

City Council Budget Meeting Transcript – 7/26/2023

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[10:00:33 AM]

I will call to order the work session of the Austin city council, it is July 26, 2023. We are meeting in the city council chambers at Austin city hall. What we're meeting for today is

to have a council work session with regard to the general fund Ed of the proposed budget. We're also meeting so that we can have public comment with regard to the budget. Public comment had been set for a time certain of 10:00, so I'll recognizing that we have a quorum of the council present at 10:00 in the morning. Council villa is joining us virtually. I will now turn to the city clerk and ask if she will call all people to speak. We will start with those who are calling in remotely and each speaker will be given two minutes. Thank you, madam clerk .

>> Thank you, mayor. No one has called in exactly yet, so we're going to go ahead and start with in person. We do have an interpreter here, so I'm going to ask that la ram Leon, come to the front. And you will have

[10:01:35 AM]

four minutes.

>> Okay.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning.

>> Hi. Good morning, everybody. Zenobia maguro ly ram Leon lokhova. Okay.

>> My name is Ryan Lamb. Ram Lang Navarro.

>> Delvalle district attorney to I live in Delvalle district. To Lockhart. Chin.

>> I arrived to us in 2009 as a refugee with my family, said clearly in time I have four kids .

>> The I'm paid the income pilots quarantine and chito

[10:02:37 AM]

miyazawa one Tapia Ed. Winneway. Ya-ching general Rubio.

>> Okay, I'm one of the recipients of the guaranteed income pilot program and I'm grateful for that. Me and my family together and it has been really helpful for our family in general.

>> Got me to. So when we meet the Austin, I got Selig anytime. Polgar ogunbode.

>> I'm one of the low income family and, and it's quite difficult here in Austin with the limited income and mortgage payment we're a property general meters people doing general nariko shimpo Miyagi especially with the high mortgage payment

[10:03:38 AM]

and also the increase in the property taxes this income has helped us a lot as a family for our family.

>> So when we are seeing our general Eckhardt Micah rey be able. To build up prior to.

>> So this income helps us to pay for utility, electricity, water and then also for my children to buy basic needs for them. Pio Adi general Yoshida when we get to Janet mitsuru when we need to rely on not need to tattoo and I would like to advocate for other families too. That might be facing similar situation like my family.

>> De when we go back to school and now head to a third layer to

[10:04:38 AM]

when we need Selig Piro, toshi and I would like to request to extend this budget for the next year or two for other family members to Colo de Austin. So general budget watashi chito and thank you so much for giving us the opportunity and receiving this funding from the city of Austin.

>> Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

>> We'll go ahead and return to reports remote speakers at this time. Bobby Levinsky. Thank you, mayor.

>> Council members, this is Bobby Levinsky with the save our springs alliance. I am speaking in favor of the equity actions committee, investment budget, save our springs signed on as a member to that. We want to make

[10:05:40 AM]

sure that the budget is taking into account all the necessary resources to respond to climate change as well as climate equity . In addition to the bullet points you've already received on that. Want to speak in favor of also additional staff resources for environmental review, especially reviewers associated with the watershed protection department. They're responsible for doing a lot right now and we definitely need more resources for them. In addition, we also are working on more ways to fund more to protection lands. We look forward to continue to work with council to explore more options there and please feel free to reach out to us any time you need us. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you, Mimi styles.

>> Good morning. City council. I'm Amy styles. I'm the president and founder of measure

[10:06:43 AM]

is a longtime community activist within Austin Ann. I just I'm here and just urging the city council and all austinites to really take notice of this critical issue regarding the budget and making sure, too, that that the offices, the equity office and the civil rights office, you know, really don't lose their autonomy and authority. And I believe that it will truly hinder their ability to serve the community effectively. You know, I just I just wanted to honestly, I just want to take a moment for us to remember the history of racism and injustice within the city and all of the work that we've done and how, really by preserve the Independence of these offices. It's really the only way that we can move forward to really continue to, to bring a just and equitable, sustainable Austin for all. It's it's this really, in my opinion, not only

[10:07:46 AM]

endangers the hard work and the progress that we've made, but it also poses a an incredible threat to our community's health our quality of life. And it just I just really wanted to be able to share, share those words on behalf of measure. Thank you, Brian Oakes. Good morning, mayor and council.

>> This is Brian Oakes, the former chief equity officer for the city of Austin. And I was calling in this morning to really express my concerns over the merger of the equity office , along with civil rights office and sbr, to create a new new department. I believe that's called the civic and business equity department. I really hope that I'm not the last chief equity officer for the city of Austin. One of the things that

[10:08:48 AM]

was most disturbing about this proposal is that the chief equity officer position will be down graded into a division manager and as a division manager it would be a non executive position and the chief equity officer would really struggle to get access to other executives within the city. The chief equity officer would no longer have access to directors meetings and these are sort of really critical internal pieces to really create the change that the city had a vision for when it established the office back in 2017. The other thing that I would encourage the mayor and council to do is to really lean on the research and the data. Back in 2016, the city inquired, required the services of the government alliance for race and equity to do a comprehensive study on how the structure and the position and equity office within the city to have the most impact through that process. The

[10:09:49 AM]

government alliance for race and equity. They interviewed over 40 community leaders and community stakeholders to get input. They also conducted two community wide public town hall meetings to gather input, and they benchmarked that against 100 other jurisdictions that also were doing equity work to make the recommendations that it was essential to have an equity office that was independent, that reported directly to city leadership, and that could be connected to sort of power structures within the city to create change. And so I would also just say to end that this is the worst possible timing that we could do a merger like this. Thank you. Your speaker. Your time is expired. Thank you, sir.

>> Mary, excuse me, mayor.

>> City manager. Do you think that we could get a copy of that study if it was sent through the system? Thank you. I don't know.

[10:10:53 AM]

>> Mary raja or raja.

>> Hi, I'm Mary raja. I have been in Austin since 2016, and I'm a citizen of district ten, and I was also the co-chair for the community climate plan or the climate equity plan that was put forth by the

sustainability office in 2020 and 2021. I am here to speak against the current budget proposal. I am in favor of equity actions, community budget proposal, all the recommendations that they have suggested in there such as aid for unhoused and low income folks, resilience hubs for the city and of course money for the climate equity plan implementation. I specifically want to emphasize that I think the office of sustainability and equity office were able to carry out the climate equity plan process by because of their autonomy and the way that they can make recommendations to

[10:11:53 AM]

other city offices and departments on equal standing with those departments. I think folding them under another department and defunding them, taking away their authority in this way will hinder their ability to carry out the climate equity plan. And that plan did take input from over 200 people individually as well as multiple businesses. And climate advocacy groups in the city. I think a plan like that really does center the needs of the most affected, and it's important that we allow the office of sustainability and the equity office the ability to carry this plan out. So please reconsider the budget proposal, specifically moving the equity office under the small and minority business resource department. And take a look at equity action's proposed budget instead. Thank you, George Middlebrooks.

>> Hello.

[10:12:54 AM]

>> My name is Jordan Middlebrooks. I live in district four and thank you for letting me speak today. I'm here to support the community investment budget proposed by equity action , along with all of the recommendations that equity action is making. And I am strongly against the proposed city budget by interim city manager Garza. One of the things that's the most disturbing to me about the budget as it's being proposed by interim city manager Garza, is the fact that we are increasing our police budget despite the fact that in the past two local elections, as the city of Austin, voters have voted against increasing our police budgets, it's this is showing to me that we're not listening to the people of Austin and that there is some there's clearly a disconnect between what the people in the city of Austin want, which is also reflected in the community investment budget, and that is clearly not what's being proposed in this. Back to the basics city budget being

[10:13:55 AM]

proposed by city manager Garza. Instead, I would really like for us to start investing in actual root cause solutions which were being reflected by having budget set aside for housing, by having budget set aside

to mitigate the impacts of being displaced. If we do not continue to fund these services, we will not be able to solve them through additional policing. We will not be able to solve them through this. Back to the basics program that's being proposed by mayor Watson and city manager Garza. So I would really encourage us to think about what are the root causes and how does our budget reflect how we're going to protect and actually increase our public safety because policing is not the answer to that. The fact that a gun was pulled on a ten year old child just recently reflects that. And so I would really encourage us to not move forward with the budget proposed by city manager Garza and also to keep the police budget where

[10:14:57 AM]

it's at reflected in the 2023 budget because as soon as we increase that, it's only we cannot decrease it any further.

