 1992. I am opposed to all of these ordinances and resolutions but I wanted to raise an issue that I think may have a consequence considered and that's on the employment and mostly on the employment. If a person is faced or practice or a hospital that's giving rights and privileges to different providers, if they are forced by this council to employ someone who then -- who is going to perform abortions or they discover and cannot hire -- fire that person, then they are going to be in conflict between this piece of legislation, this ordinance, and senate bill 8 because Dobbs did not affect

[10:35:45 AM]

senate bill 8. In fact, the new house bill 2080 actually raises the liability for someone who AIDS and abets. So what WRE going to see, I think, is not just abortion provers leaving the city of Austin, but also all women's healthcare obstetricians, gynecologists, all of them leaving the city of Austin, which for someone like me who has a car, who can still get around, that's not a big problem. I can drive to Hayes county, I can drive into, you know, parts of Williamson county that aren't in the city of Austin. But for many, many people, the people that you often or most of the time are working to make sure to get included that they won't be able to take a bus to their doctor if there's no one to treat them in the city

of Austin or in their neighborhood. So I would ask that you would consider that you are putting people who may not even be

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involved directly in the politics of this into a very precarious position. Thank you. >> Clerk: Speakingn items one through four, Mary castle and up next is Jerry sharp. >> Good morning, members. My name is Mary Elizabeth castle. I live in district 1 but I'm also the senior policy adviser for Texas values. I'm testifying against all four agenda items being used for political posturing to support abortion after the overturn of roe versus wade which makes it clear there's no constitutional right to abortion and also makes clear that the state laws outlaws abortion are in place. I ask you to vote no on the ordinance. You know, this city council has a bold history of pushing pro-abortion activism every time the's legal question on that

[10:37:46 AM]

right. It has been commonplace since the passage of sb-22 that the city council will make certain measures that aren't in compliance with current law or current opinion of city residents. Now that city council wants to ignore the -- overturning the roe versus wade and advance abortion in our city, in particular this ordinance would basically make women who seek an abortion a protective class. That could definitely create problems and I know that the end goal is to protect them from criminalization under any type of laws -- well, to protect doctors from criminalization for performing an abortion. An on agenda item two, it has several flaws. It falsely states miscarriages is criminalized. It is not. It onl criminalizes doctors for performing abortion and miscarriage is not an abortion. Also, there are no statistics provided in this ordinance that says denying, you know, an

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abortion would dramatically increase risk or death or bodily injury. Abortion itself increases death and bodily injury. I ask you to vote no on item number two as well. On item number three, I think money could better be spent on giving to pregnancy resource centers that could actually help women who are in need if they find themselves in a situation where they're worried about their job, they're worried about taking care of their child. All of this money could go to the plenty of resource centers in the city of Austin to help these women, but instead we're doing this for medical procures. So I ask you to vote no on all four. And I would just you to question the legality of number four since you're currently in let investigation for funding abortion at the moment. Thank you. >> Clerk: Items one, two, and four, Jerry sharp. Followed by Amy Perez.

[10:39:48 AM]



>> Yes, thank you, councilmembers. My name is Jerry. I'm a resident of district 1. I'm addressing council today again on agenda items one, two, and four in opposition of y'all taking any further action as written on this consent agenda. I specifically want to address the concern that this language is unclear given comments from certain councilmembers regarding what is in the actual bill versus what the intent of the language is supposed to direct staffers, especially the city manager, to -- what you're asking them to do. Specifically whether that's de-prioritizing or decriminalizing, I want to reiterate that -- that resources can be utilized to actually help women and parents in this city, in this county as well because we do address a lot of those through a lot of contracted

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and -- excuse me, contracted pregnancy resource centers as well as adoption agencies and maternity homes. So I just ask council, especially the mayor, to reconsider this to work the work session Tuesday as well as when you also consider this next -- next meeting. So I encourage the council to push this to wait for further -- further advisement from your legal offices, as well as your staff, which you are tasking them to almost create this impossible ask of them. So thank you so much. >> Clerk: Amy Perez on item two. Followed by Arlene Lazano. Arlene Lazano?

[10:41:59 AM]

Next we have Ashley Lenerds? >> Members of the council, my name is Ashley Lenerds. I live in district 10. I'm here to testify against item numbers two and four. Item number two, first -- to individuals making their own reproductive healthcare decisions. There are few people opposed to people making their own reproductive decisions before reproductive occurs. The problem is these decisions don't concern reproductive before it takes place but after. After another person has already been conceived, their DNA has been formed and unique little person has entered the equation. Once reproductive has happened this is no longer a reproductive decision. It is a human rights issue. Where a larger and stronger people decide that a smaller and weaker person is dispensable I believe and not deserving of life. Our state legislature has properly passed our abortion

[10:43:00 AM]

laws with the intent of protecting innocent human life from the violence and injustice -- injustice of abortion. And these laws must be fully enforced. We also need to stand with families, with mothers and fathers. We need to expand access to adoption. We need to have more resources from others. We need more pregnant and parent-friendly workplaces and schools. We also need to work to improve these but as we do we do not need to end pre-born children's lives. The problem is not the child. The problem is the society that does not value the child. Please fund and support our adoption agencies, maternity homes and pregnancy resource centers. Promote option and healthy parenting programs. Incentivize businesses, schools and university to adopt more pregnant and parent-friendly policies. Please don't continue to promote the false narrative that women cannot succeed without the option of adoption.

While they are pregnant and as mothers. Please vote against item two and four and instead focus on making

[10:44:01 AM]

Austin a life-affirming city where every member of our human family is valued. Thank you. >> Clerk: Dr. Joe pagman, followed by Emily Witt. >> Mr. Mayor, members of the council, my name is Dr. Joe pagman, executive director of Texas alliance for life. I'm here to ask you to not adopt resolution two. It describes the human life protection life completely protects unborn children from the tragedy of abortion beginning at conception when the child comes into being. House bill 1280 which legislature passed in 2021 makes performing illegal box a first degree felony offense. Under the definition of abortion in Texas law, that's section 245002 health and safety code, treatment for miscarriage and

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atopic pregnancy are not abortions and cannot be prosecuted. That applies to house bill 1280 and to every other abortion law in Texas. Under no circumstances can a woman on whom an abortion is performed be held criminally or civilly liable. Under 1280 or any other law in Texas. Also in 1280 the legislature appropriated -- also in 2021 the legislature appropriated vast funds to assist women, especially low-income women with unplanned pregnancies. They appropriated 100 million-dollars for the current two-year budget for the alternatives to abortion program. That program provides services for women facing unplanned pregnancies to assist them in carrying the baby to term, giving birth, king the baby or placing the baby for adoption. Support is available for at least three years after the birth of the child from nearly 200 pregnancy centers, maternity homes and adoption agencies

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across the state including many here in Austin. It is our understanding that all three abortion providers in Austin have ceased performing abortions indefinitely. We think that the priority should be to promote alternatives to abortion, not to de-prioritize, protecting women from illegal abortion providers. Thank you. >> Clerk: Emily Witt, followed by Isabelle arerra. >> Good morning. My name is Emily Witt and I live in district 4. I'm here on behalf of Texas freedom network in support of item two and the G.R.A.C.E. Act overall. Today I'd like to share my personal story I'll straiting why the choice to approve measures are so vital especially after scotus' destoitioin overturn roe. When I was 18 I became pregnant after my birth control failed.

[10:47:04 AM]

I I had just graduated high school and off to college and I knew I was not in the best relationship for me. I knew a child could not fit into my life. I knew I wanted an abortion. But before I could make an appointment for one I had a miscarriage. I was relieved but felt shame in telling people. I grew up in

Oklahoma where the laws or lack of sex education and stigmatized views are not dissimilar to Texas'. No one had ever told me I needed to go to the doctor after a miscarriage so I didn't. I was lucky that I was okay. This was 11 years ago. I cannot imagine how scared I would be if I found myself in this situation now. Bleeding uncontrollably in my bathroom, unsure of what's happening to my body and fearful to go to the doctor because I might be accused of a crime. That fear would be multiplied if I were 18 or of color and greater risk of being criminalized for seeking the healthcare I need for my body and future. We know the people in Texas had been criminalized for their pregnancy outcomes since the passage of sb-8.

[10:48:05 AM]

And for decades people of color have been criminalized for outcomes across our country. Our city resources should not be used to terrorize and harass abortion seekers to choose to build their futures and families at a time that is best for them or to attack and scrutinize people who have experienced miscarriages. We are not criminals for becoming pregnant or needing healthcare. Pregnant people should know they should safely seek medical care no matter what and medical providers should have the right to provide that care without fear of prosecution. The barriers to abortion and full spectrum of reproductive healthcare already feel insurmountable in Texas. I hope the council will use the power they have to ensure we do not further criminalize people with law enforcement or our state by voting yes on agenda item two and the G.R.A.C.E. Act. Thank you. >> Clerk: Isabelle Arerra followed by Jeanine Florez.

[10:49:08 AM]

>> Howdy, mayor, councilmembers. I am a resident of district 7. I stand here before you in my capacity as a fellow with the national Latina institute for reproductive justice. I stand in strong favor of the G.R.A.C.E. Act as it is for the best way for the city to stand against a radical and dehumanizing policy we're seeing at the state level. It's easy to come up here and say awful things about women who need abortions without being in the situation yourselves. I'm not going to stand here and tell you all the details about my abortion story but I needed to go to two different states and it costs so much money and I had to get it from funds and orgs doing the groundwork that is necessary in the state of Texas. My abortion saved my life and I do not regret getting it in any capacity. So de-prioritizing the enforcement of the -- if the state's abortion laws is one of the best ways to protect the people who need abortions in the city. We have already seen people in Texas being criminalized for seeking the care they absolutely

[10:50:09 AM]

need for any reason that may be, they don't need to have, like, medical reason or anything like that. And we should do everything in our power from preventing that from occurring within our city limits. It is needing to have an abortion in the state of Texas is already such a dehumanizing experience and we deserve to treat all these people who can possibly get pregnant as what they are, people. Providing a check and additional guidance to the police department would be crucial to protect the right to get an abortion. Thank you so much. >> Clerk: Jeanine Florez, followed by Julian Deriety. >> Good morning. I am

Jeanine Florez, the executive director and founder of breath of life maternity ministries. I've lived here 26 years and I have no idea what district I live in and I've never spoken to

[10:51:10 AM]

the council but this was too important to pass up. When I need to ask is, as you're voted in as councilmembers, you're ignoring a huge portion, tens of thousands of constituents that believe strongly that those people that need help sometimes are within the womb. Across this state, there are 34 maternity homes. Seven of which are in central Texas, which gives us access, but I never see those items on this agenda. I never see this council going, hey, there are some alternatives to abortions. We should be king at and supporting. All I see is everything supporting your ideology and not supporting the constituents across your board. That's disappointing to me. And you can ignore what I'm saying right now and stare at your notes but you guys are being voted in to protect all of us, born or unborn. In the 22 years that this maternity home, Sarah's house,

[10:52:10 AM]

has been in Austin I recently had -- it's not the first time, a reporter from a large network come to me and say, Jeanine, what are you going to do now that roe V. Wade has been overturned. I stared at him. Dude, I'm going to do the same thing for 20 years in Austin. The women who need the help and want a true choice which includes a place to live when dad says abort or don't come home, when the boyfriend says, would you like me to beat the crud out of you again? Then go get an abortion. Those are the women that find themselves in our home and we need to be providing care, protection, and laws, and things seriously as you do this morning with the special meeting to promote abortion. I would really like to encourage the councilmembers to look at their constituents, ask them personally where they stand on this because in our home, both sides of the issues are represented, both sides volunteer because they believe that a choice includes a chance to carry that tiny child to te

[10:53:10 AM]

term. >> Clerk: Julianne followed by Kathleen brain. Kathleen brain? Natalie Webb. Rocky Gonzales? >> Good morning, Austin city council. I'm here largely this morning to thank you. My name is rocky Gonzales, deputy director at Austin justice coalition, and founder for terra fund, I abortion fund that serves my home and the Rio grande valley. I want to thank you for putting forth this work and leading the state with these Progressive policies.

[10:54:10 AM]

I am here today to speak obviously in support of this important resolution and to thank you in particular, councilmember vela, for your work and councilmember Fuentes and mayor Adler and the rest of you who he supported this work. Abortion is a moral and social good. It is a measure access to abortion is

the measure of public health and public safety. Ortion saves lives. Abortion provides an opportunity for our people to thrive. Forcing birth is immoral and wrong. Access to abortion is a human right sue with the ongoing housing crisis, energy crisis and urn employment rates, our city has no business wasting valuable resources on enforcing human rights violations at this point in time. Or ever. Austin has the right to self-governance as a city in Texas and councilmember vela's G.R.A.C.E. Act demonstrates the commitment this council has to stand up to Texas archaic law, both the sb-8 laws, the trigger

[10:55:13 AM]

bans as well as the pre-roë statutes now being enforced. In my 15 years as an abortion rights advocate and reproductive justice movement leader, I have personally escorted people who needed an abortion to their abortion. I have sat inside a room and held friends and family member's hands as they received an abortion. I have talked to literally hundreds of callers who have called our helplines to say, I need abortion. Will you please help me. The genuine amount of gratitude for the impact, the positive impact on their lives is something that has strengthened and enforced my commitment to this work over the many years. I will end by saying, again, that abortion is sacred, abortion is good, and thank you so much for this work. >> Clerk: Noway allies a followed by Libby arlos.

