

Audit and Finance Committee Meeting Transcript – 8/24/2022

Title: ATXN-1 (24hr)

Channel: 6 - ATXN-1

Recorded On: 8/24/2022 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 8/24/2022

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

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[9:33:15 AM]

>> Alter: My name is Alison alter, I serve as mayor pro tem and chair of the audit and finance committee. Today is August 24th and I call this order at 9:33 A.M. I'm joined by councilmember Fuentes and councilmember pool and councilmember Kelly. Councilmember tovo is not here yet. After public communication and adopting the minutes, we are going into executive session and then when we return we'll take the items in order. We very likely won't need to take up item 3, which would be the public session for the executive session related to the security audits. Good morning, councilmember tovo has now joined us. We do not have any public communication this morning; is that correct? Great. So I will entertain a motion for adopting the minutes.

[9:34:15 AM]

Councilmember Kelly makes that motion seconded by councilmember tovo. All those in favor? Unanimous on the dais. The committee will now go into closed session to take up one item pursuant to the government code, the committee will discuss security audit matters related to item 5, discuss status of recommendations for security audits related to information security management in the city and Microsoft 365 security audit. Is there any objection? Hearing none, the committee will now go into executive session and we are going into executive session in person.

[9:35:16 AM]

[Executive session]

[10:49:57 AM]

>> Alter: We are out of closed session. And in closed session we discussed security audit matters related to item 5. Um, we will now take up item 2 which is a revisiting of two prior audits of animal services and whether they have been implemented which is separate from the animal services audit that was initiated at one of our recent meetings. That audit and how that's going to be shaped is going to be on our agenda in September. The audit and finance agenda. And it's going to be -- just as we have done with the Austin water audit that council initiated that the auditor is overseeing, we'll have them come and to talk to us about status of where that audit process is for the broader animal services audit that builds out of the prior auditor's audits that

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we're revisiting today. But hopefully we can be brief on this. Korey? >> That's what I was going to say as part of my intro. So I'll skip that today and this is a follow-up on it and we go back and look at whether or not recommendations that we previously issued have been implemented by the departments. Today, Henry led this work and Patrick Johnson is going to do a quick presentation. >> Good morning, mayor pro tem and committee members. I'm Patrick Johnson from the audit office. And as Korey said, I'll just go ahead and start. We did conduct an audit at the animal services program in 2015, we issued three recommendations and this project followed up on those. Okay, try to move forward here. Yeah, just the next one as well.

[10:52:02 AM]

Yeah, move forward. Yeah. So here you see a summary of the three recommendations. In 2017, our office followed up on our 2015 work and determined that two of the three recommendations were implemented. One was still underway. That one dealt with kennel operations and compliance with state requirements, as well as best practices for animal care. And that was a focus of our work. Next slide, please. And in that recommendation it had three parts and I'll step through those very quickly and I wanted to note that we added animals available for adoption on our slides, so that's what you see here. The first part of the recommendation really dealt with determining the optimum level of staff needed per kennel operations, specifically, um, that was to address best practice metrics for animal care. We didn't see evidence that animal service has done such a

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holistic analysis, so there's still action needed on that recommendation. Or that part of the recommendation. Next slide. And the second part of the recommendation involved addressing capacity issues and state requirements. This is where we saw the most efforts by animal services since 2015. First, the city addressed the state issues by moving out of the town wake center in 2017. We also saw efforts designed to keep animals out of the shelter. However, the population of medium-to-large dogs, especially as consistently exceeded shelter capacity, so, again, there's more work to do here. Next slide. And in the last part of the recommendation it dealt with response times to emergency service calls. We did see animal services allocated more staff in this area, but they reported challenges responding in a timely manner. We also saw -- noted service call information is not always complete, but it had improved

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since 2015. We also saw the information was difficult to get out of the system and it was maintained differently than in 2015. So we were unable to do a one-to-one comparison on the response times themselves. So, again, you know, we noted action needed as animal services continues to address these challenges. Next slide. So overall, we assessed the recommendation as still underway. As Korey mentioned we anticipate several of these issues will be included in our larger audit that we'll be conducting over the next few months. And if there's any questions -- and I believe that the director is joining us virtually, if I'm not mistaken. >> Alter: And I think that councilmember harper-madison needed a link to get into the virtual as well, if someone can help her with that. Colleagues, any question for the

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auditor and would anyone like to hear from Mr. Bland? Councilmember. >> Thanks for the presentation and, yes, I would just like to hear from director bland on the progress, the little or no progress, on that first recommendation. That recommendation would have been in place when he first joined city staff. So it would have been -- I would assume that would have been something that was a discussion during the hiring process. >> Can you hear me or see me? >> We sure can. >> Good, it worked today. Thank you.