>> Thank you so cedar sexton.

>> Hi.

>> Thank you so much for having me. I'm here to speak against the reorganization of the equity office in civil rights office. My name is cedar. I'm a resident of district three. I'm going to start with some questions. I want everyone to really think about are you for democracy or do you know what having a racial equity lens means? Do you know why people are poor? Why do you care about Austin's working poor, black, brown, indigenous, Asian and white communities that have been severely harmed by decisions made on the bias and on what data or national best practices is. It recommended to merge these offices? There has

[10:15:59 AM]

been no communication with equity office on this reorganization and there has been no communication with the community organizations and community members that the equity office has relationships with to make sure that we're being accountable to the direction that they deemed important and doing harmful outcomes for their lives. Community is that organized and out of that organizing, the equity office was created for the purpose of the equity office is to be a lever of accountability for Austin's historically under served marginalized and most negatively impacted communities as an autonomous city. Entities that could hold city departments, projects and even this council accountable to harm that has been done and continue to be done to communities of color. It was born out of true community action conversation, sweat, blood, tears and time that organizations like communities of color united or go mama Ana poder and others fought to bring to fruition. The equity office focuses on repairing the

[10:17:01 AM]

historical damage that the 1928 aster plan and subsequent city plans did to black, indigenous latinx and Asian communities here in Austin. Damage that was done based on race and to fix that, we have to focus on making sure that we're making equitable decisions across city departments that bring to light embedded obstacles that create disparate and disproportionate, disproportionate outcomes for black latinx, indigenous and Asian communities. And that also includes all of the thank you intersectionality time has expired orientation.

>> J-pop Popham. Hello mayor and city council members, thank you so much for the opportunity to speak on this proposed budget.

>> I'm a resident of district two and a member of Austin dsa. We were involved this spring in the organizing around the Austin police oversight act and among the many fine points made by the other speakers this morning, I

[10:18:01 AM]

just wanted to point out that this was a victory won by the voters of Austin for transparency and oversight and the proposed reorganization of the police oversight office would negatively impact the express will of the voters. I hope you'll reconsider this budget. I think there are a lot of things that are deficient about it. I appreciate the for percent raise for city workers. I think that's a great place to start. But we're talking about long term investments here in Austin's future. And I think this is a short term vision provided by an interim city council member, city city manager. I apologize. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

>> Robin Orlowski.

>> My name is rob. Hi. Yes, my name is robin Orlowski. I'm a resident of district ten, a former member of the mayor's committee for people with disabilities and I was the representative on the joint inclusion committee for that commission.

>> I'm in favor of the merger with the modification that

[10:19:02 AM]

because Austin contains 20% of the state of Texas deaf population, that the a the Ada program, which is a is added. Ada is a civil rights law and initially people of all ethnicities could not get access to public schools until the 1970s. The Texas school for the blind and visually impaired was originally established as an asylum and all the other facilities were. They weren't places people voluntarily went. You couldn't educate people in your own in your own city, live with your own family. I understand this is a different change, but it it's needed the equity office did not understand Austin's history. It's a point of privilege to say

[10:20:03 AM]

discrimination and segregation started in the 1920s when people when children were forcibly, forcibly brought here and couldn't live in their own communities across the state. At that. That negates Austin's history. We starting in 1856 at and calling it a school today doesn't erase the fact that these were asylums that people had to live in because of disability. It's not responsible. It's not ethical to ignore this and people people need to people need to understand the city's history, not what makes them or the council members or their staff feel good.

>> Thank you.

>> Enough is enough.

>> Joyce James. Joyce James,

[10:21:07 AM]

please unmute. Okay, we'll try again. Anthony Pandolfi. No.

>> Good morning. Council I'm a concerned citizen speaking today against the proposed cib and in favor of reallocating resources away from the police budget and toward other first responders such as the emts and integral care. One of the main reasons that in addition to what others have said about needing to address the root problems such as poverty, lack of social services and mental services, mental health services, I believe one of the main reasons is the way that police respond to crisis events. There are not well trained mental health professionals and their methods are not suitable when dealing with individuals in crisis. They often just further traumatize individuals and get them ensnared in the prison industrial complex instead of

[10:22:08 AM]

responding to their medical or mental health needs. So instead, we should prioritize the expansion of integral care, not mobile crisis outreach team. They are highly skilled professionals who possess real knowledge and expertise in handling these crisis situations with sensitivity and compassion , and they're equipped to address the root causes of crises and provide appropriate support to individuals in distress. We should also look to divert more resources to our emts who provide a critical role in our community's well-being as they are woefully underpaid and have issues of retention and understaffing. If we support and improve the wages of emts, we can ensure they have the resources they need to respond promptly and efficiently to medical emergencies. And this will undoubtedly save lives and enhance the overall quality of care during critical situations in our city. So, you know, our city where we want everyone to

feel safe, supported and respected. And that's that's a we can take steps toward achieving that vision by reallocating funds from our

[10:23:09 AM]

police budget towards the emts and integral care in Watts. Thank you, pat.

>> Darius. Thank you for the opportunity to speak my name is pat, buzz, Darius and I'm a resident of district three.

>> I am also a spay neuter advocate and I'm here to express my disappointment that, once again, the city budget does not have increased funding for spay neuter, especially in light of the fact that for the last three years, funding allocated for spay neuter was not spent and as a result, return to the general fund. Please consider looking into the amount of funding for spay neuter needed to get caught up with the amount that was not spent in the last three years. The. 2024 budget should have of the amount of money that was

[10:24:10 AM]

allocated in the last three years and not spent so that we can get caught up. Council member vela, I heard you ask a question about spay neuter at the last budget presentation. Thank you so much for asking that question. I hope that you will advocate for the increased funding that I have requested because I really think that supporting spay neuter should involve getting us caught up with the amount of money we should be spending. Councilmember harper-madison, thank you for also asking the question about animal services during the budget presentation. I hope you will also support increased funding for spay neuter because the question you asked was about the kennels and there's not enough money in the city budget to build all the kennels that will be needed if we don't have adequate funding for spay neuter. Low income residents cannot afford the huge amount of money it costs to spay

[10:25:10 AM]

neuter their animals. But as we've seen in the past, with adequate funding, when the services are provided will result in low income residents stepping up and getting their pet spayed and neutered, which will hopefully address the overpopulation crisis that we're having, as well as the overcrowded shell shelter that is causing a lot of problems. So thank you for considering this request.

>> Thank you, Joyce James. Joyce James, please unmute. Okay we will try to call this caller one more time, but that concludes all the remote speakers we have in queue, so I'll go ahead and transition over to in-person.

>> Thank you. I'm going to call three names at a time and once

[10:26:10 AM]

you hear your name called, please come down to the podium and state your name.

>> Escott cob kiba white Seneca Savoy. If I've called your name, please come down closer to the podium.

>> It would be great. Is if she calls your name and you're on deck. If you'd come down and sit here on this front row that way , respectfully, for the speakers that follow, you will be able to get to them in a quicker fashion. So please do that. Thank you, Mr. Cob, for being here.