[10:56:21 AM]

>> Good morning, council. I'm from district 3. I'm here to speak in favor of item two and the G.R.A.C.E. Act overall. In my community we have always struggled with healthcare access and healthcare education. This is specially true with reproductive healthcare and reproductive healthcare education. Now with the supreme court decision and these Texas laws we are dealing with a criminalization of healthcare decisions. When we speak about criminalization we know that those often targeted are the most vulnerable communities, black, brown and low-income communities. So I want to thank you for taking this step to make sure that our city funds are not used to prosecute people for making a healthcare deciscn. I hope that we can also find other ways that the city can support austinites when they make these healthcare decisions. I want to thank you for doing this and thank you for your ti

[10:57:26 AM]

Libby Carlos, followed by Ashley Sosa. >> >> Good morning, councilmembers and Mr. Mayor. My name is Libby harlows and I currently work in Austin as legal intern 0 for Austin life. >> I am here to testify against item number 2 and ask that you do not adopt any of these resolutions. Online 4 and 5 in item number 2, you claim that access to abortion is a deciding factor in long-term quality of life. This cannot be further from the truth. Women don't need abortion. In fact, abortion actually leaves deep wounds of hurt and regret in a lot of women. I am sure on this council and in this room today.

[10:58:27 AM]

It is discouraging that the city that I work in and I have grown to love believes that in order for us women the majority of this council is women, you believe that in order for us women to succeed and thrive that we have to choose between our careers and our families. We have to choose between saving our children's lives or pursuing a career. As a young female professional working in Austin and pursuing a career in law, I want to live and work and thrive in a city that encourages me as a mother and as a young professional, I can do both. I want to live in a city where I don't have to choose between my family and my career. I want to live in a city that

[10:59:29 AM]

encourages me and reminds me that despite my circumstances I can still rise alongside my fellow sisters and fight for a future and fight for a future that values true women's equality. This is why I ask that you do not adopt any of these resolutions including resolution 2. Thank you, council women and Mr. Mayor and councilmen. ... >> Ashley Sosa, followed by Alexander stringer. >> >> Buenas Diaz my name is Ashley sew ozarks I am speaking against item 2. I am a first generation mexican-american and a proud resident born and raised in the

[11:00:29 AM]

northeast side of Austin, district 1, where despite the poverty level being one of the highest in the city we don't let that define us or keep us from achieving success. Being the youngest of four siblings I saw my parents struggling to give us the life they never had in Mexico. But they came to this country searching for a city they could call home and Austin was that city. Abortion has never been a part of my story, but my mother had the choice to abort me or give birth to me at 26 weeks. My mother chose life. I stand here today it is a first in my family to graduate from college and hold a bachelor's degree in communications. I never thought that I would have to use my degree to advocate for the defense less and for our women that are most vulnerable. This is why I believe women do not need abortions to succeed. Men deserve better than abortion. Instead, we need compassion and

[11:01:29 AM]

we need to provide alternatives to abortion. Please do not pass resolution 2. Thank you for your time. >> Alexander stringer and then Joslin Sanchez. .. Good morning, counsel. My name is Alexis the stringer and I want to express my the rage at the right wing extremists and governor Abbott what I can't do with my body. [Screaming] A hhhh hhhh hhhh!

[11:02:40 AM]

>> Sorry, guys. I am a little emotional it is that time of the month on my period. [Screaming] .. >> Listen, guys.

[11:03:40 AM]

The we got to make knees abortions mandatory, all right? We are in a climate emergency. We have got do reduce our carbon footprint and, you know, we are the carbon that needs to be reduced from this Earth. Thank you very much. Showtime Alex stringer on Instagram, thank you and praise maluk, thank you. >> >> Joslin Sanchez and Amy o'donnell. >> Mr. Stringer, you forgot your photo up here, I think. >> Your phone. >> Go ahead and call the speaker again. >> Joslin Sanchez. Amy o'donnell. Hello, councilmembers, mayor mayor Adler, the I am the 0 communicatiodirects at Texas

[11:04:41 AM]

alliance for life and here to speak against item number 2. I am also here today as a woman who knows what it is to be 22 years old, three months into marriage and five pregnancy tests later to find out my contraceptives failed and pregnant, finishing my last year of college at Texas A&M commuting from Austin to there with a biomedical engineering degree for three days of crying I got my mind wrapped around the fact I was in fact going to be a mom, facing that unplanned pregnancy was one of the hardest things I have ever done but at the time then and at the time now I have not believed the lie that women have to choose between their babies and a college degree between their babies and being successful. That lie has been perpetuated for the last 50 years and it has been stated through that lie that women need abortions to compete academically, vocationally or in any way and that is such an unfortunate miss truth. Abortion has been held us as the

[11:05:41 AM]

answer to women's inequality in higher education, athletics and the workplace, in Casey three conservative justices erroneously said abortion was necessary to assure women's capacity to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation. This position ignores two facts, first a glance as history shows women's participation increased in political, social athletic and economic spheres of American life before row there is much data to back that up, too much to go into here but happy to send that. Second, there is no consistent correlation between abortion and women's progress. Women's participation in all at, aspects of society continued advancing in the seventies and eighties after roe's decision came down as mentioned women were already on this trajectory before Rowe, in the last 30 years when abortion rates have fallen dramatically women's progress has excel rated .. From 1990 to 2016 abortion rates fell by 26 percent, during that same period, the percentage of women

[11:06:43 AM]

in the workforce with a college degree increased by 70 percent, but the reality is excuse me that women don't need abortion to advance in this country. Today I am speaking against item number 2 and every item on this agenda and ask that you stopper pet 88 the lie and insulting women by stating we have to

kill our babies to achieve great things in life. Thank you. >> Gus Pena, followed by Theresa masca >> >>  
Good morning, mayor, Gustavo peña from 23277 east fifth street I came here to sport whatever  
decisions the women

[11:07:45 AM]

make, it is hard to kill a baby but I am going to leave it up to the ladies and support you whether you do  
it this way or that way. Us men should support our women. I have been married for 35 years. What else  
can I say that may god bless you all and help you in your decisions because there are a lot of young  
people, young ladies are looking at you right now through the television. I just pray, I am a catholic, I  
pray for all of you all, I pray for Austin. I pray for everybody, whatever decision you make it is your  
decision. I was thinking about what can I say to make it better. All I can do is pray for the young ladies  
and I will say this much. The women are the better sex

[11:08:45 AM]

than the men. You all are better than us men. Thank you very much . Theresa masca and then Amy  
brown. >> Hello, my name is Theresa masca a Texas state captain with students for life action. The I am  
against number 2 and I have lived in district 7 for all 17 years of my life. Today I would like to not just  
speak on my behalf but also on behalf of the women who will be abused if you vote for this solution.  
When a woman is forced into prostitution by sex traffickers and becomes pregnant the abuse continues  
by forcing the women to have an abortion. This allows sex traffickers to force women right back into  
prostitution and make more money. So while abortion was legal in Texas, laws and regulations were set.  
House bill 2552 a bipartisan bill authored by Thompson who is

[11:09:46 AM]

an African-American Democrat woman required human trafficking signs to be posted at abortion  
facilities. The women's right to know act established a requirement for the reporting of patients  
informed consent to an abortion. And house bill 416 required abortion employees to uergo human  
traffic training to recognize and report human trafficking as legally required. Texans said the abortion  
facilities were unsafe for sex trafficking victims so they made laws. If abortionists are not prosecuted  
illegal abortion procedures can happen that will not follow these regulations and abuse that Texans  
worked so hard to stop will continue. Passing a resolution that will help sex traffickers abuse their  
victims and turn a blind eye to helping them escape is wrong. We know it is wrong and Texans have  
already voted and said it is wrong. I know the resolution has an exception for when coercion or force is  
used against a pregnant person. But we cannot wait to investigate until we are told one is being abused.  
Because chances are no one will ever say anything.

[11:10:47 AM]



If abortions are not stopped the continue report consent and sex trafficking prevention we will not even know if force or coercion are present, not ending illegal abortion procedures is a recipe for stakes trafficking abuse. The bill might say there is an exception but it has no intention of finding those exceptions. The solution to the needs of pregnant women cannot be the same solution that allows sex traffickers to control their victims. Thank you. >> Amy brown. >> >> Good morning, I am Amy brown, a policy analyst with human coalition action and want to thank you for giving me the time to speak today. I am testifying against proposed agenda items specifically number 4 because they have undermined the state's authority to protect preborn children and they would support forcing Texans to fund abortions with public dollars. This critical moment this our

[11:11:47 AM]

country's history we are hopeful for preborn children and mothers to live in a society where both can thrive. We have long realized the central of the child in the womb and scientific made the viability of the child undeniable. The Texas has an interest in protecting these children and the abortion clinics are selectively enforcing the law and undermining the authority of the state. Those supervisor supporting these agenda items these laws threaten women with eventual prosecution let's be clear. They focus on the abortion providers while protecting women from prosecution. Under preroe statutes wins are considered the victims and not the accomplices, the most Americans don't support taxpayer dollars for abortions but this is what the city is doing for benefits to travel for out of state abortions, not only be subsidizing abortions if this went into effect but going to out of state abortion providers who profit off the scheme, subsidizing abortions doesn't come close to solving the issues that drive women to abort, there

[11:12:49 AM]

are underlying socioeconomic problems that will N vanish after a woman has an abortion, three and four of our clients would prefer a parent if their circumstances were different but actually state they want and need assistance, support, employment and affordable housing. Thankfully dedicated pro-lifers spend decades building a robust and private infrastructure of public and private infrastructure of resources to support pregnant women. The state has shown their support by showing the alternatives and expanding medicaid, covering six months after the birth of the child. Dignity of life and not put toward destroying it. In conclusion the city of Austin like the state legislature needs to be in the business of promoting life and the rule of law not looking the other way as women and children continue to suffer at the hands of the abortion industry. Thank you for your time. >> Mayor, that actually concludes our religion of speakers. >> Our list of speaker.

[11:13:50 AM]

Anybody here think they signed up and didn't get a call? I appreciate everybody's percentages here today. >> #01: That gets us back up to the dais,. >> Mayor Adler: Just to get the items in front of us, is there a motion to approve items number 1? That -- makes that motion is there a second to that

meetings. Councilmember vela makes that second. Is there a mayor T approve item number 2? In front of us? Councilmember Velasquez makes that motion. Is there a second to that, councilmember Fuentes seconds that. Motion to approve item number 3. Councilmember pool makes that motion. Councilmember Adler seconds that there is a motion to approve item number 4. Councilmember vela makes that motion. Is there a second to item number 4. Councilmember Ellis seconds that. All of these items are in front of us now. Is there any discussion on these items?

[11:14:51 AM]

It is 11:14. I think it is definitely within our power to vote on these items by noon. Let's see if we can -- let's see if we can get that done. Councilmember vela. >> I will keep my comments very brief. >> Vela: There was a discussion about family friendly policies and supporting parents and picture and supporting people so they can raise children, so they can get pregnant, so they can have babies, so they can spend time and I just want to say I think in the last, you know, six months of time I have been on this dais the council has done that a especially with the parental leave policy, I know we are looking at other policies. We are doing everything we can within our policy to support families,, to support parents, I completely and appreciate and agree with the sentiment and context, I think ordinances we have in front of us will do that as well, but I just have to give

[11:15:52 AM]

credit to the council for everything that they have done in terms of 0 parental leave over the last six months, I think that's a really important achievement. >> Achievement. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember pool, anything else and counsels kitchen. >> Pool: Thanks for that comment, councilmember vela. I want to amplify that by saying there is nothing standing in the way for that to happen. The problem is that women who are not able for many different reasons to carry a child to term, they are the ones who are having obstacles, in fact, they are being criminalized for their status. So they are the ones who have the obstacles in their way and I just want to make that really, really crystal clear here today. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Yes. I wanted to make a few comments about -- that really relate to all of these items, and to say I appreciate the testimony from everyone who spoke today.

[11:16:53 AM]

I know that this is a subject that is very important to a lot of people, and I wanted to explain my support for all of these items. For me, for me, the issue of reproductive health and abortion is a matter of healthcare and as the matter of equity. And it is a matter of trusting women. I have worked on healthcare access for over 30 years and that includes women's right to make their own decisions and the right to access reproductive healthcare equitably. That means for everyone. You know, the decision about whether to have a child or to access an abortion is a difficult, complex, very personal decision. It is not the role of the state to dictate to women, to their

[11:17:53 AM]

healthcare providers, to their families, to make these difficult and complex decisions that are really specific to circumstances. It is not the state's role to dictate those decisions. And that is what I believe in my heart of hearts. And that's why I have fought over the years for reproductive healthcare. I want to thank the mayor and the men on this council who have recognized the importance of contributing as they have and included in this resolution, so you know, I have worked in the past. I have had the opportunity in the past to work with the city on access to care for women, and I am very pleased to support this resolution that recognizes the importance of vasectomies. You know, when I worked with Planned Parenthood at the Capitol over the years, I never thought we would need the Grace Act, even as bad as it has gotten over the years in

[11:18:55 AM]

trampling on the right to make these decisions by individuals, I never thought I would -- I never thought it would get this bad so I am pleased to be able to support the Grace Act. I am -- I have a lot of angst about the fact we need to be doing this now, because I never thought we would be in this place. But I want to thank Councilmember Vela and my colleagues for supporting this. This is something we need to do as a city and I thank you for bringing this so quickly, for bringing the Grace Act forward. Thank you. And I am proud to be a cosponsor of all of these items. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Fuentes, then Councilmember Ellis. >> Mayor not to interrupt my colleagues but -- >> Mayor Adler: And Councilmember Harper-Madison. Go ahead. >> Thank you first I want to thank everybody who testified

[11:19:56 AM]

today and in semi gratitude to the Austinites who sent e-mail to our offices. I know we received hundreds of e-mails showing support for Grace Act. We are living in some really dark times right now, in fact "The New York Times" posted an article this morning about an 11-year-old Texas child who had to travel out of state to seek care and so that is the reality that Texans are facing today and so by Austin City Council taking action to add protections at the local level we are sending a message we will continue to fight back for reproductive freedom and not alone in this fight there are other cities throughout the country that have passed similar legislation, neutral, den can on the, I know San Antonio is considering it. Just yesterday Councilman from Waco also talked about bringing it forward. So this is about creating a movement on behalf of the reproductive freedoms and I want to extend my gratitude to Councilmember Vela and his team,

[11:20:57 AM]

I know Jenna with his office has been working really hard along with my office and so just also wanted to share my gratitude for everyone that has been working really hard on these policies. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember Ellis. Then Councilmember Harper-Madison. >> Ellis: We have had many brave folks come and testify to us today. It is not easy to share your abortion story but these stories need to be told. This council is committed to and will continue to support our constituents who

overwhelmingly agree people should have access to abortion. These item on today's agenda are in line with resolutions that have previously been passed by the city council. I have led on some of these resolutess, a number of my colleagues have also led on these resolutions over the years and we will continue every step of the way fighting for our constituents who expect leaders to take action a, and we are seeing the opposite of that from the state. We are seeing rights being taken away from the citizens that live in Texas.

