

Budget Resolution / Rider: ALTER #1 EMS Billing System

Lead sponsor: Mayor Pro Tem Alter

Cosponsors: Council Member Tovo, Council Member Ellis, Council Member Vela

WHEREAS, in 2021 the City released a Fire/EMS equity study that identified several opportunities for increased revenue and billing process improvements; and

WHEREAS, the newly appointed EMS Chief, Robert Luckritz, was sworn in early Spring 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Council adopted a budget rider as part of the FY22 budget cycle to address the existing EMS billing backlog, which directed the City Manager to update EMS billing practices to improve the system and increase revenue; and

WHEREAS, since the passage of the budget rider, the City has taken steps to improve the Charity Care billing program, which represent a significant change in potential revenue; and

WHEREAS, there remains an estimated EMS billing backlog of 19,000 despite initial actions taken by City staff; and

WHEREAS, while the FY23 budget includes new staffing for billing, revenue estimates were made prior to the inclusion of the 9 additional FTEs, and the FY23 proposed budget does not capture their impact on revenue estimates; and

WHEREAS, the City has recently completed a cost-of-service assessment for EMS, which will allow adjustments in the EMS fee schedule; and

WHEREAS, retention and recruitment of EMS professionals remains a priority for the Council; and

WHEREAS, further investment in recruitment and retention efforts for sworn and non-sworn EMS professionals is an appropriate use of additional revenues captured by improvements in the EMS billing processes; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Austin-Travis County EMS Employees Association are currently engaged in labor contract negotiations; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL:

The City Manager is directed to continue efforts to improve and fix the EMS billing system, to address the backlog, to make further improvements to charity care, and to provide progress reports to the Audit and Finance Committee in September and November 2022, and quarterly thereafter until these actions are completed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is further directed to propose appropriate mechanisms to invest additional revenue captured by improvements in billing processes in recruitment and retention efforts for sworn and non-sworn EMS professionals. These mechanisms should include consideration for an incentive-based structure for sworn and non-sworn EMS professionals. The City Manager is further directed to create flexibility for such mechanisms within the contract negotiation process as legally necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The City Manager is further directed to provide recommendations on appropriate mechanisms to the Council by the end of January 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is further directed to provide recommendations on whether the City should adjust the EMS fee schedule to better reflect the cost-of-service study findings by the end of January 2023.