>> Hello. My name is Scott Cobb. I work as a lifeguard for the city of Austin, and I want to talk about a few issues. Number one, a couple of them were passed by the city council last session providing dental care for all temporary employees who already get health insurance through the city, has not been implemented. There was a memo saying, on September 26th, 2022,

[10:27:11 AM]

H.R. Will include this benefit in the fiscal year 24 budget. So could someone check on that, please? Also, during the last session, in response to a question from Vanessa Fuentes, pard commit it there for beginning in fiscal year 20 2223 pard plans to hire course participants and allow them to be on payroll while they attempt to complete their certifications , require training and onboarding to better mitigate staffing challenges experienced in previous years. They committed to pay training for lifeguards as they did not implement paid training for lifeguards. They permitted a substitute system amounting to \$400 bonus. If you work 80 hours after you work 80 hours, you have to do the 40 hours. Then another 80 hours. So you go 120 hours without getting paid for the paid training that you should have been paid. And then you only get half. You don't get

[10:28:11 AM]

the full amount that doesn't happen anywhere else where you go to get a job, you get paid for that first day. You show up for work. You so I'd ask someone to check and see if paid training is in the budget. Bilingual training stipends for lifeguards. We have many pools where there are lifeguards who have communications, has difficulties. Speaking with the public, and it would help the public if we had more lifeguards who were getting bilingual stipend pay. It is currently not eligible for temporary employees . As if you had 40,000, there are around 300,000 staff hours in aquatics for lifeguards every year anyhow, bilingual pay and the \$22 living wage. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

>> If I may, Mr. Cobb, did you complete all of your concerns? I just said, did you complete.

>> Madison has a question.

>> Thank you. Did you complete

[10:29:11 AM]

all of your concerns? This is really helpful information. Were you able to complete all of your concerns?

>> I have a hard time hearing.

>> Were you able to complete all of your concerns? Did you have any other concerns that we should know about?

>> Yeah, I have a few more, if you wouldn't mind offering us the opportunity to hear the other two. All right, go ahead and say them, please.

>> Okay.

>> Well, you know, the reaching, the \$22 living wage is something we should work on. Holiday pay is something that everyone in America who works in a job should get holiday pay. You can implement that at a incremental amount by 1 or 2 holidays. July fourth, juneteenth. We work on those days without getting holiday pay. Although our managers do afford affordable health insurance, a lot of lifeguards qualified for health insurance before the pandemic. But our director did not enforce the covid rules that were required by the mayor to wear mask on at

[10:30:15 AM]

work on city property. I got covid at work. I now have to take four additional medications as I lose my health insurance because I have underlying conditions. I'm going to be in trouble as well as other temporary lifeguards. I have an educational savings plan proposed. All Amazon has an agreement with occ to waive tuition for some of their employees. I think the city of Austin could also waive tuition by making an agreement with occ to waive certain amounts of tuition for city employees. Or you could have a savings plan similar to the retirement plan Ann whereas 15, 16, 17, 18 year Olds have a payroll deduction of some percent, 10, which is matched by city council. So that when they leave you encourage them to remain lifeguards until they're 20 or 18. Then they go on to college. They have a savings plan.

>> Thank you, Mr. Cobb. And if you have any additional max,

[10:31:16 AM]

Lars is sitting right here. He'll take notes and I'll make sure that we get that to all the council.

>> All I appreciate the extra time. Thank you very much.

>> Kiba white. So Seneca Savoy and Eddie Franz.

>> Good morning. My name is kiba white. I work for public citizen's Texas office and thank you for the opportunity to speak . I'd like to start by saying that I am very pleased to see that there is some additional funding and resources for implementation of the Austin climate equity plan. That plan has or has has been moving forward, but moving forward slowly. So those resources are very needed and I will say that more will be needed next year in the following years. So it does give me a little bit of concern that so much additional resource is proposed for expanding the police department, especially when so many of the priorities in the community investment budget, which I think you've heard about from a couple other folks, are not included in the

[10:32:17 AM]

budget. So I encourage you all to take a look at the community investment budget which should have been shared by equity action with you. But is supported by many organizations, including mine on the I guess, concern side, I'm very concerned about the proposed merging of the offices of sustainability, resilience, equity and civil rights with other city departments. I don't think this proposal comes with any malice or ill intent. However I do think that there would be significant negative side effects. These offices represent core priorities for this community and as you've heard come from a long stretch of engagement with the community to create these as independent offices and their Independence is critical, well, not least because they need to be able to work across all city offices and departments and put that work at the highest level of our city priorities. They need direct access to city management and not to have another layer of

[10:33:18 AM]

bureaucracy between the priorities that they are trying to bring to you and to the city manager. And that is what the effect of this change would be, is they would have to go through another department director to bring their issues of importance to your table. So I encourage you to respectfully reject that part of the proposal. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Seneca Savoy and then Eddie Franz. How how y'all doing?

>> My name is Seneca. I am a homeowner resident in district four and I work for equity action. I'd like to state that in the, I think five years now that I've been coming to talk about various budget cycles every year, this council has produced increasingly more Progressive budgets with increasingly more aggressive investors, agents and social services as in resiliency across

[10:34:19 AM]

the city. I think in particular, this city rose to the challenge during covid in ways that saved by back of the napkin estimates , probably around 2 to 5000 lives in this city. Those investments that were part of a process where community involvement and input increased every year, it's something that this council and this city should be proud of. The ability to collaborate and to put the needs of those most affected forward. I am sad to say that at least on my first reading of this budget, that we have decided to buck that trend this year, both in terms of rolling back important priorities that we had done a great job in funding before and by reducing the overall impact of community input on the shape of the budget , in particular as I'm sure dozens more people are going to

[10:35:21 AM]

do today and as kiba so accurately did before the reorganization of the equity office and also moving human resources positions from civilian positions outside APD to inside it, those movements decrease the overall transparency and accountability of those positions and also inflate the budget in such a way that it makes it less flexible over time. Wright every cent that we move into that budget can't be moved back out if we decide that we later want to put those positions somewhere other than inside of the police department, you have to pay the million of dollars to do so.

>> Thank you, sir.

>> Eddie Franz. Hello

>> My name is Eddie Franz, and I'm here representing atx peace coalition. What? Everybody from atx peace. Please stand up. Thank you so much. We can clap for that. So atx peace coalition

[10:36:23 AM]

is a joint effort between life anew restorative justice and jail to jobs. We do CVI work, community violence, intervention , and we do it here in this city. Although it's vastly underfunded and that's why we're here today. We'd like you to consider putting in CVI as a budgetary concern as Austin grows, which is amazing in the city, is an awesome place for people to live. But as it grows, so do the growing pains. One of those growing pains is community violence, gun violence and homicide. Kids, we're on pace right now to hit 75 or 80 homicides in this city. And I know it's unacceptable to you, as it is to me. There is a solution for that violence and it is built within the communities. It is CVI life van eenoo and jail to jobs has gone all over this United States to speak with and get trained by some of the leading experts in the field Saint Louis, Chicago, Baltimore, Stockton, Oakland all have had 60% reductions in in gun related violence and homicides because of this CVI

[10:37:24 AM]

work. It's data driven. It's proven to be accurate and successful, and we have been trained by it. And we are implementing it in city right now. I can tell you that over half a dozen retaliations have been stopped because of our two organized actions. Utilize CVI in this city. Just this year alone and every homicide in this city costs the taxpayers 1.2 to \$2 million. When you add that up over the years, you're talking hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. If we could get a fully funded CVI program here in Austin, the solution is here. We're available to talk about it. We would like to be reaching out to each one of your staff and your offices to discuss it in the next couple of days, if you'd be willing to make just a little bit of time with us. We have a plan that we can lay out. We have some ideas of what would work, and we would love to see that happen in this city. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Would you mind if I took a selfie? This is kind of the coolest thing I've done in a long time.

>> Real quick. Thank y'all.

[10:38:27 AM]

>> Mayor. We were able to get to remote speakers back on the line, so I'm going to go ahead and call them real quick. Please do. Joyce James.

>> Hello?

>> Yes. Good morning. My name is Joyce James and I am president and CEO of Joyce James consulting. I had rescinded my request to speak, but since I'm here, I want to say good morning to the mayor and council members and thank you for the opportunity to acknowledge the community for the organizing efforts that led to the creation of the office of equity and also to the council members, both current and prior members, for taking a bold and courageous approach and steps to create an office of equity in the city of Austin. And this was and is a big deal. So it was through the forward thinking leadership of those who were willing to listen to the community and to be transparent and vulnerable in acknowledging the existence of

[10:39:29 AM]

institutional and structural racism in the city of Austin that I believe led to increased community trust. And so I believe that there's still a need, a strong need for the office of equity to have some autonomy and authority to work across departments. And I say this because of the experience that I've had and the privilege that I've had to work in multiple departments across the city of Austin. And just for us to acknowledge that, like Austin and Texas, race is still the number one predictor of a person's outcomes in

their relationships with help and systems and institutions. Burns and so it's really, really critical that there be internal and external stakeholder engagement where people are not operating from a place of who's racist, but rather a clear analysis and understanding of the harm that we're still living in the footprint of the 1928

[10:40:31 AM]

plan. And I believe separating and moving that office would create a step back for the city of Austin. You are a leader in this work and there are not many places across the country that have publicly acknowledged alleged institutional and structural racism and have put in place department Bartz like the office of speaker, your time is expired, not have to have have any layers in between them and city leadership.