[11:21:57 AM]

To the folks who don't like abortion, don't get one, that is what choice is for. But without access to free birth control, sex education, expansion of medicaid, closing the wage gap and paid family leave we are making it harder for people to plan their flies in the way that fits them best. I proudly support all of these items on our agenda today. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember harper-madison. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor, I echo my colleague's appreciation for being able to be in a place we are in today and recognizing, you know, we are up against chance pretty consistently but some of them everybody just has to really step up, the supreme court's decision to overturn roe V. Wade was an out outrage, I mean my small children have questions. I appreciate they have questions. That means they are the kind of people who are going to grow up in a city like ours where we are not afraid to take bold moves, to speak to injustice, and given

[11:22:58 AM]

everything that happens or that has happened, rather, in the past few years, it is hard to call Texas a pro-life state with any degree of seriousness in the face of increasingly common mass shootings, our state leaders have only made it easier for people as young as 18 to stockpile weapons of war. They refuse to fix our electrical grid, you know, we start council meetings in my mind's eye with a moment to recognize how much hope we should all have, and today the only thing I can think to start with was warning people about not over extending themselves so they don't get sick, because of the heat, you know, something really can't do a whole lot about, but the state has the opportunity to fix any, Y know, instability within our infrastructure. Fix the grid, you know. Even as

[11:23:59 AM]

we are staring down catastrophic weather events that, you know, they freeze us out of our homes and comfort and access to critical amenities. It forces us to ration our air conditioning in the middle of the summer. Our foster care system is so broken that young people are dying in state custody, are being turned out into the streets with no recourse when they age out. Our conversations about our residents that live unsheltered on the streets of Austin literal he always include a category of people who have been turned away from their homes because they aimed out of foster care. Texas is home to the highest rate of uninsured pregnant women in the country.

[11:24:59 AM]

We have one of the nation's highest maternal mortality rates something that disproportionately affects black and brown women .., lower income Texans on top of all of that the new statewide abortion ban adds more cruelty and more harm to Texans in countless ways. It is an absolute, absolute kick in the teeth. I hope that -- I hope this summer will act in the way of a wakeup call of sorts for everyone who really cares about a free society, a wakeup call to offer people the opportunity to get mad and stay mad, to get involved and to get us back on track because the current course is untenable, to say the least. I appreciate being a part of a group of people who are willing

[11:26:01 AM]

to step up and be bold and be courageous and make hard decisions and I am really -- I am really concerned about the health and well being of my fellow Texans and proud to be a part of a group of people who are looking to come up with solutions, to offer people a better life. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem. >> Thank you. I appreciate all of the comments my colleagues have offered and want to thank councilmember velauez and councilmember Fuentes and mayor Adler for putting forward these various items, I was proud to do sponsor the original item have you been, working with councilmember Fuentes, which we worked on before the Dobbs decision. We as a city as has been said have the responsibility to care for our citizens and I believe that everyone who is on the dais today believes these are steps

[11:27:02 AM]

we need to take, are there other steps we need to take? No, we wish we were not in a situation where the rights and opportunities of our residents were constrained. For those who came today and spoke, thank you for being here. For those who pointed out the need for us to care for our children in our community I invite you to help us in pushing the state to invest in schools, in our public schools and childcare, in our public health system. There are many different ways we can do that and ways we can agree on that, but it will take all sides pushing to make sure that our state government actually heeds the need to, the need to take care of our children, so I think that is really important and with that type of collaboration, because I would really love for everybody to see what Austin can do when we have the support of our state. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember

[11:28:03 AM]

Renteria. >> Renteria: Yes, mayor, and I also want to thank councilmember vela and councilmember Fuentes for these resolutions and I want to also be shown as cosponsor on 2 and 4. I have lived here all of my life and I am Texas and Austin, I am an austinite and 72 years old and I have seen the injustices they have done to my people, especially people of color. They promised a lot and they never deliver. Look what they did with our mental illness people. They took them all out of the institution that they were using to conserve and they promised they would come and help the cities take care of these people, and they never did, and we got all of these people with mental illness out on the street out there right now and there are a lot of people throughout that are really, you know,

[11:29:04 AM]

protesting and calling and saying we need to do something about these people. And now they are promising they are going to take care of the children -- it is not going to happen, people. You know, you say three years we are going to just -- we have got -- we are going to take care of three, then three years, while now three months for medical people, three months, I mean what is that? And then you have people can't board to have babies when they can't even take care of them? And then the state says they are going to take care of them? That is bs. And we all know that. So that is why I am supporting this issue. >> Mayor Adler: These are tough issues, as we see watching the debate with the state and watching the debate nationally and I appreciate the debate and discussion we had here today and I appreciate the decorum which

[11:30:05 AM]

we had the debate and the discussion here today with people speaking on both sides of this discussion. I believe there is a constitutional right for women to have a choice with respect to this reproductive healthcare issue, bottom line. I am concerned with the court finding that that right does not exist. I am real concerned with the -- with what could conceivably follow from that determination with respect to gay marriage and other issues. I fundamentally believe there is a constitutional right there as well. Because I believe that there is a constitutional right I believe that it is something that we should be seeking to protect.

[11:31:09 AM]

Item number 1 says that we should not discriminate against people that exercise, what I believe to be a right. Item number 2 says that we will be exercising our discretion in a way consistent with the values that are held by the majority of the people that live in this community. Item number 3 recognizes that a much better choice than an abortion is prophylactic measure to prevent and unwanted pregnancy and we should try to do it in a way that promotes gender equity. And item number 4 I believe also seeks to protect a constitutional right that is embodied in the commerce clause and other clauses that says that

[11:32:11 AM]

one state cannot stop its citizens from exercising a legal act in another state. So I will be voting for all four of these items. Any further discussion, councilmember vela? >> Vela: Just wanted to say some brief thank yous. First and foremost, to my staff, Jenna aims, rainy coal, my chief of staff -- who we were all so shocked when the leaked decision came out we sat down, brainstormed and here we are sadly a few months later passing the decrim measure, thanks to my colleagues and the legal department for helping us vet and improve the initial draft. Thanks so much to the abortion

[11:33:12 AM]

rights advocates, planned parenthood, Lilly fund, Austin justice coalition, Austin freedom net network and others we have worked with to defend abortion rights as much as we possibly can and Austin has always been a leader in this area in reproductive rights. There was a great article in the Texas observer talking about student activism which ultimately produced the roe V. Roe V. Wade decision, the UT law school's role, fascinating history, so this is, you know, we stand on the shoulders of giants. This is -- what we can do today to fight for abortion rights and thanks to so many other cities that have taken the text of the resolution that was drafted here in the Austin city hall and running with it in so many cities, not just throughout the state but Nashville, Atlanta,

[11:34:13 AM]

and again I am just humbled and grateful and looking forward to passing the measure. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Any further discussion before we take a vote? Let's take a vote on these items. Take a vote on each of them individually and in order. Moved and seconded item number 1, let's take a scroll vote. Those in favor of item number 1, please raise your hand. It is unanimous on the dais with councilmember Kelly off. Item number 2, those in favor, please raise your hand. Those opposed. It is again unanimous on the dais with councilmember Kelly off. Item number 3, please raise your hand if you support. Those opposed. It is unanimous with councilmember Kelly off the dais. Item Number 4, those in favor please raise your hand, unanimous on the dais, again with councilmember Kelly off the dais.

[11:35:14 AM]

It is 11:35. Do we want to begin the briefing and use these 25 minutes until noon or do we want to take a break and let everybody grab their lunch now? Going into the press conference at noon? And then we reconvene for the briefings, if we have the ability to grab lunch here at 11:35. It seems as if we could reconvene then, say, at 12:45 for the briefing. Does that work? Does that work for staff? Okay. So let's do that then. This special called meeting of E Austin city council, 11:35 is in recess. It will reconvene at 12:45. There is going to be an intervening press conference at noon. Which is also a noticed city council meeting that councilmembers can attend. We will see you then.

( recess )

[1:03:06 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Item number 5. Tech folks ready. We're broadcasting so we will reconvene the meeting on July 21st, 2022, the continuation of the special called meeting. It is 1:02 -- 1:03, actually in the afternoon. We have one item left, item number 5, which is the briefing as I think that was originally requested by councilmember harper-madison dealing with the emergency response with the heat. We've all been dealing with. Councilmember Harper madison, do you want to say anything or go

straight into the briefing? >> Harper-madison: I'm really looking forward to the briefing as well. On the message board I laid out my reasoning for this, and I think that it's clear but to quickly summarize my thoughts.

[1:04:07 PM]

We have been warned for years that climate change was happening. I just can't think that enough of us took or are taking it seriously. I think it feels like it's all catching up to us. In the past few years we have had floods and freezes and fires and now we're on a pace to live through the hottest summer in Austin's history, just a decade after we set that record. That's important information, you know, to sort of Thi about that timeline there, the chronology of it. You can call this extraordinary weather, but we need to come to terms -- all of us need to come to term it's with the fact that pretty soon it's just going to be ordinary. This is just the weather. So as a municipality, I think that we really need to wrap our heads around the kind of real robust, resilient strategies that we need for those worst-case scenarios and our grid is not reliable and even if it were, our infrastructure is

[1:05:08 PM]

vulnerable to extreme temperatures. When people lose power, they're in danger, period. Whether we're talking about losing air conditioning or losing electricity for their critical medical devices. We need to recognize that environmental impacts have disproportionate outcomes with our lower income residents and our unhoused austinians. All of us have heard concerns about the cooling centers and their hours and how to access information about them. And I personally have several questions about how the staff can operate them, among other things. So I'm interested in learning more from our staff about what strategies are in place, what strategies could be in place, what council might be able to do to better be able to consider additional measures and better coordination between city departments, the city and county and our private partners, frankly. I think this is an opportunity for us to really create a model for other cities experiencing

[1:06:09 PM]

similar challenges. I really do look forward to continuing the conversation. I also just want to make sure to recognize that in this conversation, I know that some folks may even feel a sense of redundancies, right, in this information being requested. And I want to be very clear to indicate a deep appreciation for staff and the work that they're doing to bring us the information. So any degree of criticism is not at all personal. It's about, you know, getting the best possible outcomes. I also, you know, have to just make sure to point out over and over again this is extraordinary stuff that we're dealing with here. None of us are accustomed to operating under these conditions so in a lot of ways we're all trying to really figure out how to take care of each other. I appreciate having had the opportunity to be in on a conversation on the city's efforts for building a more resilient Austin and I had the

[1:07:10 PM]



opportunity during the course of that conversation to talk about some local efforts around anti-fragility. You know, people just really being able to bear the brunt of some of these unexpected occurrences, really just being -- beyond resilient, frankly. And also the last thing I want to make sure to recognize is, you know, while I can appreciate that the city has a lot of obligations to its residents, we also in a lot of ways we're limited by access to resources, really limited to access to resources. So even at our very best what we're providing is information, um, to provide the solutions will not be a city exclusive executed effort. It's going to take us all coming together to make sure that people have what they need and they are able to protect themselves and their families. So, again, just really looking forward to this information and

[1:08:11 PM]

recognizing that this is the tip of the iceberg in terms of conversations we're all going to have to continue to have around our ever evolving weather-related circumstances. Thank you, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Acting city manager, you want to start us off. >> Thank you, mayor. So the assistant city manager will lead the conversation with several groups involved and we hope to answer the questions. Thank you so much. >> Thank you, ray oriano over at the safety outcome departments. It's my pleasure to be here and thank you, councilmember harper-madison for bringing those comments today. We're going to provide an update on our emergency response capacity, and looking to see if I can advance the slides here. Oh, here we go. And so the hot summer we're experiencing has brought on a number of questions about heat preparedness and overall

[1:09:11 PM]

disaster preparedness. Today we will cover our current response capacity as well as future plans to expand that capacity. As council may recall, the general approach to emergencies is an all-hazards approach. That is, much of our procedures, our resources such as facilities and staff are capable of being deployed in a consistent way regardless of the type of emergency. As we are in the midst of a hot summer season, we will be focusing on heat emergency response. In particular, we will cover how we are communicating information to the community as well as electrical grid considerations. With me today are Laura peteno, chief resilience officer, and the general manager and chief operating officer, and Jerry Galvan, Austin energy vice president of services and both Sydney and Jerry are joining us virtually. Sarah Henry, homeland security and emergency management public information manager.