[10:56:04 AM]

Good morning, councilmembers. I would like to say, you know, each -- when I first got here, we had just hired our first H.R. Coordinator. So we have -- still have the one coordinator that deals with all of our H.R. Issues. Each year, we have asked for additional staff, knowing that we have shortcomings based on this audit to our response time, and to our kennel care. And we -- since I have been here, we have asked for 49 additional staff through the three years that I have been here. And we got one and a half prior to

this year. And this year we're getting six. So we do know that we need significant amount of staff. I will point out that each year the state comes in and does an evaluation of our shelter, and then we also hire private that come in and do intermediary

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evaluation and each year our capacity -- our care for the animals has passed with flying colors. And they have annotated that it is our staffing that is here doing the work that has made us successful, that we -- you know, we do not have everything that we need, and they have written us up on several occasions prior to me being here with animals in crates. They frown on that, and that is something that we get dinged on. So we do need additional staff and we were looking at it internally and we haven't done an official H.R. Study yet, but we know that right now just -- if you look at the standards of care in the industry, and we need 32 animal care staff, with the volume that we have right now. And we have 21 or 22. To handle the response times, which we handle our priorities

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ones and twos within our metrics for animal protection, but they really don't have the capacity to do much work to keep animals out, and advocacy, because they are so busy. And our three-day response time for a stray is -- is not met. A lot of times that is something that we set. And if you look at our animal control officers, we're getting two additional, but handle based on the numbers in the industry standards we would need 40, instead of our 21 that we have currently. So, we -- we do see that we do need additional staff, and we have been asking for staff, and we are pleased that we're getting six out of this cycle. >> That is great, what is the vacancy rate that you have currently? >> As of -- I haven't looked this week and as of last week we had 12 open positions. >> So I think part of my concern

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is related to the fact that while you have -- and others I suppose -- have been looking to grow the number of staffers onboard, the structure for the work that we do in animal services relies significantly on volunteer and community support. What I don't see -- and you acknowledge that you need more hands and more support, you prefer to have it as more hired staff, but it looks to me like that has been your focus despite the fact that you haven't over the years gotten the additional staff that you say that you need. But I would think that as the manager, as the chief animal services officer, you would have looked at that situation and said, well, if I'm not able to swing the additional increases in my staff, then I definitely need to go back and rely more completely on the relationship building within the community, which is, in fact, how animal

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services have traditionally been managed. And what I see is -- is a loss of that relationship building in the community, which has led to some that has led to interesting situations at the shelter, and too many dogs not being walked because the people that we relied upon to help with that have left. The relationships have frayed. And I am hoping that the independent audit that's coming forward will help us to identify ways in which we can reknit together the relationship that we rely upon, and that brings us, um, a real bounty of help and concern and involvement at the volunteer and the community level. We cannot do our animal services

[11:01:10 AM]

work without the full support of austinians. And I would urge that kind of a -- a readjustment of the thinking on staff is not so much to build the numbers, I mean, you should feel your vacancies, certainly, and then if you're falling short, there is a lot of available community interest, but you have to work at it. You have to build those relationships. You have to make those groups feel welcome. And I would challenge you and your leadership team to look in that direction, and then as we move through the months of the independent audit, I'm very hopeful that we will have some good recommendations so that we can have more successful outcomes. And have our animals walked and the behavior modifications undertaken, and that we have a really robust sharing among the

[11:02:13 AM]

animal advocates communities to help us in -- in every way to be the successful, no-kill city that Austin, Texas, desires to be. And supports. Thank you, chair. >> Thank you. Thank you. I would like to say -- give you a report -- that if you look at our commission report from last month, we have really ramped up our volunteers to the point that last month we were just a little under 200 hours of volunteer services prior to the pandemic in 2019, for the same month. So, our volunteer hours are, you know, back up where they used to be. Every -- our volunteer orientations, we're limited, you know, on how many we can do a month, and every one is completely filled up and we're getting the volunteers back, and they're doing great work.