>> Frank Netzer. Howdy y'all.

>> My name is frank Dutcher. I am a homeowner in district one dsa and a proud union member. And I'm calling because I take a look at this budget and I see that we're allocating more and more money to police every time we add money to the budget for the police department. We cannot ever take it out. So that pie slice of pie gets bigger and

[10:41:31 AM]

bigger. Meanwhile, in the city of Austin, we have APD, aid, BPD, capmetro pd, the counties, the county sheriff's office. We have dps in ever increasing numbers and we have those are just the ones that I can think of off the top of my head. I'm sure there are more. I'm sure there are more and more pd officers that I cannot right now. The issue is not that we don't have enough police or police budgets. The issue is, for example, a couple of weeks ago I had a friend who had a mental health crisis. They called me because they knew that I wouldn't call the police. I'm telling you that the answer is never going to be police. What we are trying to do is fix a problem that is needs a nuanced approach with a hammer. When you have a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. So there are things like emts, Escott, like someone mentioned earlier, the emts go to every single police interaction that we have right?

[10:42:32 AM]

Or at least most of them. They are not paid in parity. They are they're understaffed. And a much greater rate than any kind of pd in the state of Texas. In Travis county, we are struggling to make sure that we have the emt response that we need and they're not paid in parity. So of course not. So the issue here is not that whether or not we need to move dollars to police departments, but rather to what services can we provide that actually solve the problems that we're looking for? For example, the DUI office would

be able to solve that. When I look at this budget and I see people trying to increasingly solve non-police problems with police S when I see people trying to neuter DUI officers and diversity initiatives, I notice thank you , speaker.

>> Your time has expired.

>> That would come.

>> Mayor that concludes all the remote speakers. So I'll switch back to in-person. Thank you. Okay. Once again, I'll call three names at a time. When you

[10:43:35 AM]

hear your name, please come forward and you can sit in the front chairs and wait. And then speak your name into the mic at the dais at the podium. Sorry. An de coco Shelby Bohanon jj Ramirez, if you're here, please come forward.

>> Andy coco resident and homeowner in district one. But butts are moral documents. We hear it a lot. So let's review a couple moral curiosities in the proposed budget. One our election three months ago showed landslide support again for police transparency. Is it moral for Mr. Garza to turn around and put more money into the public info access abyss, purposefully opaque? Austin police department . Not in my understanding of democracy. Should we roll over to state punishment and increase

[10:44:35 AM]

the police budget this huge amount? Irreversible only the city said Eid. Now y'all. Community investment budget address as many local ongoing crises and preps for new ones. Is it moral for Mr. Garza to propose increasing our reserve \$40 million and a simultaneous ignore the vital services community investment budget offers up? Does it feel moral in a democracy? See that this interim fella has left you all council members with little, if any, room to listen to and fund your constituents needs? Is it moral to play with power and defang the equity, civil rights and sustainability offices? When Austin has been a leader on these issues? On our unhoused neighbors? Some say there but for the grace of god go I. But y'all, grace is not delivered, not divinely. But through our actions as Mr. Garza set you up to indulge magical thinking. If we present a balanced budget will stabilize. Well, it's the boots on the ground. Organizers

[10:45:36 AM]

you're hearing from today who are presenting a realistic community, stabilizing spending . Our unhoused neighbors are disproportionately people of color, disabled and queer. And with that, how dare Mr. Garza proposed severe divestment from critical homelessness prevention. It doesn't get morally uglier than that. I keep hearing back to basics, but whose basics and from what era play old policies, resurrection games when rotting zombie prizes . Let's not infect our future with dreadful all immoral anti visionary spending.

>> Shelby Bohanon, jj Ramirez and then Eli Cortez. Hi I'm Shelby Bohanon and I'm speaking against adding any additional funding to the Austin police department, giving an additional \$32 million to the police department, knowing that this cannot be later reduced per state law is ridiculous.

>> The police department is still refusing to agree to basic

[10:46:37 AM]

oversight that was won by a huge margin of Austin. Voters in may do not ignore the voters they struggled to hire, despite offering high pay for additional officers and being currently able to offer \$15,000. Signing bonuses to new officers. This is an issue with the police department's leadership and culture of violence, throwing an additional \$32 million at them will not fix this. This would come at the expense of critical city services such as ems, who actually saves lives. Park staff, housing programs and more. I urge you to vote against any increase in the police budget and vote against moving any additional city positions into the police department, which reduces transparency. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Jj Ramirez. Eli Cortez, Kathleen Mitchell.

>> Hey, guys. So my name is jj Ramirez. I'm an organizer at the Texas harm reduction alliance. Honestly, I struggled on what I wanted to say today to y'all.

[10:47:40 AM]

The community investment budget is a budget proposed by by the community advocates, leaders in this community, talking to the community, talking to taxpayers who and recommending to the council who are elected by the community on how to spend our tax dollars. Interim city manager Garza the other day quoted in cut thought that any kind of opposition to any any information given by the community, how these things are going to be impacted by them said this would stifle the professional staff of the city. Well, the professional staff of this city largely doesn't have the direct the direct experience of living in the street. Does the members of this community, and it isn't the professional staff that should be recommending, recommending how we spend our money. It's listening to the community telling you how we should spend our money. The council members up here listening to your constituents voting those things that are and in the city manager doing what the city manager is supposed to do helping to manage

[10:48:40 AM]

the city and carrying out these these these budget requests. It's just it's just really aggravating to have people come up here who are who are homeless, who are outside and tell tell you these things don't work for us. But then 30% reduction in the homelessness strategy office, no additional funding to homeless services, even though we have a much higher homeless rate than we did yesterday, we're in a homelessness crisis. No money allocated officially to any kind of harm reduction, pro procedures where the opioid crisis is at an all time high. But 30 million extra dollars to policing 30. You know, I just I'm really aggravated and would be very, very just annoyed if council would just vote this through as is. I really, really hope you don't because if you do, what are you here for? What do you voted in for? What kind of pony show is this? Appreciate y'all. Thank you.

[10:49:41 AM]

>> Eli Cortez, Kathleen Mitchell, Donna Hoffman.

>> Good morning. Council my name is Eli Cortez. I'm a resident of district one and I'm an organizer at Texas harm reduction alliance, which operates in district three. We are in the midst of an overdose and a homelessness crisis in Austin, which you all know. If you pass this budget as it stands today with no substantial investments in housing, no substantial investments in and services for homelessness, no substantial investments in harm reduction services, you are making a statement that you will do nothing substantial in the face of these crises. You're making a statement that you're going to allow these deaths, allow this homelessness to continue, and that is not acceptable. Knell furthermore, not only will you have ignored the programs and services that we've been asking for that we know that work really across the board in the community investment budget. But you're making a public statement that you believe that police are the

[10:50:42 AM]

ones who are going to answer these crises. You believe that \$32 million additionally in that budget that for police will will reduce overdoses, will end homelessness. And we know and we've been telling y'all that that's not the case. We know that an investment in policing is harmful. It drives overdose is up. It doesn't do anything to support people exiting homelessness. And frankly, I'm tired. I'm tired of coming here year after year. Public comment session after public comment session. Public safety commission meeting are are reinventing public safety task forces like we come back year after year after year and we tell y'all policing is not the answer. We need housing. We need services, we need you all to listen to your community. And to the extent of Mr. Garza's comments yesterday, it's not the public staff and their recommendation runs over council members actually taking initiative to listen to their community.