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And the deputy officer who will be presenting the first section. >> If I may, this is councilmember harper-madison. I don't know what other folks are experiencing but on my end for visuals all I see is a screen that's -- that's, like, the beginning of being able to open up the presentation. It says item number 5, presentation for ptx, but I don't see a presentation if I'm supposed to be seeing one. There you go.

Thank you. >> Thank you. Good afternoon, mayor and council and city manager. Next slide, please. So the heat emergency plan is managed -- thank you -- hieson

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manages the heat emergency plan. We review this plan annually with our partners and we make updates as needed. Now while higher temperatures do not equal an emergency, we certainly monitor conditions and the impacts on the community and we provide coordination and support as needed. And so when the national weather service issues a heat advisory, that triggers phase one of our plan. And so that's where we -- where we have regular coordination calls. We monitor those impacts. And we provide outreach and communications. When the national weather service issues an excessive heat warning that triggers phase two. So that's where we provide notifications to the public, outreach to populations and actionable messaging. We also assess our cooling centers and extend hours and locations as needed. This is in alignment with what other jurisdictions have done

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throughout Texas as well. Next slide, please. So here's a list of our partners that we work with on at least a weekly basis for those heat calls. As councilmember harper-madison said though, this is a community effort, and we all have a role checking on our neighbors and having some level of personal preparedness. Next slide, please. Heison does have plans for mass sheltering. Cooling centers are a different type of resource. So they are designed for temporary reprieve during the hottest hours of the day, and we do use existing parks and recreation facilities and library facilities during their normal regular operating hours. During excessive heat warnings we do extend hours and additional locations. These locations provide air

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conditioning, water, restrooms and seating. They are open to service animals and they are accessible by bus. They are not emergency or overnight shelters, they do not provide cots, meals or medical support. And so we have 48 facilities that are available as a cooling center and resource to the community. Most libraries are open until 8:00 P.M. On weekdays and several rec centers are open to 9:00. Many facilities are open, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, to 5:00 P.M. We have eight facilities that are open on Sundays, and we do open additional locations as needed. So here is a summary of our actions so far this summer. We have been in communications with the national weather service and with our partners

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since may. So when the national weather service issued an excessive heat warning June 12th, we worked to open two additional cooling centers at our libraries. One at carver and one saw six individuals utilize that service, and the other one had nobody turn up at that location. On July 10, which was the

next date for our excessive heat warning, we opened another two locations Luis and little walnut creek library. We had four guests at one and 17 at the other. D some of our partners also have opened up cooling centers and they have not seen much demand, so we have not seen a continued need for additional resources but we continue to monitor the heat related calls

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and hospitals and cooling center use in order to assess the need for those services and adjust as needed. And with that, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague, Sarah Henry, communications director manager for hsem. >> Thank you, good afternoon. We continuously adjust our communications approach based on feedback and for heat-related incidents we have boosted our process to reach more people more quickly. Next slide. So for mass communication, and specifically response to heat over the summer, we've kept austintexasgov and translated in 10 languages including asl. And we provided over a dozen on-camera and print radio and interviews, in partnership with Travis county ems and public health to traditional media outlets. We have pushed social media and, of course, provided updates to council with the hope that

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council can quickly translate that news flash information into your own social and communication channels. I have seen several re-tweets so we appreciate your support for that. Next slide. And we are also making sure to do outreach for our most vulnerable populations. So we have worked with our partner departments and service providers to make sure that we're reacng out, for example, to folks experiencing homelessness and elderly and medically vulnerable and people working outdoors including people in construction and our city crews. We have the ability to send text alerts and we have the warn central Texas app. Next slide, a lot of what we want to do is to make sure that we make data-informed decisions, so we're collecting data from heat-related illness incidents from both public health and ems. We have set up a service and a request with Austin 311, so we

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can monitor what's coming through for heat-related calls. And I would say that one of the biggest challenges in the cooling centers is that many of those parks and library facilities are pulling double duty. They're serving where people might be checking out a book and cooling down in the ac. Someone might be going to a rec center for summer camp and, you know, and using the facility to cool down, right. So to better understand who is using the cooling centers during these normal operating hours, we're setting up an opt-in survey that will be distributed to all of the locations and we'll use that data to be able to help us to target outreach efforts where possible and to better understand the heat resource needs. Next slide. In addition to responding to emergencies, we're also making sure that the public and the community are able to be prepared outside of an emergency. So, as you know, council approved \$250,000 to help to support a preparedness campaign and we have used these funds to develop a "Make emergency

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preparedness, your super power." So we have been advertising this across the various channels that you see on the screen. It really highlighting the four pillars of preparedness and with the help of CPIO, we have managed again to do paid media outreach -- I'm sorry. >> Mayor Adler: I'm sorry, go ahead. >> Traditional outreach and paid ads on streaming devices and social media, and all running in multiple languages. And last slide for me please. And in short today with these funds we have been able to reach over 300,000 people in 12 languages and our next steps with this campaign are to continue developing partnerships with major retailers and to continue our marketing and outreach efforts. And with that I will turn it over to Austin Energy, Sydney Jackson. Thank you. >> Thank you, Sarah, and good afternoon. I'm Sydney Jackson, [indiscernible] Operations op. >> Mayor Adler: Can you speak up or can we increase that volume?

[1:19:28 PM]

>> I will try and speak up. Is that better? >> Mayor Adler: That's perfect. >> During grid emergencies and high electrical load periods, Austin Energy has coordination responsibilities with provided entities, some which are ERCOT which has the grid authority for much or most of the state of Texas, as well as other partners such as HSEM, the Homeland Security and Emergency Management and I will expand on that later. The preceding weeks have resulted in all-time heat across our region. Last week ERCOT said that the peak loads were hit multiple times and we have set incremental loads, even into this week. The graphic on the left-hand side is a snapshot of two ERCOT operating days last week. The top one is Monday, July 11th. And the bottom one is a snapshot of Monday, July -- excuse me, Wednesday, July 13th. These snapshots were taken normally at 5:00 A.M. On each of these days and it graphically represents the projections of

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the ERCOT grid stabilization loading conditions that are expected to be over the peak hours and this time of year they are nominally 6:00 P.M. And the forecast across 6:00 P.M. shows the potential to exceed the electric supply. Obviously, that did not materialize last week. The demand did not exceed supply. But the primary takeaway of these snapshots is to affirm that Austin Energy as well as all electric providers across the state, are in constant communication, in coordination with ERCOT throughout the operating days. This coordination helps to provide heightened awareness which aids us in our energy planning efforts as we have a variety of inputs and consideration and planning parameters that we are required to execute in the delivery of electricity across a complex system. The right graphic I have laid out is ERCOT's emergency progression and it's important to communicate that this progression also frames Austin

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energy's internal incident response plans. Starting at the top of this progression, you can see normal operations in green. And normal operations from an ERCOT perspective are operating reserves being greater than 3,000 megawatts with a stable outlook. Operating reserves here being generally defined as the margin where generation supply exceeds generation demand and forward-looking forecasts affirms stability. Looking further down the progression to potentially worsening conditions, you see EEA-1 highlight. EEA standards for emergency alert and it's where it falls below a certain threshold. And this threshold is 321 megawatts and that is with unstable forecast or worsening outlook. It's equally important that this is the threshold where Austin

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energy initiates our emergency incident command structure to include specific notification of HSEM or Homeland Security Emergency Management. And progressing down the table the highest state of emergency where ERCOT would potentially give the director for controlled outages that occurs at EEA-3 level and that's listed in black at the bottom and again for emphasis ERCOT has not called any EEA-3 in 2022 or any controlled outages this year as well. I would like to emphasize the Progressive step and that is highlighted in yellow called energy conservation or conservation alert specifically. This is one of the early steps in the progression, and it is an important step in the progression. Next slide, please. Here we're emphasizing the actual Austin energy conservation around the conservation fields or conservation alerts and it

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confirms our ability to work with ERCOT and to inform the public of the conservation needs. These are executed by Austin energy social media, push notifications, those registered by our customer portal as well as the website. And, again, for emphasis, the public appeal for energy conservation is a vital instrument. It helps to decrease the electric demand when it is needed. It helps in securing electric grid stability. And all things being equal, it leads to potential avoidance of more severe ERCOT emergency actions such as perhaps controlling outages. Next slide, please. I will conclude with clarifying the electrical outages that might normally occur during what we call typical daily operations. These outages may be generally unrelated to any ERCOT outage. So when the grid conditions are tight or there's appeals to

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reduce electrical demand, electrical outages do and can occur. We obviously mobilize here at Austin energy to restore service as soon as possible and safely as possible, but again these outages can occur in parallel with ERCOT actions. Some of the outages codes I have listed here and summer weather can bring downed trees due to pop-up thunderstorms or vegetation impact with infrastructure. In addition, we have listed here animal interference, equipment, vehicle crashes and even construction is generally associated with digging or excavation. Again, all of these outages can occur during hot weather, whether they're related or unrelated, or simultaneous to ERCOT's actions. And, lastly, prior to transition to Austin

energy, I was asked to talk briefly about winter emergency actions and how that might differ from summer

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emergency actions. The ERCOT emergency progression levels that we've discussed we made the same, they're applicable for both winter and for summer, and as we discussed they top and center our bond operating reserves and our stability of operating reserves beyond certain thresholds. However, there are seasonal differences associated with the summer and perhaps the winter, and most of those differences deal with the unique impacts that weather has on some generation types, as well as seasonal load shapes as well. And, lastly, regulators such as the PUC and ERCOT require winter weather season preparations such as power plant winterization. But, again, these are just a few high level seasonal differences. Thank you, mayor and council. Jerry? >> Thank you, Sidney. Good afternoon, mayor and council and I am the vice president of customer care services at Austin energy.

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We have several programs to help support our most vulnerable customers. Today, I'll briefly speak about our navigable vulnerable registry program, or NVR. Thank you. Eligibility is based on life supported equipment, or the medical condition of a member of the household. Not on income. And soon after a customer is registered on our NVR program, our staff reaches out and helps them to create an emergency plan in case of an outage. When an outage happens, you know, when possible in advance of an imminent emergency, customers receive courtesy calls to validate they are ready and able to execute on their emergency plan. If they need help, we're here to help. We can connect them with the media resources.

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And that is true for also non-NVR customers, Austin 311, as well as the utility context center can provide that information. And then last, I just want to remind us all that Austin energy during extreme weather, passed a moratorium on disconnections for non-pay. Thank you. I believe that now I pass it back to assistant city manager. >> Thank you, Jerry. So having covered our current response capacity, I'd like to turn now to what staff is doing to expand our capacity. And to start that conversation, I'd like to introduce Laura Peteno who will establish our efforts in establishing resilience hubs. Laura? >> Thank you. Mayor, councilmembers, with climate change we're expected to see an increase in heat shocks and heat stresses.

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By 2100 we are expecting to have more than 90 days of triple digit temperatures. That's going to be our new norm every year. What is more concerning is that based on our report from the university of

Arizona and the American planning association, is that formerly redlined neighborhoods are an average of five degrees hotter and as much as 12 degrees hotter in some cities. So we need to find ways to integrate heat management strategies which include preparedness and response, and heat mitigation and adaptation strategies that include reducing the environmental contribution to heat. This will create heat resilient communities. The city is working on improving heat mapping, engaging with communities to understand the lived experiences and establishing new partnerships to develop projects. These include projects that are

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with equity to help all austinites and the most vulnerable communities. The examples are weatherization programs for homes and investments in cool pavement, and more green infrastructure and a focus on urban forestry and trees. But specifically today, one intervention that is supported by council is the resilience hub network. Resilience hubs are very important tool for the response preparedness and recovery during climate events. The resilience hub program is in the early stages of a pilot which is the first phase, or phase one. And phase one is aiming to kick off the six pilot locations in the eastern crescent by the end of this year. And the ultimate goal at the end of phase three is a full-scale network of facilities that provide services and programs to all austinites during emergencies and also during blue sky days. Next slide, please. So, a few O the significant

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milestones that we've accomplished during the pilot phase include the six focus areas in the eastern crescent have already been identified, and the types of hubs for emergency activation have been developed. This include weather site hubs and cooling and warming centers and food and water distribution centers and shelter operations. As well as an initial concept of the operating models for these different types of resilience hubs. This means are there agency owned and agency operated, and agency and community owned and operated as a partnership. And the third, community owned and community operated. A brochure to share and expand the efforts and communications of the resilience hubs have been created and community engagement consultant has been pro secured and a community task force has

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already been identified to select our six pilot sites. Additional staff capacity has also been brought in through a partnership with the university of Texas. Next slide, please. And so to conclude with the next steps, we're in the process of finalizing the community engagement process to select the six specific pilots. Continue formulating the next phases, phase two and phase three of the program, to expand the resilience hub network to other cities based on what we have learned from our pilot program. And, finally, launching a communications campaign that includes existing emergency communication and other services. I want to end with stating that resilience, sustainability, and the sustainability office and

hsem hav continued and will continue to align a resilience strategy and this work is not accompanied in silos. So as we work with aid and