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And that's truly what we do rely on to get to us that point. So, we are making great strides and I don't mean we -- a lot of our new volunteers participated, and we actually received the chronicle's volunteer organization -- best volunteer experience of the year last year -- this year. So, we're really pleased about what the steps are that we're making and the volunteers are filling up our orientations to capacity each month. And so -- >> Pool: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, that is really great to hear that. And that is indeed the direction that I believe that we need to move in. Thanks for that update. >> You bet. >> Alter: Thank you, and I will ask my colleagues to try to make this short unless you can stay after 11:30. >> Sure, I will make it short. Thank you very much, and I was listening to you all while I was not on the dais, I had to just step away for a few minutes. I just.

[11:04:13 AM]

Just wanted to ask a few quick questions and I want to call attention that I put questions in the q&a related to the question coming up with this audit, and those budget questions I know that haven't appeared yet online. I believe that director bland, you had submitted the answers and I think that there's just a lag in getting them posted but I'm told that they'll be posted soon in the q&a portal. On page 5 there's a discussion about required information being missing on some of the out-of-state organizations. And I wanted to ask director bland if -- if there's a process in place -- I'm sorry if I'm missing the management response, but I wanted to just offer you an opportunity to explain how you're going to progress forward and meeting some of the gaps that the audit identified in -- in that first section of required information being missing on at least 10 of the

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applications for out-of-state applications and no application forms for six of the partners and needing a formal agreement with about half, 17 of the partners? >> There's a two-step process. If someone applies and submit an application to be a partner and then they actually have another step where the agreement that they have to sign, and so a lot of folks, you know, they might do that first step and then they stop, they are doing the application because they're interested in one dog and that dog is pulled or reclaimed or adopted, and they just stop the process. And they're not moving forward with the next one. And then some of those we -- it is a failure on our end because we will go and to do the application process when there's some missing information as we have conversations with them -- our foster rescue partner

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agreements, they reach out, they go over everything verbally with them. If they have left it off, our folks are getting it in the verbal and putting it in our software but they're not going back to their form and

amending their form for them. So if they've left something off, we have confirmed it, and we've got the information, but we've just not gone back to complete it on their form. >> I see. So what's -- what are you doing in terms of working with your staff to make sure that they understand the importance of completing those forms? >> Well, we -- we advised them to go back and to make an annotation and here's their answer so that we do capture that information. So it can be seen that they left it off the application but they confirmed it and here's the response and we'll capture that information to make sure that

[11:07:16 AM]

it's annotated back on the form. >> Good. I think that is really important, I know that on council we get questions often about some of the organizations that are partnering with you, so I think that getting that -- making sure that information is always complete is really an important part of maintaining the community's trust. So, thank you for providing a focus on that. One last -- one last couple of questions. Councilmember pool talked about the -- about staffing, and I think that is important based on the vacancies, and I'm glad that you're focused on getting those hired. As I understand the conversations that you and I had, and some of this came through in the council session, those additional ftes are going to help to reopen the animal center on Sundays. Which I think that will help with volunteerism. Because while some of our great volunteers are able to help during the week, there are certainly volunteers that are only available on Saturday and Sunday. >> And we've not -- Saturday and Sunday, even though we're closed

[11:08:16 AM]

on Sunday, volunteers are still here and can be present on Sundays. We have never eliminated them. You know, since opening back up from the pandemic those few weeks. >> Great. Thank you. And then with regard to one of the audit's findings about the -- about the challenges that our center has -- I mean, that was not the word they used -- but they noted, the audit talked about the fact that we only have one location for our animal center right now. I wanted to ask you what the plans are really for utilizing that mobile facility? The van that we have that, you know, that once upon a time was more active. That seems to me as one of the ways in which we could get that -- get animals, you know, present throughout our -- our city, including in spots that, you know, that are really a far distance from town hall? >> We have used that quite often this year. We have found that, you know, it's been difficult staffing. We've actually set up appointments where we are going

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to a location and we didn't have the staffing and so some of the leadership -- myself, Jason, mark sloak, we have actually managed that truck because there was no one else that we could pull from caring for the animals that we have. We find that while it does create really good P.R., we don't get a lot of adoptions from it. Sometimes we -- we get several, and then other times we have zero from the same location. So it's hit-and-miss. But we have really been working to try to have more off-site events where and when we can. >> Great, I think that is really important. I know that we had a couple here as councilmember pool has mentioned before, and one of them they were able to adopt all of the animals and another, just several. So maybe some is about publicity, and to the extent that council and others can help you to amplify those efforts, please, please let us know. And I know that I for one and I am sure that my colleagues would be happy to help to amplify