That's inappropriate. That's unacceptable. And we are the community. We know what works, especially people

[10:51:43 AM]

experiencing homelessness, people who are experiencing overdoses, people who are who are dying in these streets, and to continue to come back here and have you all completely ignore the things that we've been asking for and invest in things that we've been saying are harmful is a slap in the face and if y'all pass the budget as it is today, that's y'all committing to an Austin that's going to continue with overdoses, that's going to continue with homelessness and we're we're we're through with that. Thank you.

>> Kathleen Mitchell, Donna Hoffman, Larry Franklin. Please come on down. If your name has been called.

>> Hi, y'all. Compared to everything you've heard so far, I'm going to give some very boring testimony. I do want to remind you, I'm sure you know the community investment budget was the collaborative work of dozens of organizations, burns each of them committed in two different kinds of different pieces of it. And there's a lot of expertise that went in. It into it. So I hope that you do

[10:52:43 AM]

look closely at it and identify things that the community is demanding and put them into this budget. I also just want to say I support what Joyce James's comment. So I had the pleasure of working with her on the academy review committee and she is an amazing woman. I hope that you heard what she had to say. They're getting to my detailed comments. I'm going to stick to one page. This is the changes to the police budget. You've heard a lot of concerns from people about the changes to the police budget. And I want to speak to a couple of them in particular. I think you all know that the city has been excessively slow to implement anything related to prop a that passed this year. The reason I need to bring this up now is that this budget brings 25 human resources. People and four Pto people into the police department and the definition of a G file is a file maintained by the police

[10:53:45 AM]

department. That's literally all it says in the statute. This is a file maintained by the police department. If you put people into the police department Swint, then everything they do is G file. So I understand that there are some debate. There always has been within between the community and the city about many things related to the G file. But I promise you that if you move 25.5 human resource positions and four positions into the police department, you will not be facilitating the implementation of prop a or the

kind of trans agency and accountability that this community expects from you. Okay. I had three other points, but I guess I will get to them another time.

>> Thank you, miss Mitchell. And if you would, email us the rest of your comments, we'll review those and see you next time.

>> Donna Hoffman are you here?

[10:54:46 AM]

>> Mayor pro tem, if I may, did you submit a copy of that documentation?

>> Ms. Mitchell to the clerk's office? Do we have a copy of that? No, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

>> Okay. Larry Franklin, Alicia torres, Daniela silva.

>> Good morning. I'm a little bit nervous, but I'm going to go through it. I took a look at your baseline budget and do you know that currently our city only produces about 7% of its food on a local level, but nowhere has it ever been that our city has a concern towards the production of food as a line item within the budget until we had the community investment budget. Now the city has a concern towards food. I have a small recommendation for each one of you as our city grows, that's more people, right? That's transportation. That's housing. But most importantly,

[10:55:46 AM]

that's food. So with that being said, once again, I would advise all of you to not push forward with the baseline budget. But to take a look at the community investment budget thoroughly and pick some of the most wonderful things out of there. Because remember, we are a growing city , food, housing, electricity. Thank you all.

>> Alicia torres. Daniella silva. Ivonne if I may, I'm sorry, Mr. Franklin, before you leave city hall, Sharon mays in my office, our fantastic chief of staff is actively working on food security in the city of Austin.

>> I'd like very much for you to stick around in the atrium just for a minute, so she can come down and meet with you. Thank you.

>> So, city manager. My name is Daniella silva.

>> I'm a resident of district three, and I'm here today to speak on behalf and in support

[10:56:48 AM]

of the community investment budget, which you all have heard a lot about, and you will continue to hear more about because it is a broad coalition ranging from many issues and folks who are experts of those issues will speak very passionately about those is. So I support everything that they say. And I'm going to personally just share a story from my life that is related. I recently had an unhoused neighbor text me about a friend of his who was going to soon lose his home and if I could come help. So I went and met up with them and his friend let me know that his brother in Round Rock passed away the house is stuck in probate. He doesn't understand the process. He doesn't know where to get help. He also was put into housing where they paid the first month's rent. But he has struggled to keep up with rent as he's trying to get employed and could really benefit from some emergency rental assistance. And generally just as a tenant, I think would really also benefit from education and from legal assistance. All of these probate and estate planning for

[10:57:49 AM]

seniors, emergency rental assistance, tenant education and legal assistance are aspects of the community investment budget. So while these are all bullet points, that could just seem like blank data, there are actual people who could benefit from these recommendations today. Right now, I also want to echo the disappointment of the dramatic increase in the police department, which I think Austinites have said time and time again, that is not how they want to solve safety and security. Many people want to get to the root causes of these issues, all of which are addressed in the community investment budget, which again doesn't speak for every single community in Austin, but does speak for many of them. So I would really encourage you all to take a look at that and see how we can maybe move some of this funding around to ensure that direct community needs are being addressed and that we're not putting more positions into pd and we're not dissolving the autonomy of very vital

[10:58:51 AM]

departments. Thank you so much. Thank you.

>> Alicia torres, Ivana nury, eight track.

>> Hi everyone. I have someone with me that we couldn't get translation for, so I'm going to be reading some of the statement that she gave me and then a piece of what I also wrote. So good morning, everyone. My name is Ivana Andy. I am a homeowner and resident of district four. I also work for up together, and I'm here to request that you reject the proposal to combine the equity civil rights, sustainability and resilience offices into one department. Those offices, including the innovation office, are the ones making sure that hard to reach communities are engaged in city processes and that there is equitable distribution of city resources. Those offices foster innovation, have racial equity as

a core value and are catalysts for projects that have improved our communities. And you can dismiss the fact that those offices were created by the community and their Independence and autonomy

[10:59:51 AM]

must continue. I will also like to request that you incorporate the priorities of the community investment budget into the budget for fiscal year 2023, 2024, which includes funding for childcare, principal specialists, rental assistance and specifically funding to continue the guaranteed income program that is investing \$1,000 per month. I'll tell you the story of candy. Candy is a mom of two kids. She works as a babysitter and dedicated, dedicates her time to organize domestic workers across the city. The pandemic affected her. Her house. They lost their jobs and had to make a payment plan to be able to pay for rent. The money that she received to this pilot has helped her catch up on rent and been able to pay other bills. Additionally, she's been impacted by the by the recession and by the inflation Ann she's saying how now she's able to cover for some expenses and because of that, her life has improved. She has more less

[11:00:52 AM]

stress. And now she's able to dedicate more of her time to be with with her family. She's grateful for the organizers who are asking you to put more funding toward the extension of this program. And also is grateful for the city, for the investment that you're currently making into this. I want to say something. Thank you.

>> Alicia torres, are you here? Alicia torres okay, eight track. Michelle knell, manning, Escott and then Camille cook. I made it mad.

>> Sorry. Good morning, members of the council and mayor Kirk Watson. Wherever you may be. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm first going to direct my first comments towards council members Ryan alter and council member qadri. Am I pronouncing that correctly? Thank you all for the bravery and the stones to stand up to Garza with the amendments for the marshaling yard. Sorry Garza your smartest guys in the room

[11:01:53 AM]

ain't the smartest guys in the room. I'll bet you they won't even know how to find food if I drop them off at republic square with no money, no id, no nothing . My name is a-trak. I am a member of the Texas harm reduction alliance organizing committee. I am a member of street forum and I have been unhoused on the beautiful streets of downtown Austin since . Mid-december. \$32 million. Are y'all kidding me? Every time I have an interaction with Austin's finest, do y'all know what photosensitivity

means? Those flashing lights are the most painful thing in the world for me. What is APD's response last night? It's a light like the sun. You want to give to me. You want to give \$32 million to that. That attitude. And that is not going to help things at all. That is only going to make people worse. And make people angry. Garza why do you even care? You've already been on

[11:02:54 AM]

record saying you're going to be watching all this from TV when you're done. What's your dog in this fight? I'm trying not to get angry because when I get angry, I lose focus. \$32 million. That's a lot of food. That's a lot of that's a lot of clothes. That is a lot of rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing vouchers. And you're taking that away. A lot of people are going to starve if that is just all of the resources wasted going to APD, that could help the root cause. Integral care, harm reduction. I've lost so many friends this year due to overdose. How many more friends am I going to lose ? Thank you all for allowing me to speak. Thank you for speaking .