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Travis county for the pilot progra for neighborhood resilience hubs we're also working with the community organizations and grassroot organizations and our community partners to bring resilience to all austinities. Thank you, and I'll pass it back to -- >> You can call me ray. Thank you, Laura. So, connuing on as a result of after-action report recommendations and the city auditor's report last year on our emeregy response capability, it was clear that additional resources were needed in order to better respond to emergencies that are becoming more frequent, and larger in scale. In the current fiscal year 2022, our approach was to reallocate four vacant positions to hsem as you can see on the slide. Staff is actively working with human resources to reclassify the positions that will focus on supporting a resilience hub program and bolster hsem's

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capability for mass response. As is the response with many of our departments, hsem is prioritizing filling the vacancies that it has. It temporarily has four vacancies that may not seem like a big number, but having four of 15 of a total complement is a significant impact to its capabilities. In order to address that, in the proposed fiscal year 2023 budget we have the following investments that can help to bolster that capability. The first, second and fourth items total \$3.4 million and 19 positions that are proposed to add to hsem's ability to manage and distribute emergency supplies, support resilience hub development, and coordinate mass care activities in an emergency, and improve community preparedness and equitable access to assistance. The third bullet is an investment for Austin public health to operate two additional shelters during cold weather activations. Beyond these highlighted

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investments the after-action reports from prior emergencies also contain recommendations that can increase the city's capabilities to respond to emergencies. Again, last year's auditor's report on our emergency response identified that we weren't tracking the recommendations very efficiently. Accordingly, the austin-travis county emergency management offices, both with the city and the county, jointly developed the community resiliency improvement status portal, or crisp, because we have to have an acronym for some of these programs that we have. The crisp includes the after-action reports dating back to 2014, and it will launch later this summer. This is a snapshot of the front page the portal. In the pie chart on the left, we see recommendaons according to FEMA's miss areas of response, mitigation, recovery, protection, and prevention. And the pie chart on the right

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portrays the recommendations by status of closed, completed, in progress, and on hold or pending. So when we get -- when you are able to access the portal, what we'll be able to do is to dive into whether it's by the actual after-action report for a specific emergency or by these different mission areas. You will be able to see what the status of these recommendations are. And in addition you might be aware that some of these recommendations in subsequent after-action reports have a very similar recommendation or topic. And so in this portal we tried to make sure that we're re-duplicating, if you will, or making sure that there's a consistent response across all of the different recommendations that might be similar. This concludes our briefing and I'd like to take this opportunity again to recognize councilmember harper-madison's interest and her co-sponsors in providing this opportunity for an update. I acknowledge that we may not have covered all of the

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questions that councilmember harper-madison posted on the council board. My approach is to have follow-up and to provide a response so that all answers on this topic can be in one place. So, in addition to today's presenters, representatives from Austin fire department and Austin public health are available to respond to any questions that you may have. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. I have a quick question on, like, the second or third slide. There was a mention -- from the data points that you were looking at were hospital intake or numbers or reports. Do we -- in last month, do you have those numbers or a feel for what we were looking at? >> I do not have them offhand. Ems gathers that data and then they let us know if they see an

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increase or a decrease in those -- in those cases. Additionally -- I beg your pardon -- sorry -- ems gathers the heat calls and Austin public health looks at the levels of hospitalizations. And it tends to have a one or two-day delay. And since Austin public health is on the call, I think they may be able to provide that information. We have cassie DeLeon. >> Mayor Adler: That would be helpful, and if you have it now it would be great. If it's something that you can report back to the council and giving us that data, that would be fine too. The only data that we got were the number of people that were showing up at the cooling stations, the six people and zero people and then seven people and then 14 people. So, again, getting a feel for the other data points with respect to people that were clinically impacted by the heat

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over time, I'd like to be able to see if we could pull together that data. >> Can certainly do that. Cassie, did you have some information that you might be able to provide? >> Yes, thank you, oriano. We do have information that we have on heat related illness and the impact that we're seeing in the emergency rooms. And what we've seen so far -- this specific year from may 1st, 2022 to July 11th, 2022, we've had 642 heat-related illness visits and 412 ems calls. So it's kind of important to look at that in context as well. And we're only halfway through the extreme summer months and we are tracking

rapidly ahead of the previous years. If we look from 2018 to, you know, a five-year time span. >> Mayor Adler: Is that ted

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on the -- on our website somewhere for us to take a look at or is that something that you need to provide us so that we can look at the year-to-year comparisons? >> Mayor, we can definitely provide the graphs with the charts that include those comparisons and those figures. >> Mayor Adler: That would be really be helpful. Thank you. >> Absolutely. >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues? Councilmember harper-madison and then councilmember pool. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor, and I thank everybody for the information by way of the presentation. I obviously still have tons of questions. Some were answered partially. And so I'm going to jot it -- I jotted down three that got kind of a partial answer. So one of those partial answers was around, um, whats not permitted. No animals, no overnights and no medical supports. And I would just really like to expand on, um, maybe rationale

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for those limitations. And really dig around and exploring what viability is for some potential solutions for what seems to me to be extreme limitations there. And then the -- there was a slide -- causes of outages slide. There was -- in fact, if y'all can pull that slide up real quick. Hopefully that's easy to access. Okay, this one here. So wt causes outages on sunny days. Downed trees, animal interference, worn equipment and

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car crashes and so everything here seems like -- the kind of incident that can't be contlled with the exception of worn equipment. In which case I'm curious about its inclusion in this scale here. And what are the implications around worn equipment -- I mean, I guess that seems to me like a stand-alone conversation about stability expectations around the provision of electricity. And what percentage of outages are caused by worn equipment. You know, is that something that we're looking to mitigate moving forward? Is there a certain amount of resources that are available? Or is there any sort of a scarcity there? Just generally I have questions about that icon. And then lastly, the moratorium

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for disconnection for Austin energy. I just have some general questions -- how long is that moratorium under effect? Is there any limitation by way of what amount a person has outstanding -- just, if you could elaborate on qualifications for the moratorium on people being disconnected. >> Thank you, councilmember harper-madison. While we have this slide up if I could ask Sidney Jackson to address those last two topics. >> Thank you. So let me speak to the vast majority of outages and you mentioned

worn equipment. And it's simply animals and vegetation, overwhelmingly so. When you speak of worn equipment, we do have poles that are out in the field for

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decades, if you will. Those poles age, and we do inspect those poles and we do replace those poles. We do have equipment that's perpetually impacted by lightning. We have cables that are underground that are impacted by lightning, so when we speak of worn equipment, I wouldn't call it worn in terms of aging. Think more as equipment that is impacted by environmental conditions and impacted by lightning strikes and some of those things. So that's typically where we see that. I will say that we do have an extensive preventative maintenance program where we routinely work to replace underground cable that has aged. And we progressively go through those actions, but, again, the percentage of outages is clearly animals and vegetation and weather induced. >> Harper-madison: I see I wanted to have you to speak to

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the last few things and that is this particular slide and also asking for you -- or somebody -- to elaborate on the disconnect moratorium. >> That would be Galvan. >> Yes, can you hear me? Yes. The weather moratorium for the summer, for example, is based on heat index, 102 degrees or higher. And just a quick reminder there, that does not mean a temperature of 102°. It's based on the heat index. And to put this in perspective, I do not believe -- I cannot recall what days we have been -- outside of the moratorium. But for the most -- for the largest part of this since may we have been moratorium most days. Normal weather conditions the moratorium is usually the summer, and it usually ends in late September, early October.

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>> Pool: Yeah, I just have a quick question. I thought that the council resolution that began in moratorium specified a temperature. I thought that it was over maybe 90 degrees during -- during a period of heat that's over a certain amount. There's a moratorium. Can you remind us of what the specific -- the specific criteria, please. >> I don't have the specifics in front of me. I can certainly G them. I'll make them available and email them back to council. I believe 90° sounds right but the heat index -- even when we're above 90° can quickly get beyond 102°. >> Pool: Absolutely. I just wanted to make the point that I think that there's specific criteria and you're right that it tends to fall during the summer but it is -- there are really specific criteria that trigger it. And I think that we've been in it probably for quite a while. >> That's right. That's right. I'll make sure that I get that specific language emailed. >> Harper-madiso that's helpful and thank you for asking

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for that clarification, councilmember tovo. And, Mr. Galvan, if I can expand on the response that you were offering. When you said september/october, I think that councilmember tovo's point about real specific parameters that doesn't tell me that we have a specific, like, on October 13th, under no circumstances whatsoever did we extend beyond -- I just want to know do we have sort of hard and fast rules? Are we going -- is it circumstantial? Are we just making our assessments as we go? Is it fluid? >> We do have fast and hard rules on that. And I'm not in the disconnection process, that's the reason why I cannot recall that data point. But I'll make sure that I have the specific language back to council. But it is -- it is based on that temperature, as well as heat index. >> Harper-madison: Thank you. I appreciate the response, but you can certainly imagine that that is a part of what it is

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that was the impetus for wanting a meeting, right, you know, being able to say specifically to our constituents on this day at this time, if you still have concerns about it, then you're following recourse is really -- we have some systems in place that I want to make sure that we're offering our constituents the best path to success possible. And so if I don't know the exact day -- I'm not being critical -- I'm just making sure that you understand what the rationale was for really wanting to dig into this information. Because I don't think that our current systems, regardless of how robust they are, are going to be sufficient. So we need to figure out what supplementary solutions we need to be cooking up and implementing. >> Absolutely. And, by the way, my apologies, just to add clarity to this -- we look at the heat index for the following day. And I'll still come back with the written language response.

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>> Mayor if I may. I just went through some information and I found it. It's 59109 and it's the city shall place an extreme weather moratorium on disconnecting utility service for non-payment during the summer months if the heat index -- again, not triggered to the time of year it's triggered to the temperature. If the heat index the current day is 102 or over and is forecasted to be the same for the following day, then a moratorium will be issued for the following day. I really thought that it was closer to 90° but it looks -- if this powerpoint is correct, it's higher than that. And then during the winter months if the forecasted low temperature for the following day is or will be below 32° fahrenheit or the forecasted temperature for the following day is 35° fahrenheit or lower with a 50% or more chance of precipitation, then a moratorium is issued for the following day. Again, that's 59109 and it says information is tracked by the collections department, actual

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and forecast, each day using the camp Mayberry location. >> Harper-madison: Thank you. I appreciate that. I'm all but certain that there's somebody else who would need to speak to the animal issue and then the shelter accommodations issues in general. >> I believe that I can address at least part of that. In terms of the animals, the cooling centers do accept service animals. Additionally, animal services has let all of us know that as needed that they can provide cooling trucks for pets outside of those -- outside of

cooling centers upon request. At this point, that demand has not been there and it has not been requested, but my understanding is that is available as an option. And in terms of the sheltering,

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the cooling stations are there to supplement what is already available to the community. So we certainly don't want to provide something that is already being provided such as the steady state sheltering that is provided by arch and other partners, but we do want to make sure that we have additional resources for our most vulnerable populations during the highest temperatures and according to the national weather service outlook. >> Harper-madison: I'm not sure where to start. I don't -- -- yeah, I'll leave it. I think that, lastly, the final question was around medical support being available at

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cooling shelters, but it sounds to me as though the position that hsem has taken is that these services are available and -- or within the community, but with the organizations that serve in a different capacity. So that's probably not a consideration that we're looking to implement moving forward is medical personnel, medical staff at cooling centers, the overnight accommodations and the accommodations for animals that aren't considered service animals. >> Councilmember harper-madison, ray oriano there. We didn't quite catch the aspects of the questions that you were asking so we currently don't provide medical service in that way at cooling centers. Again, it is really meant to be a cooling center. If somebody is in medical need of services and then certainly calling 911 is an option, and that can be the way that we support those that have medical needs.

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Looking into the future, I think that as perhaps Laura was mentioning in the resilience hub concept, that there may be the ability to bake that into what we do in the future or even in the cooling centers or more specifically if there's a widespread outage, again, it would be a consideration for perhaps standing up actual shelters that are more long term. So these are things that we'll be taking into consideration moving into the future. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Have something else? >> Harper-madison: No, nothing productive. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Thanks, mayor, and thanks to our staff for coming and giving us this really important briefing. I have two quick questions and

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one is for Austin energy and the other may be for our resilience officer Ms. Peteno. So for Austin energy, how -- I believe that our cooling centers are on critical circuits. This is the item for Austin energy specifically. So I wanted to just confirm that our cooling centers are on critical circuits and what that means. Would that be Mr. Jackson? Or Mr. Galvan? >> Actually, Vaughn Ortiz can address that. >> Pool: Very good. Can you talk us about the critical circuits and the access for the cooling centers? The point

they want to make here is the reliability that our cooling centers will be able to remain cool during outages. >> Yes, thank you very much, I'm happy to answer this question here. That is something that we're

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monitoring and we're working closely with Austin energy to look at the locations of the cooling centers. Now a lot of the cooling centers that we're using in the day-to-day, our facilities are open for services. And not all of those facilities are going to be closed with critical circuit. So, yes, it would be vulnerable in the event of an outage, but that's something -- and that is why we're working closely with Austin energy so we can evaluate that and then if necessary make changes and move from one cooling center to a different facility that will be remaining open. >> Pool: So then it sounds like city staff, both with hsem and Austin energy are working to ensure that all of the cooling centers will be able to provide uninterrupted cooling should they be called into service as cooling centers. Is that a yes? >> That is correct. But I want to make sure that it is clear -- there's a lot more

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facilities that we will be utilizing initially as a cooling center that may not be -- in -- [indiscernible] So, yes, there's a potential that in the event that there was a power outage those facilities could go down, but we would then move those cooling center activities to those facilities that still have power and remain open. So at this point -- >> Pool: So staff is aware and prepared to deal with situations should austinites be at a cooling center that also experiences a cooling outage? >> That is correct. >> Pool: Okay, good. And then the second question goes again to resilience hubs and I just wanted to have Ms. Peteno talk about the different groups that the city is working with, and I think that, like, for example, aid and maybe Tesla. What other entities is the city

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working with on our resilience hubs and how is that going? >> Sure. So, the program, councilmember, has been going -- has been initiated since before I arrived to Austin. So the sustainability office has been leading conversations in a team structure that includes community advisory committee, the cac. It includes a leadership committee, which includes members of city of Austin, it includes the members of aid, as well as members of Travis county, and central health. And the community advisory committee, we have folks from different nonprofit organizations represented, they have helped to guide the project from the resilience hub focus area locations all the way to looking at specific functions within the resilience hubs. So, how hubs get activated.