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those in advance so that you can get people that are looking for animals. And, thank you, I know that the staff vacancies are creating a challenge. I really appreciate the staff and the volunteers who are working there. I had an opportunity to see them upclose over the last month. And they're all working really hard and my new little guy from the center who came home last week is doing great. So thanks for your work, and continue to look to see some of these -- some of these gaps in better shape as you continue to hire staff. >> Alter: >> I think we're having furs-day on September 1? >> That is correct. >> Alter: Councilmember Kelly, did you have anything on this? >> Kelly: I'm just really excited about furs-day. Thanks. >> Alter: So, I think that, auditor, we do not need to do anything since this is a report back and so we'll move to our next item. I want to do a time check, are folks able to stay another 15,

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20 minutes so we can fairly cover -- I know that councilmember pool and I can stay one more. Can you stay? Okay. Great. So we're going to now move to -- >> Chair? Councilmember Madison -- [indiscernible]. >> Alter: I think that she was here for the next item but I don't know -- councilmember harper-madison, did you have questions on the animals? >> Harper-madison: I do not, thank you. I'm here for both items but I didn't have any questions. >> Alter: Yeah. The next item I think that has a facility in her district, so I know that is important to her. So, we will now move to item 4 which is our strategic security presentation. And we'll hear about several different things that are in the works. One piece that we're going to hear about is what we know about tele-working and how it's

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impacting our facilities. We're also going to hear about, um, several other projects that they're working on. You know, we have made a commitment to move from lease-to-own space and we have some

challenges for public safety personnel that we need to address with some locations and some warehouse stuff. This has been an issue that our committee over the years has been focused on as well as, you know, I had a resolution in 2020 that asked about the tele-work and councilmember Renteria had a resolution recently that is looking at how it impacts the needs that we have with respect to our facilities. >> Good morning, everyone. I'm the deputy cfo. I also have with me here today in the room, I have Daryl Alexander, our building services officer, and online we have Michael Gates, also from financial services, our real

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estate officer. And three of us together create this -- and also acm, we are the strategic facilities governance team. So thank you for the opportunity to provide you this update on our activities. We have four items to cover today. Next slide. First, we're going to speak to the impacts of tele-working relative to office space planning, and then like the chair noted, we will be touching on plans for public safety campus. Johnny Morris service center. And then ultimately a solution for being able to continue to deliver these facilities in the most efficient way, both from a time and a cost perspective. So, next slide. >> Alter: If you could do your full presentation and then we'll take questions at the end. >> Sure. Okay. Next slide. So in June of 2022, council passed a resolution directing the city manager to conduct a study of occupancy rates at city

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facilities as a result of remote work schedules. And how that might impact changes for office space needs and then ultimately come back to council. So we have just a progress report on that. When that resolution came forward, we were in the process of conducting surveys to departments that are in leased space that is up for expiration here in the next few years. But we have expanded that to cover all of the departments to have a more comprehensive view of what kind of tele-working and office space needs they might have. So utilizing those surveys as well as data from our timekeeping systems to see specifically what are folks entering in terms of in-office hours versus tele-working hours. We have from that been able to glean from those departments currently in lease space, they actually were estimating that we'll need around 173,000-square-feet, which we can -- we can address through currently-owned facilities, including the town lake center

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and one text center. And this is incredibly positive news that we can address that. But there's also -- we also need to take into consideration the office space needs that we'll need across the entire organization, not only now, but in the years to come to make sure that we're appropriately planning for

those needs. Next slide. We also have been working on what our options might be for a public safety campus. Currently we have Austin police department, ems, fire, and the office of the medical director that are in a variety of facilities. So that includes the police in their headquarters downtown, which that building is -- there's been prior council direction to relocate out of that facility. Plus that building is in not the greatest condition. They are also housed at Rutherford lane and the fire is

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also at technicenter, and ems at both erj and technicenter. And in the vein of creating a more comprehensive and a connected public safety group we're looking at creating a public safety campus on the Rutherford lane campus. So Rutherford lane is a very large site, over 32 acres, so it could -- with its current buildings and with the potential for expansion, it could meet the needs for all of those departments. And in addition, because it is public safety oriented, it qualifies for utilization of certificates of obligation, if that is the decision ultimately for funding it. The delivery method is -- would be intended with the public facilities corporation which I'll talk a little bit more about in a moment. We've completed space programming, those reports are still in draft form as we work through those, and we'll be seeing a significant portion of the rfp. And we're hoping to put that rfp