>> Michelle manning. Scott and then Camille cook and Michael

[11:03:54 AM]

ward.

>> Good morning.

>> My name is Michelle manning. Scott and I am a district seven resident and a homeowner there.

>> I'm also a member of community radio station co-op 91.7 fm here in Austin, Ann and I'm here to say that both I and co-op object to this proposed budget as written and endorse the plan put forth by equity action.

>> My time does not allow me to detail all the objections we have, many of which have already been stated by the eloquent voices that have come before me. Co-op radio's mission is to serve the underserved and give voice to marginalized groups here in Austin and beyond. Therefore, there are many aspects of this proposed budget budget that will go against this mission, such as dismantling and removing the authority and autonomy of city offices like the equity and civil rights offices, as well as depriving and decreasing funding for the programs that serve the marginalized and vulnerable

[11:04:54 AM]

populations, populations of the city and take us backwards in terms of social progress that we've been witnessing. The past couple of decades as a program programmer with co-op and a news and public

affairs programmer on co-ops airwaves for the past four years, I've had the honor and privilege of speaking with many of the people who are part of the organizations who are speaking out against this budget, and they are vital voices. They have stories that should be seriously considered and when rewriting this budget, they serve these vulnerable and marginalized communities and have done the research and have the data to back up the reasons they object to the budget as written and endorsed the community investment budget, which addresses the concerns of these organizations. I will say also that I've had the privilege and honor of speaking with Mr. Qadri. Ms. Alter and Ms. Harper-Madison on my program, and I know all of you are allies in this fight, and you will listen to and take seriously the

[11:05:55 AM]

concerns of all these organizations. And I urge the rest of you on council to also take into consideration all of these very important voices. Storytelling is very important when taking into consideration changes you're making on behalf of an entire community here in Austin. Thank you.

>> Camille Cook, Michael Ward, Chantelle Pridgen, good morning, y'all.

>> My name is Camille Cook and I work right down the street at Public Citizen. There are a lot of changes I'd like to see in this budget, but I'll just speak on a couple. First of all, I don't want to see the offices of sustainability and resilience consolidate and put under the planning department. Similarly, I don't want to see the office of small and minority business resource department, equity office and civil rights office merged into another department as well. The importance of these offices should be represented, should be represented in their ability to stand on their own by subsuming them into other departments. The city of Austin is saying that civil rights sustainability, resilience and equity aren't top priorities. What kind of message does this

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send to the most vulnerable in Austin, whom these offices support the most? Second of all, we need more money to ensure that the climate equity plan is properly, properly supported. This plan was created in partnership with citizens of the city and to see it not prioritize during the hottest summer in history sends the message that the city of Austin does not listen to its citizens. Why not invest in replacing gas appliances with electric ones or invest in building public shelters to deal with climate disasters like winter storm Uri? Equity Action has already created a community investment budget that details ways that funds can invest in our community health and safety. There should be one of our highest priorities. To sum up the low funding of the climate equity plan and the demoting of various justice departments is indicative of a larger trend happening across the country. We're faced with the largest single challenge of our lifetime, and rather than come together as a community to support those being hit by it, by the worst, we're keeping on with business as usual. Anything is possible. Allocate funds to where the people have told you all to allocate funds towards climate justice work and towards

[11:07:58 AM]

the building out of our equity office, civil rights office on our sustainability office. Thank you.

>> Michael ward Chantelle Pridgen and Bethany Carson.

>> Hello. Elected hello, elected officials. I pray all is well and you're happy to be above ground. I am Michael ward junior and sit on the board of the greater Austin eco system two UT at Austin Cockrell school of engineering community partner of the it caucus of the Texas house and president and CEO of the Austin urban technology movement. I am also on the economic and workforce development task force for the Texas broadband development office. That just opened up this year. Today I'm here to share the challenges with the proposed city of Austin budget. A city budget is supposed to finance the day to day operations and obligations to the city, which includes Austin citizens, residents and amazing incoming transplants such as myself as proposed. The budget does not take into account the needs of the community as highlighted by the community investment budget

[11:08:59 AM]

created by equity action. Austin urban technology movement and more than 30 other organizations that were here to solve their problems and remove the barriers preventing equitable impact and growth for all. Austinites especially for our most vulnerable communities, we also want to highlight the proposed budget does not align with the city of Austin master workforce plan or the higher local plan spearheaded by workforce solutions. Local businesses and other community organizations. Lastly, this budget doesn't support workforce development and technology. Technical advances for the community overall, such as broadband and devices for households and reorganize. The city departments focused on accountable city does taking us further away from Austin becoming a smaller hub and the thriving tech ecosystem for all? On behalf of our partners, volunteers and clients we serve, we urge you to take into account the equity actions proposed by the community investment budget. Listen to the needs of the community and support the city budget that enhances the lives of austinites . With all that being said, I'm

[11:09:59 AM]

also father, a husband, community leader, business leader and the type of Austin I envision is one where everybody can thrive. Children can play, adults have enough income to take care of their households, businesses can find talent and also can be a leader where other people want to follow suit, other countries want to follow suit. Other cities want to follow suit. So I put the power in city council to please listen to the needs of the community and provide a budget that supports everybody. Thank you.

>> Shantelle Pridgen, Bethany Carson.

>> For all our guests in the audience, if you want to move the microphone, just move the top of it won't yell at you as much.

>> The mic is sensitive today, I guess. Shantelle Pridgen, Bethany Carson chapel colony.

[11:11:01 AM]

Connolly sorry.

>> Good morning. Council back, back to the basics is the theme of the proposed baseline budget . And I have been thinking a lot about these supposed basics. And one of the things that comes to mind as a young woman who approached me a few months ago when I was walking out of a meeting at hakka at our housing authority, and she said, I'm desperately looking for resources. I have a family of five. We just got evicted. We're all out on the street. Do you know where we can go and how we can get resources so we don't become unhoused? And I thought about her struggle and how we tried to get her connected to something and how much there is a lack of that in our city. And then I also think about how during our point in time count this year, we counted a shocking , unprecedented number of single mothers living in parking lots throughout the city right now, particularly in south Austin and

[11:12:02 AM]

with their children and not having access to resources that they need. And then I think about how this year our budget is moving from \$8 million of rental assistance, tenant stabilization money, legal assistance and moving assistance for renters to less than 250,000 for that. And I think about how the proposed baseline is a radical defunding of all tenant stabilization and support services. And I wonder what basics are we going back to? And then I think about how all of the community investment budget requests around homelessness are being largely ignored. I think about the need for caseworkers being ignored. I think about the need for site based vouchers for psa being ignored, service funding for psa being ignored. I think about everything the community is asking for being ignored and I'm not sure for if it matters to sit here and list off all of the things that you already know because we've already asked you for all of

[11:13:03 AM]

these things. But I am going to use the rest of my time to acknowledge that today there are 600 active eviction cases in Travis county and that our numbers of people experiencing homelessness is seeing a sharp spike due to our lack of upstream prevention and I'm going. Thank you. Thank you, Miriam Connor.

>> Chris Harris and Alexandra Evans. If you're here, please make your way down to the podium and state your name.

>> Mayor pro tem. Yes go ahead.

>> Thank you. JP if you could email council the rest of your remarks, I'd really like to see the rest of what you had to say.

>> In the absence of being able to hear it. Thank you.

>> Good morning. My name is Alexandra Evans. I live in district nine and I work at avow Texas. I am in support of the community investment budget and more so was particularly

[11:14:04 AM]

disappointed to see the baseline budget failed to mention any funding of logistical support for austinites seeking abortion care. The submission does a great service to the Republican party. Who knew the who know that their total state ban on abortion is greatly harmful, greatly unpopular, and are relying on all of us rolling over and accepting a post Dobbs world despite the grave consequences, the asked for logistical support funding is not new. In fact, it previously existed from 2020 to 2022 within the general operating budget, when the supreme court overturned roe V wade, this funding was seized despite it being more necessary than ever. It is true that chapter 272 of the Texas government code prohibits a governmental entity from entering into a taxpayer resource transaction with an abortion provider or an abortion provider affiliate. While I understand the city cannot violate state or federal law, I urge the council to consider other financial barriers to abortion besides the cost of the procedure under a total ban, including travel and lodging costs, childcare, time off work, food and more. The nearest abortion clinic for someone in our city is 500 miles away.