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What structural needs are for the facilities themselves. So to your point on redundant power systems and how can we look and explore the potential of having these hubs be their own -- have the ability to produce their own power to continue to operate should the grid fail. And then ultimately really the community engagement piece. And through that community engagement group, there's a subsequent community outreach process that has led to the development of a task force that looks at an individual within each focus area that was identified to really help to hone down on the facilities to select a final pilot location. >> Pool: Do you think that it would be possible as we craft this structure and this process and make it really robust and responsive, that we might have, like, a second category of

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locations, like churches, for example, that are offering their facilities to be cooling centers like they do in the cold months as warming centers, but that they can operate under their own processes and standards and rules and we would have a list and there would be addresses for people to go to should the hubs that the city are putting together be oversubscribed? >> Yes. And the answer to that is, absolutely, we are working on that with the neighborhood resilience hubs team. If you recall on this slide, there were three phases. The first phase is focused primarily on the pilot. And the six locations that are agency-owned facilities. However, through this engagement process that we're kickstarting we will be asking those questions of the communities that if it's not a city or an agency facility, where do folk goes to get help. As part of the red solution

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passed in June sponsored by councilmember tovo, we're looking at also how do we integrate not only communication and information material, but how do we integrate the larger community to be part of the hubs. That is to be explored in the -- in the second phase where we will gather information of folks who are providing those services right now and develop a procedure for faith-based organizations, non-profit, businesses, at want to serve as a resilience hub and can provide these services. I don't know what that specifically looks like right now. I think that is part of WHA we're doing in the exploratory phase. And also learning from the pilot program. But the goal is to have a procedure that integrates with the emergency management plans to be able to communicate and activate the hubs that are not operated by the city to be part of the response.

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>> Pool: That's great. I do think that those informal sites will also be useful and helpful. Yes, Mr. Ortiz?  
>> Yeah, if I could add a little bit to that as well, in a real event -- some of that activity will also be coordinated through the emergency operations center and working with those faith-based organizations and other community-based organizations that can help us in those times of need. Specifically, American red cross or Austin disaster relief network, they have networks that they can help in the coordination of helping to identify and open additional facilities, if that is something that would be

required. Similar to how earlier in this season, in June, I Austin disaster relief network assisted us in finding additional cooling center locations to be stood up

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and they were able to open up one center, but we're going to base that on the demand, given the situation. >> Pool: That's great. I really appreciate that, director Ortiz. And assistance city manager oriano, thank you for assembling a really strong team and this is an important issue for everybody in our city and I appreciate the resilience hub effort that my I colleague councilmember tovo initiated. It is really necessary. And I think that these are the kind of policy changes and program changes that will have really long shadows going forward and will be hugely important and helpful to everybody in our city. Thank you. >> Kitchen: Yes, thank you very much, and I appreciate the discussion that my colleagues have raised, that has been very help will of the questions that have been asked. I have a different question. It relates to the MVP program

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and it's not just the MVP program though, so I'll ask two questions. The first question is just I'm wondering what the status is of following up on the outreach system for seniors. That is as you recall -- that's a program that the mayor and I worked on as well as other councilmembers, I believe, during, you know, during the cold weather conditions that we had. And as a follow-up, this is a follow-up item, and, you know, might be listed -- might be listed in one of your after-action reports. But it was a follow-up recommendation to develop a system to reach out to seniors during emergencies which would include both cold weather and hot weather events. So I just don't know what the status is of developing that system. I can see -- I appreciate the update on the resilience hubs which is absolutely critical.

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I just want to know what the status is of this particular program. Do you have that information now? >> I do not.ik >> Kitchen: Okay. >> I understand that it might be in Austin energy lead on that, and if they aren't prepared to talk about it, then we can certainly follow up in response to all of the questions that we're receiving today as well as councilmember harper-madison. >> Kitchen: It was charged -- the commission on seniors, age-friendly action coordinator was charged, but she was not -- certainly not something that she could do on her own because it's an across departmental effort and it would need the support of hsem. So, I would like an update on that on, you know, because it's been a while now and I would -- the idea was to put that system in place. I mean, it's something that the mayor was really instrumental in and we worked with the community on actually making -- I forget how many phone calls now to seniors to identify the needs they had. You were helpful -- you remember

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now, right? >> I recall this scenario now. >> Kitchen: Yes. So following up after that we said, okay, that is something that we had to make up on the fly. And so we needed -- we need a system in place for that. So I just want -- if you could look into that, let me know what the status of it -- if there are barriers in some way that we need to know. It's time for an update on that. >> Happy to do that. >> Kitchen: Okay. So then my related questions on the MVP program which is a different program, but I had a few questions about the specifics of it. And so I think that I heard that there's an application process that customers and their physicians complete, and it sounded like it was an process. So I wanted to confirm that I heard that correctly, and then I wanted to ask whether the system allowed for, you know, individuals that are on oxygen or in more permanent situations really don't need to be -- don't need to fill out a form every

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year. Is there some sort of mechanism that makes this easiest for the customers M so that -- so that they could just be, you know, if it's a permanent condition, if they could just stay on the list? >> That's a great point and a good idea. The current process does require annual certification, because the way that we understand it, the patients may progress in whatever it is that is causing them to have that. So, it does require annual certification. There are others that just require more frequent certification if the doctor feels that it's not a permanent condition and they want to just continue to have that follow up for us. And those with the more serious

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medical conditions -- >> Kitchen: So everybody has to do it at least annually and some more often, depending what the doctor says, is that what it is? >> Correct. >> Kitchen: What does the certification process involve? >> It's an application and they can call the contact center and we send an application to them. Esand their desired doctor. And then we -- once we get that documentation from their doctor, we can move it out. >> Kitchen: So -- okay. The kind of question that I have is that I'm making some assumptions here, but that seems like that could be burdensome for some customers, because do they have to be proactive or do you guys reach out to them and say, hey, you need to update your center snisks. >> We do. We have an outreach and an annual certification and the customer can reach out to us way before that through our contact centers as well. >> Kitchen: Okay. I would like to ask you to

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consider a certification that lasts longer than for one year. >> Okay. >> Kitchen: So that a doctor, for example, could request a certification for a couple of years. It just seems like a lot of work to recertify people every year that are -- that have conditions that aren't going away. I'm very familiar with my mother, for example, who was on oxygen for a long time and she was never going to go off oxygen every year and her doctor could readily attest to that. And if you have to certify every year it takes a lot of work. How many people do we have on the MVP program? >> It's 375. >> Kiten: 375. Out of how many customers? >> Just under half a million. >> Kitchen: Okay, it seems that we're missing some people most

likely. So I would like to follow-up on that with you also to just understand better how we reach out to people to let them know

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that this program is available. And it just seems like that is a pretty tiny number for the population that we have. And so, okay, and then I'd also like to explore with you ways to make that more -- a little more user-friendly where it's appropriate for people whose conditions are not going to change. So, thank you very much. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. And I have a couple of questions and I'll start with the one that you have there but you kind of asked it, councilmember kitchen. When we had conversations and especially this came up during the winter storm and we had conversations and I remember sitting in neighborhood association meetings and others after the storm about what the medically vulnerable is, how one accesses it. I don't think that there's a great amount of knowledge among people who really need -- need to be on that list.

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My office and, frankly, one of my constituents really assisted a resident in district 3 who was in a very, very precarious situation during the winter storm. And I think we have families in our communities whose lives are at stake if we have a situation like we did in the past who have never heard of the medically vulnerable registry. So councilmember kitchen, this seems like an area, both this and the senior outreach, where we might provide some real direction in terms what we want to happen there and getting the word out and working through doctors offices and working through Dell childrens and other organizations I think we can get that information out to those who really need to be on that registry. So maybe you and I can work on it. >> Kitchen: Absolutely. >> But it's an area where some real specific direction might be of value. I agree with you that is a tiny one, given the number of customers that we have in our

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system. >> Kitchen: Yeah, the resolution that we all passed on the senior registry had some specifics with it, but not only -- yeah, it did, but not on the MVP. So I absolutely agree -- I'd be happy to work with you on that. >> Thanks. That was a question that I had for you. I know, of course, and I remember and participated in the senior outreach that you are talking about where we all made phone calls and I couldn't remember if you followed up with a resolution? >> Kitchen: Yes. >> You did, okay. >> Kitchen: Yes, we all passed and it had specific parameters to it, and probably not sufficient, you know, but it was enough to direct the staff to get working on it. >> Thanks. And did I understand that exchange to mean that you're going to follow up with councilmember kitchen and what responses have been taken in response to councilmember kitchen's resolution? >> It is. >> Thank you. And maybe it's in our new database which I'm still working to learn how to use. Okay. And, let's see -- I want to get

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back to some questions that councilmember harper-madison asked'm about pretty friendliness. I'm sorry that I didn't totally understand the answer to the question. I heard the response -- I heard a response -- but I wasn't sure exactly what the question had been about if there are requests made, pets can be accommodated. But could you just repeat that information for me. >> Yes. And may I ask Austin public health to help me with this. But when we have additional cooling centers open, animal services let us know that upon need, that they can provide a cooling truck for pets that are brought to those cooling centers. We certainly do not want to turn anybody away from those locations because they have a pet with them that is not a service animal. So they can provide that resource. That need has not been made -- that request has not been made yet.

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>> Thank you. Thank you for clarifying that. So I think that what -- this is an area of concern that I share with colleagues and councilmember harper-madison that raised it initially on the message board. And we have talked about the last several weeks that there are pets not allowed in places that serve as cooling centers, libraries and rec centers and others. And I'm not sure that individuals would know to proactively request that a pet -- I mean, if it doesn't indicate that it's not pet friendly and they won't bring their pet and thus they won't go. And so this might be an area that we need additional direction, even some proactive measure tang forward from staff on this to accommodate individuals who need a cooling center and have a pet, or we need to do something proactive as a council. Along the lines of the moratorium, if we have a 95° day

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and individuals seek shelter in our libraries or other city facilities that are serving as cooling centers, you know, well behaved leashed animals or what is it called when they are not leashed -- I have had a lot of animals over the years but I forget the name -- kennel -- kennel. If they're not leashed or in a crate -- or if they are leashed and in a crate and over a certain degree that we will allow them into those kinds of so I just throw that out to my colleagues and I'm not sure that councilmember harper-madison is still on, but that might be one way to -- to try to get a more proactive policy with regard to pets at these facilities. Otherwise people just won't go. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, councilmember tovo and I don't know if you can hear me and I'm on the way to a planned medical procedure, so my question was not answered. And I couldn't help but think about the emails that I received

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as of late that said that folks have been asked -- volunteers are asked to help to provide accommodations to meet the need of our shelter pets for overcrowding reasons. People are being asked to help to provide fans for shelter dogs. So if we have a cooling truck option that we can deploy, why aren't we using it at the shelter already? And so I didn't ask that question because I don't have enough information to go on. A lot is what I'm hearing in the background, but if that's an option that we have, I

wonder why we're not using it. To your point, I don't think that information is being readily distributed about what resources we have at our disposal. But, thank you for highlighting that, because it is a once for me and I know to your point that a lot of our constituents won't seek assistance without their -- without their furry loved ones. >> Tovo: Yeah, I totally agree and I think that I would just highlight this for the manager, please, come -- please share

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some -- I understand this is an area of concern and I think an area of opportunity to come up with some good resolution to this issue. And if one is forthcoming I invite the dais to put their head together and to look at what might be useful. >> I want to acknowledge this topic and how to be more proactive and flexible in terms of accepting pets during these extended heat situations. >> Tovo: Great, thank you. You know, I see around the community lots of businesses accommodating. I mean, I've had an opportunity to bring my pet into a couple of places recently because nobody wants your pet to stay in the car in this kind of heat. So if private businesses can allow pets in under these really extreme circumstances, I think that our city facilities can too, again, assuming that they're on leashes and well behaved. Okay. And my other questions have to

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do with resilient hubs and staffing. Thank you so much for our resilience officer. I think that a lot of my questions are going to be directed to you but a couple might be for our assistant city manager because they relate to budget. So councilmember pool really Teed this up. You know, one thing that -- I really appreciate, number one -- let me start by saying that I really appreciate the work that has gone on with regard to the resilience hub. I am so pleased by the kind of collaboration that is done with aid in particular, some with Travis county, and the other partners. I'm interested to hear more about the U.T. Piece so let me start there. What -- what is the program at U.T. That is collaborating with -- with us on this resilience hub? >> I'm sorry, can you repeat. >> Tovo: Sure, what is the U.T. Department or program that is collaborating with us on the resilience hub work? >> Sure. And I will actually say that the