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out in the beginning of 2023, but even before we do that, this fall we want to do extensive community engagement with the area about this potential campus to make sure that we're -- we're addressing the community ideas, concerns, but also looking at whether there's opportunities for us to partner with the surrounding area. For example, the asian-american resource center is just at the doorstep, so where can we partner there. So to not just meet the campus needs but also a good partner in the community overall. Next slide. Just a quick update on the Johnny Morris service center -- so that -- that piece of property will be utilized to house a joint service center for both Austin resource recovery and fleet services. It would provide a north Austin site, which would relieve overcrowding at Harold court that is occupied currently by a number of different departments, and also to address services for fleets -- the fleet services that are currently taking place

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at Hargrave. So part of this service center will include not just the facilities for the service -- those needs -- but also office and warehousing, which is warehousing is, um, a need that comes to us regularly from all across the organization. So, anytime that we have an opportunity to address warehousing needs, we're looking to achieve that. Community outreach was conducted as part of the design criteria manual. So there's two options for us to be delivering this. It could be through a typical public works managed

project. But we also have an option to do this as -- through a public facilities corporation. So if you could go to the next slide. When we're looking at our project delivery, with Austin energy headquarters and the planning development center, we were able to achieve that through a private/public partnership, developer assisted type of approach. That approach allowed us to deliver those projects in less than four years from start to finish, and at a very cost

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effective way, relative to other methods. So the challenge with that method versus doing that on land that we don't already own, versus land that we do own is state procurement law. So we were able to use that method and those two examples baunited states it was a real estate transaction. The developer brought the property to the table. In situations where we own the land, we cannot do that same approach. But through a public facilities corporation, we can do an approach like that, so we can achieve that effectiveness and achieve those efficiencies and still achieve all of the values that we want in terms of a project and facility delivery. So, in this case, the PFC, which would be the council-created corporation, would hold the ground lease. It would run the rfp for the developer team who would then finance the construction. And then we -- PFC would lease the debt and lease that back to the city and those lease

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payments would be essentially be the same as our debt service. So we're able to reach the same end goal, but with just a slightly different approach. Then -- so we're planning on coming to council in the middle of September for approval to create that PFC, but we're really excited about this possibility because it could be used, like I mentioned on the Rutherford lane campus as well as Johnny Morris and other facility projects that we have in the future. So that's all we have to update you on today and I'm open for any questions. >> Alter: The Austin energy site is not listed for the teleworking option or moving folks into that. I think that several of us on the dais, and councilmember Renteria went to visit Austin energy's new beautiful facility, which was fairly empty. And we were concerned about best

[11:21:32 AM]

utilizing that space. So can you speak to the Austin energy site and plans to -- where that's at? Their teleworkers and how we might pivot there. >> So Austin energy headquarters is definitely an option but because it's paid for through rate-payer dollars there would have to be a lease payment of sort. So we're trying to focus ourests on relocating the departments into city-owned space that would not require an additional payment versus Austin energy. It's absolutely on the table, but we're trying to be as smart as we can with those dollars as we make those moves. >> Alter: What are the occupancy levels for -- >>

The occupancy levels for those? I don't have those right on hand and that's something that we can pull together and provide later. >> Alter: I think that it was an important part of the resolution for understanding that, so I think that we need some follow-up information on that. And then another project that you guys are working on are the warehouses. Can you speak to that process? >> Right. So like I noted with the Johnny

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Morris space there's a warehousing component and I noted that we have significant warehouse needs across the organization. We are -- we've been taking a look at collectively at what are all of the warehouse needs amongst the various departments and seeking out a city-owned property where we might be able to create a warehousing facility. Because we have continually leased warehousing space over the years, but it's becoming more and more challenging in terms of finding space and then also the cost of it. So, similar to where there's been prior council direction for us to shift our approach in terms of getting out of leased space for office, we're trying to do the same in warehouse. So we do plan to come back to council in the coming months -- the next few months, honestly -- to present a concept for how we can achieve that warehousing transition and put a significant dent in the warehousing needs for quite a few departments. That is something that we can -- Daryl can speak to if you have