[11:15:05 AM]

Difficulty asking accessing abortion care disproportion affects people of color. People living with low income and people who are already parents. We were the first city in the nation to provide such practical support for people needing abortion care, and I applaud the creativity that went into that funding as we see the dire consequences of a total abortion ban in current heart wrenching lawsuits are already staggering. Ever increasing maternal mortality rate and more. I'm sure you understand that it is critical that this funding be returned. Council it is not an ask that you violate the law, but in the interest of every austinite who has needed abortion care, who needs abortion care today and who will need abortion care in the future, I urge you to have the bravery, integrity and understanding of your duty to navigate said law. The failure to do so is effectively support for the extremist lawmakers who have put us in our current situation and your city is much more deserving of your solidarity than they are. Thank you, ma'am.

>> Miss Evans, I just want to say thank you for your comments.

[11:16:05 AM]

I know a number of us on this dais have worked on abortion, logistical funding over the years. I know there's a court case currently working its way through the system. Just asking the legislature to define exactly what it meant by some of the situations that people may find themselves in with difficult pregnancies. And so I appreciate your comments. Maria Connor, are you here?

>> Okay, Chris Harris, Chaz Moore and Ms. Ramos. Good morning.

>> Council. I'm Chris Harris with district. I'm in district nine, policy director for ajc. And I'm here today to speak against this budget and Florida community investment budget. Recent I called three on one about a man apparently in a mental health situation who appeared agitated. I called three on one for a number of reasons, which will become apparent. But upon talking to three on one and asking for someone to come and do some sort

[11:17:08 AM]

of mental health check with this person, I was told that this was a police matter and I told him I didn't think it was a police matter and the three would not call. Operator said the police would will say that it is and you should call 911 and it might take a minute, but hang on, because someone will pick up this to me exemplar lies the real challenges that we face in our public safety system today. We have a lot of people who do need help, but it's not the type of help that we're offering them and it's definitely not the type of help that's being offered by this budget. In fact, that's the type of help actually being cut by this budget. We need people to in the 911 call center desperately. We need people at ems. These are positions that can be filled if we changed how we funded them. You all have given the police a raise with nothing in exchange. Paige you've given a signing bonus.

[11:18:09 AM]

There's not clear that more money thrown at the police department will do anything as it relates to the staffing issues that that they claim. What is clear is that they continue to struggle to recruit and then once recruited, they very much struggle to retain recruits through the academy. You all and this community, myself included, have worked for years to help reform the academy, to fix just this issue. And yet it continues more money thrown into a police department will not solve our public safety challenges, and they will not solve the staffing issues. Money the 911 an ems will help with our public safety challenges and will help this community. I urge you to do that. Thank you so much for the time. Chaz more Craig Naser and Jen Ramos.

>> People are just disrespecting you today. Yeah. Good morning.

[11:19:09 AM]

Afternoon whatever. I'm just here to speak against the budget as it currently stands. Yeah. You know, I feel like in the last whenever we got some new folks on council, we've been moving backwards. You know, for the last eight years, we've been doing some pretty Progressive things with our budget. We've been trying new things. We've been trying to invest in ideas and institutions, programs that actually help people and in a matter of months after the after the November election, we we've striped and we've taken steps back to reinvest and invest more in things that we know, like Chris said, does not help people . And although if you let Twitter call it, they blame folks like me and Chris and some of my friends behind me for all the problems with policing, I wish I was that powerful. But you know the truth is APD has

[11:20:09 AM]

staffing issues that are not my fault at all. You know, people just don't want to be policed no more. Go figure. And I think the fact that we're putting money into a police budget as opposed to putting money into the things that all these brilliant people behind me are speaking about is just a signs of like city council going back to like the 1990s and not moving and progressing in the way in which this very smart, capable city has been moving over the past decade. And I hope that we can continue to have dialog with the folks that sit behind the dais that have talked to community members, you know, shout out to Mckenzie Kelly that for all intents and purposes, according to social media, should never talk to me. But she's one of the few that have actually she opened her door to talk to people like me. And I appreciate that. And I think the more we have conversations like that, the more we can really see where the money needs to go and not just putting it into these really old, outdated ideas. And

[11:21:09 AM]

also, I'll say this, at the risk of potentially butchering the stuff my friends are doing, I think that us city council should really check the powers of the interim city manager who's not here for it. That's not his job yet. And I think you all should take some of your power back and do what people elected you to do.

>> Craig nazer, Jen Ramos and menchie.

>> Oh, my name is Craig nazer. I'm the conservation chair of the lone star chapter of the Sierra club. It's hot out climate change is here and it is already affecting disenfranchized communities the most. The Sierra club strongly supports the community investment budget. We are going if we are going to be

climate change, we need the help of everyone. People struggling to survive are an essential part of the solution. We are all in this

[11:22:10 AM]

together. Look out the back window. That beautiful evergreen sumac tree is dead as a result of climate change. The shade it provided is gone. That is a warning. I draw your attention to the congress avenue bat colony, which is also showing signs of struggle. That colony provides Austin with millions of dollars worth of jobs and environmental services. The Austin animal advisory commission unanimously passed a resolution to request hiring one city bat biologist to provide expertise to address this issue. It appears that all city departments under so much financial stress that no department wants to accept the position. I remind you that you set policy. The costs would be small for a big future benefit. Our bats are an essential part of the Austin community. Here is a quote from John fire lame deer from 1972. If this Earth should be destroyed, it will be by

[11:23:13 AM]

desire or by the lust of pleasure and self gratification , or by greed of the green frog skin by people who are mindful of their own self, forgetting about the needs of others. The green frog skin is his name for dollar bills. Thank you very much.

>> Jen Ramos, menchie shaman person.

>> Good morning, members of the council. My name is Jen Ramos. I am the central Texas region director for the Texas young Democrats. The first Latina president of the Austin young Democrats and a resident of city council. District three. First off, I'd like to comment on the lack of transparency from interim city manager Garza in the presentation of this budget, which included the use of large binders to present the budget to council staff on a Friday night, a lag in the public upload of the budget document online and a lack of a simplified proposal

[11:24:14 AM]

all which hinder austinites in their timely ability to see how our city would like to allocate funds. In 2023, we should be utilizing resources to make this information easier for all austinites to see. I'm a renter public transit user and someone who has been able to find success in my life and career thanks to previous budgets, plus an increase in funding for health and human services as championed by former council member de la Garza, allows me to seek lifesaving service care at the planned parenthood clinic in east Austin when I was uninsured and only making \$14,000 a year. I am disappointed that the budget, as currently presented to the public, does not invest in community resources such as renters. Relief

especially during an affordable housing and housing crisis in the city of Austin. The removal of a living wage as a priority and the consolidation of multiple offices that all serve different purposes, such as the merging of the equity office and the office of police oversight. As currently presented. This budget does little to help our communities and I believe that equity actions, community investment budget will be a step in the right direction. What we

[11:25:14 AM]

need to look at when we fund this budget is how we can help more austinites and not put them in silos. The increase in police funding is a detrimental mistake that we can make for this community because it means that we will get to a budget amount that cannot be reversed for a department that does not want accountability and is not willing to meet us at the table for accountability and resources . Thank you for your time.

>> Menchie shaman perskin and Monica Guzman.