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specific program department is skipping my mind right now -- but, it has been a partner that has been with the sustainability office, the -- well, assistant professor Patrick Bixler as well as dev youni who have been working with the city for some time. And the program itself, we just executed -- executed an agreement that was already in place to bring on one of their students to officially sit with the resilience office and the sustainability office for two years to develop specifically an enhanced capacity and to develop the phase two and phase three of the resilience hub program. >> Tovo: So are they collaborative partners or are we paying U.T.? >> Part -- it's collaborative partners with a portion coming from the city to support the --

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the employee that has come from U.T. To work with the city. >> Tovo: Are we getting other resources from U.T. That are not paid? I guess that I'm just trying to understand the relationship, if they are -- if they are participating as aid and Travis county as a collaborative partner or if this is part of our interlocal -- kind of our umbrella interlocal agreement that allows -- that allows the city to go forward and kind of pay U.T. For their involvement? >> Right. So they are both a participant of our community action committee. As well as now with the formal partnership that had expanded the teams capacity for neighborhood resilience hubs. >> Tovo: Okay, thank you. And I'm very excited in particular -- I'm excited about all of the work, but I just want to highlight the need for phase two to begin immediately. You know, councilmember pool asked about this as well, but, you know, I look back on -- on an example that I cited in the resilience toolkit and that was

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Barcelona. And in one year, they were able to -- they called their resilience hubs what we're call resilience hubs they call climate shelters. In one year they were able to increase from 70 to 163, by utilizing the existing buildings and not just municipally owned buildings but community partners and if they can do it we can too. And it's critically necessary. And because they were able to increase so dramatically and in such a short period of time, they're now within a walk for residents anywhere in the city. So, you know, I -- I'm sorry, this is sort of welcome to Austin, this is kind of the way that we always work. Like, you know, we're delighted that you're here and we're super excited about your work and we want you to do all of it right away, which I know that is not feasible. But I do see that there's line items in the budget for staff and I would say that, you know, the sooner that we can get some of that toolkit out, even if

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it's not the final iteration and there's lots of work to be done, if we could get some communities some direction immediately, I think that would be really be helpful -- right after the storm I went to a couple of neighborhood association meetings and they're already thinking this way. You know, they know a lot of our neighborhoods -- most of them -- really had great learnings after the winter storm. I mean, they did this informally, right. They talked to one another and they talked to their neighbors and they talked about who was medically vulnerable and who had a four-wheel drive, and so people near the mindset now on how to make this work. I know that as soon as we pass the first resilience hub resolution I was contacted by different congregations and others want to participate in this work. And one of our own ministers at my church is interested in this. And so I think that there's a lot of talk about this and people are ready for action and they will help us to expand that network quickly if they have basic guidelines what facilities

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are appropriate and what sorts of resources that you can line up, how you can use that place as a hub in blue sky days as well as times of disaster. If we wait for all of the six pilots to get on the ground, we'll be a long time down the road and, frankly, we won't have them across the city. We won't have them in areas that are potentially most prone to, say, wildfire risk and some other situations. So, you know, we are -- I just never want to see a city in the situation that we were last time where we had people calling our individual offices, texting our personal phones, saying that they were freezing in their houses and had nowhere to go. And, you know, you had just kind of informal flying by the seat of our pants efforts to try to get schools open, you know, and just we can't -- we can't ever have that happen again. So, that's just an urgent plea that if we could, say, borrow

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or, you know, use and compensate a group like gava who has already done kind of a toolkit and is doing community trainings. If we could use their work at least initially, if they're willing for us to do so, to kind of get these community groups across the city working, I think that we would really be able to dramatically expand some of those places for people to go on days like today where it's hot, but also, you know, in times of real disaster. I know what director Ortiz was saying that we have the red cross and we have disaster relief network and others, you know, who can fly into actions at times of real crisis, but, frankly, that didn't serve our entire city last time. We had areas that were not -- did not have access to warm places to go. And we also need them in times that are not hugely -- you know, are not huge natural disasters, but are -- where people need places to go to get in out of the heat. So, that was kind of a long

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editorializing -- >> May I provide a response. >> Tovo: Yes, of course, and then I will ask some more questions. >> I want to say I wholeheartedly and 100% agree with you that we must act with a sense of urgency in these matters. You know, we cannot wait for the next storm to be able to start moving forward with mitigation and adaptation items and building resilience. I will say that since the resolution that passed in June, there have been efforts that are moving forward to start creating the website. And so that is moving forward. And as well as integrating gava's work, and so we are having those conversations internally and with our partners. And then the other thing that I wanted to remind us is that as we go through this process we are bringing in additional staff positions, and for a resilience hub coordinator and these positions are instrumental in allowing us to further expand

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the capacity of the team to be able to not only just build the tools and platforms, but also start creating the databases and creating the information that is needed to bring everyone into the table for this response. >> Tovo: That's wonderful, thank you. And I know that you mentioned that the U.T. Position is also focused on phase two. So, is it fair to say that phase two is -- maybe I'm just hearing what I want to hear -- but it sounds like phase two, which is that empowering the community to kind of organize their

own resilience hub -- is phase two happening to some extent concurrently with the pilot? >> In some ways. I think that we are -- we are doing them in parallel and utilizing the learnings from the pilot program to incorporate and kick off the phase two as early as possible. And being able to start sharing information to get -- to get

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those resources out there. On the things that we already have created, on the materials that are already available, that have been created by the city and by our community partners to be able to share them. >> Tovo: Great. Yeah, that's -- you know, again, I understand that y'all have a lot of learnings from the pilot that would inform perhaps an even stronger network across the city, but, on the other hand we have to balance that against just getting -- getting some of those groups activated now. So I guess that I would always lean on the concurrent that we can iterate as there's a need to. The budget. So, I want to be sure that I'm understanding, on page 26 it talks about two positions being

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reclassified to provide ongoing direct support of the resilience program. And then on page 27, it talks about nine new positions to support resilience hubs. And then two positions for community preparedness and equitable access to assistance. So I'm not sure that there's more detail in the budget itself. And I haven't really gone through that section, but what I would like to know generally -- and maybe not in today's session if it's not appropriate -- it's not at all clear to me, by the way, what our budget work section structure is going to be and we seem to change it every year and sometimes we have each department present and then we were doing videos and having different sections of the day for question/answer and I think that now we only have one budget session work day and so I don't know how we'll use that time. So I'll just ask my questions now. I think we need more clarity around what each of these positions are doing and H they're different from one another. As I see -- as I see this, it

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sounds like we're adding a total of 11 positions with regard to resilience. I don't see funding included in the budget for the work that we just discussed -- the toolkit. That is listed on the unfunded item as "In progress" and I would say, you know -- I have a question about that, about why that would be the choice, given what I would regard as kind of a high level of importance. And I'm not sure that I understand how nine -- how nine full-time employees would be utilizing their time in times of non-emergency. Obviously, there's a great deal of planning that has to happen to be ready for those times where it's necessary to coordinate mass care and emergency sheltering, but in the times of non-emergency, are they also going to be -- what are they doing, and how are they helping us kind of become a more resilient community? >> So I can start at a high level about what we're trying to accomplish and it might be best

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to respond in a more detailed way to those questions and as I understand it now that the proposed budget is available, then the budget council questions might be some of the way to get some of the detail that you might not have now and for us to be able to give an adequate response. In terms of the current year allocations, reallocations and, again, one of the things that we try to do and recognizing and certainly giving kudos to the sustainability office who took the lead on resilience hub activity, was to reallocate at least two positions to start to relieve them of that effort so that sustainability office could really concentrate on the climate action plan. And so we start with the current two people to focus on resilience hub in the current fiscal year and then augment it with the investments that you're seeing for fiscal year 2023. And beyond then it would be helpful we took an opportunity to provide a more comprehensive answer, because I think that there's a few aspects of what you asked in that brief

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moment -- >> Tovo: Sure. >> That we should spend some time on. >> Tovo: I think would be great and I could submit a lot of questions but I think that there's a general -- my guess is this is an area that a lot of the council is interested in and a lot of community is interested in -- and I could ask some questions to try to get at how these positions are used but clearly there's a rationale of how they were requested and where and what kind of workload there is, and if we could start by asking if there is any of that, you could forward it to us in the extent that it's not already in the budget. And it could prompt other questions, weather rather than me submitting 20 or so questions that would be really be helpful. If you would include the last one, the other two positions. It looks like we might have 13 positions that fall into the category of emergency preparedness and sheltering and I ne to understand the division of labor and what they're going to be working on in times of non-emergency. And, again, why there's not funding included in this year's budget as it was directed by council for that toolkit and

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what Laura has -- what our resilience office director has described as phase two. >> Happy to do that. >> Tovo: Thank you all. This was a really useful presentation today. >> Mayor Adler: So interspersed with the questions that a lot of people have raised and touches on a lot of the stuff that councilmember tovo raised -- in response to the winter storm effort that we had, we recognized that one of the greatest force multipliers that we had was the general public response. And we talked about trying to institutionalize that response. That the Austin disaster response network was insufficient to do that. It was an important component. That was consistent with the traditional city response of being kind of at the center of the response, but also recognizing that when we had a

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huge response that, again, was insufficient, that we were criticized about a lot of people helping in the community and saying that their need to help was the shortfall of the city of Austin and after all they had to be there because the city wasn't able to handle it as opposed to recognizing that in those kind of



instances that the city can't handle it. And then we should look at that as something that we recognize upfront, that is kind of a paradigm shift and then thinking about how do we take advantage of this great force multiplier, even to the tune of recognizing that we have hot animals and we're not going to be able to respond to that and how who do you we take advantage of the community helping to deal with hot animals and how to empower that. Because we can't do that.

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But so long as our immediate response is how do we do that, and how do we do that at our shelters, we are setting ourselves up to fail and we're not taking advantage of the force multipliers that exist. Every time that we've had this conversation about response, we've always raised this issue and we've asked the question of how do we institutionalize that aspect of our response. It's maybe not the thing that we have to institutionalize when we have a series of hot days, because maybe it doesn't rise to that level, but I just, again, I suggest that there's got to be a way to institutionalize that and maybe there's a core group of a hundred people that gets identified and you're meeting with them once a year so that they meet each other to talk about what that looks like when an event happens. And if you're going to be taking six facilities and moving them forward, what's the corresponding pilot that ties

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into that force multiplier event that would then get expanded and another thing -- I just had never heard how that gets institutionalized, but we have touched all around that and, I would suggest again that we need to figure out how to incorporate that and institutionalize that aspect of what we do that does not have the city at the center, but purely in a support role. >> Thank you for those comments, mayor. And I think that part of what we'll see and perhaps if Mr. Ortiz could jump in to add to hsem is an effort or a core of folks that can, in fact, do the outreach, can do the coordination for our partners so they have a more meaningful role. >> Mayor Adler: Okay, that would be good to see and maybe that becomes part of the response to what councilmember tovo was asking for is that we better

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understand what that additional capacity would be doing. >> Um-hmm. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: Thank you. I have a question about the list for the medically vulnerable. There are some Austin residents that are not on Austin energy. Is there a collaboration with maybe bluebonnet to help the public safety folks know if something is happening to them and they're not in our service area? >> So I would ask Jerry Galvan to respond to that question. >> Yes, this program is very unique and I don't think that there's many utilities around the nation that have a program like Austin energy. And we can certainly share our information and best practices. Recently, Austin energy -- our program -- was recognized by a national utility industry conference for having one of the most robust programs. So we do share with our partners

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through those conferences and other opportunities. But we don't have anything specifically with them in terms of this work. >> Ellis: Okay, I might just want to follow-up with you offline about how we could try to make sure that those utilities also know how to build something like this. I think that it's creative. I think that it will end up being quite robust, and I look forward -- robust, and I look forward to seeing that expansion and I know of folks not on Austin energy. And we have ems and fire stations close by and so there could be assistance provided and they may not be aware that there's a potential situation. My other two comments are -- are things that I have seen good successes with. You know, during the winter storm we had a great collaboration between one of our local churches that steps up and is a polling location when it's time to vote. The Austin disaster resource network was working with them and the city stepped up and was able to provide portable showers in times of need. So I have seen this deployed well in district 8 and, so, you

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know, it sounds like there's a lot of other community members that are geared towards trying to create this quick -- quickly deployed type of collaboration in these areas. And then I would just say that I have seen the capital metro buses with their signage at the stop saying that you can come in here if you need to cool off. So I think that is a really good visual reminder, if someone knows that there's a short-term situation where they don't have access to power, you know, maybe an hour or two and there's ways to get on a bus, cool off. And go to the pool and convince someone to be a lifeguard and there's a lot of different options that we have locally. But I have seen some of those successes and I'm glad that people are really working hard to try to make this happen. I understand and I sympathize with my colleagues who are really trying to make sure that the most vulnerable and affected by this situation are attended to as well. So I hope that some of these -- these newest ideas can be implemented pretty quickly.

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>> Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: Yes, councilmember Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Thank you. And I want to echo the comments from the mayor and councilmember tovo and really wanting to see a system that is coordinated hand-in-hand with the mutual aid groups and with our community and non-profits. That was some of the feedback that I have been getting from folks who worked very closely with our unhoused community is the fact that our cooling centers, they close at 8:00 P.M. And so there's no alternatives for folks to go overnight. And even during cold weather, they are often, you know, our cold - - during cold weather, our warming centers are set up at our recreation centers or libraries, and usually they are asked to leave by 6:00, 5:00, 7:00 in the morning, before the youth programs begin. So that's another issue. And one way -- so I say that to share and to highlight that, you know, using city facilities is not our only option and that our, you know, working with communities to have and an

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identified location that can be available overnight is one of the avenues that I would like to explore further. And so I wanted to share those comments. The question that I had was around hydration. We know with these extreme weather events and advisories, that one of the recommendations is to stay hydrated. So I'm wondering, as part of the response strategy right now, what do we do on the hydration efforts? And I'm not just asking about water availability at the cooling centers, you know, is there a strategy where we're actively providing water to folks who are deciding -- or who don't have a choice to stay outside? >> We certainly have provided assistance with bottled water and providing those to vulnerable populations through our partners that we can access through Austin public health and the homelessness services division.