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any additional questions as well. >> Alter: Well, I guess that I'm concerned also about the -- the Heesom distribution facility and, you know, whether that's going to be leased or owned space. We put quite a few positions in the budget to -- to interface with that. Although that's not their only role which is why I didn't raise it during the budget, but I wanted to make sure that we're getting that space quickly, but we're also taking care of moving that to own space, and then related to that, we have non-profits who work with us on our disaster relief. Like the Austin disaster relief network, that need warehouse space that is not a huge amount of space, but that would be extremely helpful for their ability to bring other resources into the community. So I want to make sure that we're incorporating some of those needs into our planning or considering how we might -- how we might do that. >> Absolutely. Heesom is definitely a component of that larger warehousing project, or proposal, that we'd

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be bringing forward. But we're also working with them actively right now to address their interim needs on relocating some of their -- the -- the containers, thank you, that is the word that I couldn't think of -- they have large containers that they have been using. So we're working actively to address the immediate needs and also long-term needs so that they're taken care of. But they're definitely on the

forefront of our priority list. >> Alter: Thank you. Colleagues, councilmember Fuentes? >> Fuentes: Thank you, and I know that we met earlier this month and we were able to go through this presentation and we had a very thoughtful conversation. One of the things that I wanted to flag for my colleagues here is that I'd love for us to consider renovating or expanding the public safety training facility which is located in my district. A partnership between EMS and fire and police. If y'all have had the opportunity to tour the training

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academy facility, it is, you know, bursting at the seams and certainly needs to be expanded to meet the needs that we have. So would the public facilities corporation have a part in that if we were wanting to renovate that training center? Would you be able to use -- >> There's potential there, but it's not a must have, per se. We're very early conversations with acm Mariano and all of the safety departments to determine their exact needs for expansion, but in the meantime there are funds that have been set aside in the capital budget to address just some general renovation needs that are more immediate, but then we're having those conversations with acm Mariano and the departments for expansion. Then there would be down the road, if we -- if we go down the typical schedule for our -- our bond development -- bond programs -- it's in the not-too-distant future, there would also be an opportunity for us to continue, not just that

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facility, but a variety of other facilities. >> Fuentes: Since this is a public safety component, would we be able to use the certificate of obligation? >> Yes, yes. So certificates of obligation, house bill 1869, puts significant restrictions on what we can issue certificates of obligation for as non-voter approved debt. And private safety is an allowable use. So we have those options. So we have options in terms of delivery and we have options in terms of funding mechanisms. So it makes it a little bit easier to handle than some of our other projects. >> Fuentes: Yeah, and, like you said, this is definitely a long-term project. Certainly, as we continue to grow as a city and we'll need to invest in the public safety academy. So I look forward to continuing conversations on that front. Thank you. >> Alter: Thank you. Before I move to councilmember harper-madison, anyone on the committee have further questions? Councilmember tovo? >> Tovo: Thank you. First, I have a couple of questions about some projects that you talked about earlier on in the slides and that is one Texas center.

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And that is on page 4. And so when you talk about the facilities under consideration to relocate departments from leased space into owned space, does that include the planned redevelopment of one

Texas center for use, including affordable housing? >> So, right now that would be utilizing one Texas center in its current state. The ultimate long-term plan for one Texas center relative to redevelopment and affordable housing, that is all still in development and nothing has been finalized there. So those are conversations to occur. >> Tovo: But what is the current status for redevelopment -- is work underway for design? >> Because of the information that we're gleaning around tele-working and office space needs from that resolution it's causing us to kind of really take an organizational-wide look

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at our office space needs and make sure that whatever decision happens on one Texas center, that we're doing it in concert with that data. So, we're having to wait until we get -- we finish completion of that -- or finish collecting that data from those surveys and the timekeeping systems to make sure that we're informing that decision point. >> Tovo: Do you feel that you have clear direction from the city council about affordable housing on one Texas center. >> Yes, absolutely, absolutely. >> Tovo: And then since one Texas center obviously involves right now the temporary use of the downtown Austin community court, this is my understanding -- and this is a question that I wanted to entertain during the budget, but I'll just raise it here and ask our city manager to please follow up -- you know, it was my understanding that that conversation was coming back to us pretty soon. And here we are months and months later with no follow-up on the downtown Austin community court conversation. Do you have a sense when that is coming back to council? >> I do not. I know that there were