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They have agencies that they can reach out to and individuals and water has been provided to them and distributed. >> Fuentes: But they would have to ask for it first? >> I'm not exactly sure how they're being distributed out. I'd have to ask some of our partners for that. But the request from homelessness division certainly has been made and we have responded with available water and those will be provided. >> Fuentes: Okay. Yeah, that's one that I definitely want to learn a little bit more about. And then also -- or lastly -- the question that I had was around enhanced communications. I think that, you know, certainly, like, many austinites are receiving a text message that are saying that we're now in an extreme weather advisory. And I think it even linked to the cooling centers that we had set up. But that was something that we hadn't seen before when it comes to extreme heat.

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And so really it was impactful and sharing with our community the state that we're in when it comes to climate change, but also it was an improvement with city communications, emergency communications, and how we coordinate with the public. What else can we do to deepen that engagement? And, I mean, that working with the radio shows and the online and the digital communication, but we be often that those who need this type of shelter, or cooling center, are those who are not online or plugged in. What other efforts can we take a look at? >> Sure. So we are currently working with our homeless services division for -- they have a navigation distribution list. So a lot of the providers have worked with this group to provide cellphones. And we have that information plugged into the warn central Texas system. So anytime that there's a heat warning or an excessive heat situation, we are directly messaging this information to that group.

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So I would say, you know, that there's always an opportunity for that group to expand and for more cellphones to be provided and more people to be on that list. So the service providers are working with our city folks to make sure that as many people as possible have that access to that resource. And then as that resource is provided publicly, that we're plugging those numbers into our system to try to reach people that way. Really, we rely with our aph partners and our service providers and -- it is a two-way

street and a two-way communication. So as needs arise, we can be flexible and people say this isn't clear or can you provide this information to this particular population and this particular way -- we can be responsive and flexible. That is just one example. Another example of where that has been successful is just that two-way communication is working with the steps that have not been open to them -- to the people that they serve during the daytime. Because we have been in regular communication with them they're

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now open to serve folks who are experiencing homelessness Monday-Sunday, from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. And normally they just have overnight facilities. So because we have been in communication and looking for out-of-the-box solutions and we're able to improve how we serve that population. >> Fuentes: So thank you for highlighting that. So the partnership with Arch, and them being open during the day, during the week days, is that going to continue throughout the summer so if we have any additional extreme weather advisories that is an option? >> As I understand right now they're not restricting that. And it's still 102°, and still warm so my understanding is they have changed their operations to make that available throughout the summer months. >> Fuentes: Okay, that's great. >> Councilmember, I see that Dianna Grey is up on the screen. Dianna, did you want to add some context? >> I don't believe that I have any other comment at this time, I'm just available for any

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further questions. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, we have anything else on this before we take a break? Yes, Councilmember Tovo and then Councilmember Vela. >> Tovo: Just a couple of quick things. So Councilmember Fuentes, you raise a really good question about the access to water. You know, it was just a few years ago, really, that I brought the resolution and Austin Water Utility worked faster than any department that I have ever seen to guess those water fountains distributed throughout our downtown. We don't have a lot of them but right before the pandemic those were established downtown and they also include -- they're really a great model but also includes -- like, a pet area on the bottom. But I think that in this -- as we're seeing this summer -- we really need those kinds of water fountains in other areas of our city as well. So I would -- I would suggest that we look at some of those places outside of the downtown area that may not have public --

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I almost said public restrooms because we had that conversation for so many years -- that may not have access to public water fountains and then ask Austin Water Utility to help us to look at that solution. And, Mayor, thank you for raising the point that you did and thank you for embedding that within it. I think that what we really need is kind of a better understanding of how all 13 of those positions will be used, and what kind of responsibilities they'll be fulfilling within that. But, I think that is really important to utilize the strength of the community. >> And just in follow-up in terms of the water fountains and so forth. I can certainly bring that information back to Austin Water. And as well, make sure that the

fountains that we do have are operating properly. >> Tovo: That would be great to see. I mean, I see folks using them, but it would be really good to know how they have fared and how they have held up over the last couple of years. And also, you know, some of our city facilities have water fountains but they're inside and

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not outside. And so, I mean, all of our city facilities I believe have inside water fountains. But it would be good to have some sense of what libraries and others might have water fountains outside. And where the gaps might be. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember vela. >> Vela: My question is for Austin energy. I was wondering how was -- and I'm thinking specifically over the last couple of weeks with the conservation notices and the stress on the grid, how was usage in the Austin energy area? And, again, just to give a little context -- my sense is that people are very aware and conscious of both the usage and conservation for environmental reasons in particular. Did we see a strong reaction from folks? And, again, I know that Austin energy has those -- the thermometers -- not thermometers -- but the -- lord have mercy --

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thermostats. That's the word that I was looking for. Where they can automatically, you know, kind of shut that off to, again, to preserve. What did that performance and usage look like locally? >> Excellent question, councilman. >> Sidney, your camera is blocked with something. >> I apologize. >> There we go. >> Thank you. Excellent question. You are correct. As the state of Texas and the ERCOT region, and Austin energy and our service territory and our defined service territory, we also set peak demand loads last week, actually, it would be this week as well. And we approach those peak loads last week and set a new peak load this week. And our previous peak load was slightly north of around 2800 mark, I don't have the exact number in front of me. And our new peak load is nominally just north of 2900,

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maybe 2920. We are still working on some of the final reconciliation of those numbers, but it does appear to be a new peak load set this week. To your point around conservation and the response, we do have the thermostat control and we did exercise that. As we have exercised that, we have seen a good performance in the number of -- and as well as the demand response that we have contracted with the number of customers and we have seen good performance in that as well. Does that answer your question? >> Vela: That does, that does. And I know that demand response has been -- people have pushed forward on the state-wide level. To me it just makes a world of sense, but, unfortunately, I think that actually I remember seeing a chart where, you know, we used to be decent at demand response and now I think that Texas has fallen to one of the worst states in terms of demand response. So that's just a major problem. How about just locally in terms

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of chokepoints, you know, and I'm thinking more of the system, the grid, that, again, Austin energy controls. Despite, you know, record-setting usage, how did it perform? >> Well, again, excellent question. One of the things that goes into peak preparation for us to meet peak demand of Austin energy, our preparation starts years in advance. A lot is driven by forecast and a lot is driven by expectations and where we expect the load to be. And as a result of that we have put in one new sub-station and we have more new sub-stations being planned as you can see in downtown Austin where that load is growing. We have a new sub-station going in there towards the southern part of the service territory. We engaged in putting new sub-stations and supporting growing load and the southern part of that was energized just a number of months ago. So to answer your point, yes, there were chokepoints and one

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thing that we do as a daily basis is to look at the loading in our system. Not only to load across three phases, a, B and C phase, but also load across the sub-stations so that we do not have overloads. That is one of the things that our control center, we do have a system, or we have a control center, where almost like air traffic controllers are looking over the electric grid at any given moment and they're analyzing these things, um, looking for needs to rebalance the system where load may be pocketed or increasing in the localized area. So that is one of the challenges, and it's one of the things that we have successfully been able to execute over this particular summer. And to your point, yes, that has been challenging. >> Vela: And did the chokepoint, you know, or the stress on the local grid -- did that produce any localized blackouts? >> We've had localized

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challenges and we have worked with ERCOT on most of those to deal with some of those localized challenges. I will leave it at that. >> Vela: In terms of -- and I know that there was the slide earlier talking about -- identifying a couple of, like, local -- of customers affected. I mean, about how many people were affected by any kind of localized problems in the Austin energy service area? >> Okay, let me go back to last week. We had a load limiting component. And that load limit component was sensing overload and it tripped as it was designed to trip, as a protected load, as it protected the critical load on that circuit to include medical facilities and it worked as designed. Unfortunately, the people on that circuit were without power for nominally 30 minutes where

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we were able to restore that energy as we switched loads to a different circuit. That's an example of something that may have [indiscernible]. >> Vela: Okay. Switching gears right quick, the Fayette power plant, I know that we've had a number of conversations about the Fayette power plant. Was the Fayette power plant in full usage over, you know, throughout this very kind of tight grid conditions over the last few weeks? >> Our particular units have been in operation over the last couple weeks, yes. >> Vela: And

related to that question, how was the -- and, again, I know that y'all still may be settling accounts and numbers, but, you know, I know on the one hand that Austin energy is a generator and a seller of electricity, and the other hand we're a purchaser of electricity. How is the financial performance

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of Austin energy over the last few weeks? >> We have been challenged as most in the industry have been challenged. The loads have not been necessarily forecast. If you go back to months prior forecasts, one of the things that we look at in terms of looking at our portfolio and looking at what our anticipated loads have been, if you go back to the long-term forecast and a number of months this summer was not anticipated to be as intense as it is. In terms of financial performance, we've gotten hit by some would call a relative perfect storm. What I mean by perfect storm is intense weather, accompanying intense loads, record-setting natural gas prices, high prices in the energy market as a result of those natural gas prices. Not necessarily sustained, but definitely in high pockets, specifically when the

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temperatures were high. And then in addition to this, and to that, the one component that has been challenging has to do with constraints on the transmission grid, to your point. So to the extent that you have resources, generation resources, that are distant from our load center, and yet those resources are needing to support load in the Austin area or other load center areas, it can be a challenge for operating or transmission capacity to be available to transport that energy. As such, you can get congestion pricing and that has been a financial challenge and an operational challenge, for not only Austin energy, but for the rest of the entities in ERCOT. >> Vela: Again, and I'm just trying -- I'm not that familiar with the electrical market, but I'm trying to learn as quickly as I can. In other words, I mean, since no one was expecting this, we did not have kind of long-term power

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purchase agreements in place that would have, you know, cushioned the blow of the short-term power prices. So we had to go into the short-term -- or the spot market -- to purchase, to make up -- I mean, would that be an accurate, you know, kind of description of the -- the kind of market position that Austin energy was in? >> Councilmember Vela, this is the general manager at Austin energy. We have a team of folks that operate what we call energy market operations. And they look at our positions and they have very robust practices with regard to hedging and using financial instruments. So, there is. So there is currently not a capacity market and what we do to manage our exposure is to use a variety of tools that are available to us and do that on a yearly basis. We look at on a monthly basis.

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We look at a weekly basis. And we implement those things on a daily basis and put positions on and off that act like insurance, if you will, so that we can protect our customers from the volatility we are seeing in the marketplace. Now ERCOT has changed how they are dispatching the system and that has created some nuances as they trays level of reserves that they have available to ensure that the load is covered with these higher demands and as that loading 0 of resources on the system and the parts have changed, that creates congestion in some areas, and so there are other tools that we use to manage that risk but I want to as sure you we are continuously monitoring that and we have very robust programs and a team of people that are very skilled to manage our exposure.

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>> Yes. >> Vela: I very much appreciate that, and I think Austin energy's financial performance has been solid through, you know, a number of years, but my sense was that as Mr. Jackson was saying, this was unexpected. I don't think anybody was thinking that, you know, 111 degrees and, you know, again just record usage, I know the usage was way out of line with what ERCOT was predicting, I can't image that, you know, you all's expectations were that much different. But I will just, again, trying to get a sense of, you know, being on both sides of the purchase and generator of power, you know, how did Austin energy make out over the last few we weeks? >> So we continuously look at that and there are several things and motors reads that have to be finalized and there is the tools that we use in the marketplace that we have to wait until we get settlement and things from ERCOT.

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I will tell you that prices have increased significantly and that, you know, it does cause us to have concerns with regard to our power supply adjustment which is where these costs are captured. And when we set the power supply last year you will recall, I guess councilmember Vela you weren't here, but we put it below market because we had an over check that we were, over collection we were refunding as so we look into the, into the next year we have to reset we will have to compensate for, you know, it is no longer under, undercollected and potentially could have an over collection and where we will have to moderate and adjust that rate to be. So I can't tell you specifically, where we are right now with that, but I can tell you that we are monitoring it very carefully and that the team is taking the necessary steps to provide that stability for our customers. >> >> Vela: Good.

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I know these are trying times for electric utilities, private or public, really, and I appreciate you all's hard work and I look forward to looking and learning more about the operations and the struggles that you all face and again I appreciate the answers. >> Mayor Adler: Okay, guys, anything else? All right. I think we have answered all of the questions. Thank you, thank you staff for spending so much time on this issue. Obviously we are all trying, these are trying times with 41 days over 100 degrees and unfortunately we are seeing extreme weather situations that seem to be hitting us more and more frequently. Colleagues if there is nothing else, then I am going to adjourn this meeting at 301 and we will



[3:01:38 PM]

reconvene as a city council next week. We have a work session regularly scheduled. With that, this meeting is -- councilmember kitchen. >> I don't know if this is out of order, I can ask it off-line. For next week, on the work session I was thinking that we would be talking about our process for budget, you know, we have always brought budget riders in the past and I know there has been a suggestion, it is a bit different than that from our staff to learn, to make sure we had the opportunity in the work session to clarify and be really clear on what the process was going to be. So is that on the agenda Tuesday? >> Yes, it is that budget discussion will be on there. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: With that, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you. >>