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considerable conversations going on amongst their advisory board and community stakeholders on their geographic boundaries and their service approach, but I don't -- and there were conversations about how that would come back to council, but I've not been involved in those directly so I'm not able to answer that question. >> Tovo: Okay, thank you, I will just raise that is something that I would like to hear from the city manager about and I really hoped that it was coming bat us, say, in July. So, thank you. And then shifting gears to the public facilities corporation and I appreciate -- I think your office reached out for a meeting and we haven't had that meeting -- so I have many, many questions about the public facilities corporation and I'll keep it to just one at the moment. Can you help me to understand how the work -- so the work that I think that you're describing is the work that was really contemplated for the economic development corporation. And so can you help me to understand how what you are describing -- why there is a need for the public facilities corporation now that we have a

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local government corporation whose task it is to develop projects on city-owned land? >> Right now we're looking at it as warehousing and it's not an economic development project, it's just purely administrative office space. So, we are absolutely working, and we are working with aadc, and particularly on identifying the city-owned properties relative to the creative spaces, and other partnership opportunities. So we're definitely working with them, but in this case it doesn't really fall into an economic development, um, kind of area. It's just -- it's office space. >> Tovo: So I think that in -- in and among the other questions that I'll have for you and for other staff as we move towards potentially taking this up in September -- is really fundamentally that -- you know, the economic development corporation had a mission broader than just to develop creative spaces and one was to maximize the potential in the financial potential of our sites, including, you know, I think that it would encompass

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this as well, because when we're using our sites efficiently, financially efficiently as well as efficiently in other ways, I think that is good for the city. So I, um, I'm not -- I am really looking to see whether this -- the ways in which it may not fit into their scope and some of these buildings likely will have other partners within them as well. And so that is -- that does put it into an area where we might have leases with other entities as part of our owned facilities. So, anyway, those are some of the questions that I'll have and we'll just continue that conversation. >> Alter: Thank you, councilmember Harper Madison. >> Harper-Madison: Thank you, chair, I appreciate you allowing me to ask some questions. So I think that councilmember Tovo asked a lot of the questions that I would have otherwise asked, including the differentiation between the Austin economic development corporation and this new public facilities corporation. I will probably have a lot of similar questions, including,

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um, it would be nice to see kind of a chart maybe about what the two entities can and can't do that are either similar or dissimilar, because much to her point, I don't see the need for the additional facilities, corporation, if the first can complete the mission. And on those same lines I would ask, what is it about -- what would be required to set up the public facilities corporation? And then the warehousing component -- so I have -- anecdotally, I have -- watershed has a facility in district 1, it's smack dab in the middle of the neighborhood and it's equal parts fleet and warehousing. And so and so I would really like to get some guidance on how best to most officially to get to the root of how to repurpose

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our fleet and warehouse facilities that are located within the neighborhoods. And potentially taking up spaces that could be used for housing. I know that we have several single-family houses to store things, which is odd to me. So I do have questions around our warehouse facilities needs and what kind of square footage are we looking for, what sort of footprint are we looking for, do we want one south, one central, one north? Just one? So I have a lot of similar questions about, um, just generally moving fleet out of neighborhoods. So I guess that ultimately my question is -- is this -- is this a council item that we're bringing forward on its face currently? Or is this something that we need to process through the auditor's office? And get a full report with the necessary data to determine what

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potential housing square footage, um, footprint do we have that we're not able to use because we're using it for fleet services. And then, lastly, my -- my final question would be, um, during the conversations over this last three years, you know, it's crazy to think that we've been having this conversation since then, but, you know, looking at passing by the fleet services there at Hargrave and realizing -- I mean, I literally can see all of the downtown skyline from the fleet services site, realizing that we have almost eight acres and it's right in the middle of d1 where we need housing and, frankly, we need community amenities. But realizing that we have a lot of those. So I know that this space, the arr, and fleet were talking about sharing -- I really would like to know how many fleet services sites we can relocate to a comprehensive location for

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fleet and not take up valuable space in -- in city center. And communities for fleet. That was a whole lot of questions I'm aware. >> So, councilmember, if I could start from the beginning. The watershed one -- I'm not sure which property that you're referencing. So we can work with your office afterwards to get some more information to research that situation. In terms of the fleet -- Hargrave site -- the Johnny Morris site would absolutely serve as the new home of that -- the service center that is currently at Hargrave. And in terms of all of the fleet services sites, we can absolutely take a more comprehensive look at all of theirs. I know that Jennifer walls is definitely taking a good look at all of their facility needs, so we can partner with them, absolutely, to make sure that we're addressing not only their service needs, but also looking in terms of just best and -- best use of the city properties.

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>> Harper-madison: That would be very helpful. Thank you. And then, you know, if we're looking at it comprehensively, I think that the additional question they would ask would be around environmental considerations. It certainly, you know, is not lost to me that we have to do a considerable amount of

remediation to repurpose these facilities for housing purposes. So if we're going to compile data and conduct a pretty thorough analysis, I would say that should definitely be a point of conversation, how long, how much, all of that. And I wonder if -- because it is a real estate item, if it would require an executive session to really sort of talk through what are our warehouse needs. I would like to have a better understanding of overall what our needs are. >> Alter: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Yeah, thank you, councilmember harper-madison and I think that you have raised some considerations. And that prompted another question for me, you know, we

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have several council directives about working with our partner organizations in this city who may also have similar needs, like fleet and others. Have you -- in identifying the need for these kinds of spaces, warehousing, fleet, have you been actively working with, say, Austin independent school district and Travis county to see whether there are any opportunities to jointly locate some of those services on land or facilities that they may own? >> We've had previous conversations, particularly with Travis county, on warehousing needs. Aisd -- >> [Indiscernible]. >> Tovo: Once upon a time as a result of some council direction to look for ways to partner, we had some partners around warehouse space. >> Well, we can -- we can absolutely touch base with the facilities folks at aid, and to

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touch base with Travis county to be cooperative partners across the city to meet those needs. >> Tovo: Fleet would be another area -- I don't know -- if enough out of the aid facility loop at this point, that I'm not sure -- I'm not sure whether they have capacity at some of their fleet areas. I know that they sold one of the tracts that had been providing a fleet, but just to councilmember harper-madison's point at looking at carefully how we utilize those spaces before we move forward with -- with a fleet, you know, a different kind of fleet campus, I would like us to see whether there are opportunities to partner on those kinds of locations. >> Yes, councilmember, Gerald Alexander, building service officer. We are looking at -- I think that is one of the things that we're stepping back to take a deeper dive for the need for everybody for the warehousing space within the city. Or we have talked to or had conversations with Travis county, I know for sure, on using some shared space if possible. The only thing about aisd, but I think we can look at that and

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also kind of look at the state and see if we could do some joint -- >> Tovo: Thank you. >> -- When it comes to warehousing. Troif if it's helpful in the millions of files I have in my office I have -- >> Did you say millions of file? >> Tovo: I was wildly exasperating. Exaggerating. The many files I should say. >> All

right, all right. >> I'm not sure that we need an executive session but, certainly, we can consider having a presentation at a future audit and finance committee meeting, you know, about the warehousing. Councilmember harper-madison, I think this will be our last question. >> Harper-madison: Thank you, and it's a statement and not so much a question. So I'm looking at a list produced for me by Jennifer walls. And I have six sites. One in district 7 on Kramer and one in district 3 on Bohn, and two in district two and one on Todd lane and one on maynardis,

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and one in district 9, service center 5, 714 east 8th. And then three, four -- in district one and they're called specifically service centers. The one thing that I would ask that is maybe a question -- in district seven it's called service center 13, but I only have a list of six. It would be nice to know how many service centers we have and make sure that when we are compiling all of that information about -- about fleet service sites and warehouses, that we're not missing things like -- what is called a service center. I just hope that -- that the wording doesn't miss the opportunity to include it in the data collection. I hope that we don't lose anything on semantics and we basically are all asking the same thing about city-held assets and spaces that we're using for -- for fleet and service adjacent purposes. >> Yeah, we can do that,

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councilmember. >> Alter: Thank you. Colleagues, our last item -- thank you very much for the presentation. It is important work and we look forward to further conversations. Our last item is agenda item 6, which is identifying items to be discussed at future meetings. Ms. Stokes? >> Hi. At this point I don't have a full list of the items that will come in September, but for sure the item that we discussed earlier related to animal services, my office will come back to talk about that. Our work to date related to that resolution and our timeline for that audit. That is one of the items on September and I'm not aware of others at this point. >> Alter: When will we see the draft audit plan? >> The draft audit plan will come to the October meeting. >> Alter: October meeting. Great. And then in October we're going to be hearing from project connect, looking at the finance side of things. Some of our writers from the

[11:43:09 AM]

budget and we have some reports related to ems and the omco, and that is going to be on our agenda and let me know if there's other topics that you are interested in. Hearing no other comments, it is 11:43 and I adjourn this meeting of the audit and the finance committee. Thank you. Thank you for joining us councilmember harper-madison.