>> Hello, my name is monkey and I am with up together, a nonprofit that trusts and invests in communities with unrestricted cash payments. I'm also a resident of district seven. I'm here today to urge you to adopt the community investment budget, which includes continuing direct cash transfers to families experiencing financial hardship in the 2023 to 24 fiscal year. I also urge you to reject the restructuring of the equity civil rights, resilience and sustainability offices and

[11:26:14 AM]

instead keep them as autonomous entities to focus on addressing systemic inequities and sustainability in Austin as you may know, up together is a non profit organization Ann that is currently partnering with the city on the Austin guaranteed income pilot to distribute \$1,000 a month to 135 families in Austin and Travis county up together believes that families experience financial hardship, have many strengths themselves and in their communities, and by combining those with direct cash, investments can achieve their goals and accelerate their socioeconomic mobility. So far, preliminary results of the pilot show that participants have made positive impact impacts. After just six months. For instance, participant have increased housing stability. Participants are reporting improvements in their mental health and food security, and participants are working towards their long term goals, which include going back to school, increasing their job skills and spending more time with their children, continuing to fund direct cash transfers is a vital part of addressing systemic racism and inequity and improving outcomes for Austin residents while preventing their

[11:27:15 AM]

displacement out of the city. The equity office has been an integral partner in launching our guaranteed income pilot. The office has a proven track record of making a difference in many areas, including vaccine accessibility, addressing urgent needs after winter storm uri, advocating for community voices in emergency management and climate planning, and providing vital funding to businesses and organizations. Restructuring the equity office as well as the civil rights, resilience and sustainability offices means losing a key voice for accountability Katy and historically oppressed communities in Austin. In closing, I ask you to ensure that Austin remains a city where everyone can live and thrive by adopting the community investment budget and keeping the equity. Civil rights, resilience and sustainability offices as independent entities within city of Austin. Thank you .

>> Real quick, I know I've met with, together regarding some preliminary findings with the guaranteed income pilot program. I believe my colleagues might be interested and also receiving that information and just would want to invite you to, to share

[11:28:15 AM]

that out if you can.

>> Oh, great. Yeah, we can definitely do that at a later time. Yes, you can definitely do that. Thank you. Thank you very, very much.

>> Next speaker, our shaman perskin Monica Guzman, council and mayor, wherever you are.

>> Thank you very much for letting me speak today. My name is shaman perskin and I am with the Texas harm reduction alliance. I was just sitting here thinking to myself self that I agree with most what everybody said about this, this proposal, all this budget proposal is not, not not good. That one that you're you're you want to give money to police in a in a in a situation where they have not been in a good police force for a long time. And it behooves me that that this would propagate out more money to be

[11:29:17 AM]

spent with the APD as opposed to all the other things that it could be spent on in better ways . Now, in particular, I wanted to speak about the public, the voucher for the permanent housing voucher and I'm a I received this voucher. I have for years. And basically I get about \$1,000 and \$50,050 a month. I pay the rest of the bills and that's a lot cheaper than millions of dollars to be spent. Other places. So how many months rent is \$9 million, for instance. Thank you very much. Have a good day.

>> Monica Guzman. Alicia Castillo and Simon Benz. During council.

>> I'm Monica Guzman, policy

[11:30:18 AM]

director at Garza. Go Austin. Vamos Austin. We are hopeful that you will consider a more robust budget that carries forward the critical progress of the past decade and urge you to consider excuse me, to course correct on three points increase your investment in public health parks as well as investment in tenant relocation assistance. Given Austin's growth and increase in climate stressors, resourcing these departments and critical needs is more important than ever. Garza also supports the community investment budget and its priorities. Keep the current departmental structure of independent offices for equity and sustainability. Resilience and civil rights. It is crucial knell that the equity office maintains a purview that allows for the continued development of equity champions in each city department who are analyzing the data sets, metrics and creating process changes that drive more equitable outcomes from drainage improvement to anti-displacement

[11:31:19 AM]

dollars. The offices of sustainability and resilience must continue to have inter-departmental reach. So they can bring our utilities together to address critical infrastructure needs. Sustainability holds more knowledge on current assets and gaps than any other department siloing them in. Planning would be devastating to our disaster preparedness and response efforts. Finally we take the irreversible and excessive increase in police funding off the table. Our policing shortages are not due to funding shortages and we already know that funding are critical. Infrastructure, social services and quality of life initiatives bring us the crime reduction and social safety nets that truly keep us safe in the few seconds I have left speaking solely as a district for residents, my comments are mine and mine alone . And I say this the Austin police department currently has the largest budget in Austin history. It doesn't need more

[11:32:21 AM]

money. It needs to address its racist history. We thank you. Alicia Castillo, Simone Benz and Beverly Lazar.

>> My name is Alicia Castillo.

>> I'm a district three resident. And thank you for your time and listening to our comments today. I wanted to follow up on some of the things Kathie Mitchell before me was bringing up in regards to the police budget. We have some questions and just just some things that we'd like more clarity on and that portion of the budget, firstly being a couple of somewhat mysterious items that we're seeing here. Number one, I wanted to note that there was there's one item and I'm looking at page 315 of the budget. That's an increase for various technology contracts in the budget, nearly half \$1 million for that. It would be wonderful to get more detail on what what that actually is. We

[11:33:22 AM]

also want I'm curious about the high fte in the building services department moving those eight positions. That's \$2 million for those eight positions is I'm just curious what that's for. Also a little bit concerned about the full year funding for that February ordinance that we passed that was supposed to cover one year is my understanding. And yet we're funding it at in this budget without having had that be part of the bargaining contract or anything. So and from my standing that has to be removed if we expect arpa to come back to the bargaining table rather than just giving it their \$8 million right now, 8 million. So those are a few of the questions. But also I wanted to comment on one item regarding the improved training and data reporting based off of the Kroll

[11:34:23 AM]

report. The data reporting that's listed there. This absolutely should be an office of police oversight budget item , not a police department budget item. It is explicitly in the oppose role to do some of that data reporting. And that's really important to us because it will ensure an external third party read and analysis of that data reporting rather than the APD's read on that data. Thank you so much.

>> Simone burns, Beverly Lazar. David Johnson. Good morning.

>> Council my name is Simone Benz. I'm a district four resident and staff at sustainable food center. Sfc stands in solidarity with the community investment budget collaborative and we urge you to consider its recommendations. I also want to echo Larry Franklin's comments related to food system investments and thank you for your continued investment in social service contracts. I'm here today to voice our concern specifically over the proposed restructuring of the office of sustainability

[11:35:24 AM]

. The office of sustainability is fundamental to xfx's mission of transforming the food system to nourish our health, land and livelihood of the community in Austin and across central Texas. For example, when the burger center was designated as a community vaccination site, office of sustainable Katy brought together partners including Austin independent school district, sunset valley police department and the city council of sunset valley, to ensure that both immunization and food access initiatives could work hand in hand to support our community during a time of extreme stress and throughout the pandemic, the office of sustainability continued to convene partners on a weekly basis to share information and bridge community services, ultimately ensuring that our community was supported by our systems. And now they are charged with developing and implementing the city's first ever food system plan. This is a deeply community involved process which requires collaboration across sectors and stands to build a

food system that will serve generations of eaters and producers to come after us. While sustainability is vital to city planning, the scope of this department should not be limited just to planning so I come to you today in

[11:36:26 AM]

partnership alongside dozens of partner organizations that you've already heard from. We want to highlight that this is happening at a time when racial and gender equity are being challenged across the nation by overlooking the value and autonomy of these offices. We limit their ability to effectively address community crises and provide innovative solutions, amplify voices and secure necessary resources for our community. So again, I ask you to protect the autonomy of the office of sustainability. Thank you for your time.

>> Beverly Lazar or Alyssa David Johnson and temi olujobi. If any of you are here, please come down to the front. Temi is at you. Okay.

>> Good morning everyone. My name is David Johnson, policy and research organizer,

[11:37:28 AM]

grassroots leadership, and also the co-founder of coalition to abolish slavery, Texas. I don't know how we got to a place where the people that we put in place don't believe in our city, don't believe in us, the people that make this city great. I don't know how we've landed at a place where fear has people ready to revert back to two things that happened the last time, the last time. Mayor Watson was mayor Watson, when everything was centered around business and wealth and privilege. I'm a resident of district eight. I went from I went from zero 3 to 0, four to 4 to 9. So I know about privilege. I watch it and I enjoy it myself. And I can speak and say we don't need to center business. Ace since when has business ever

[11:38:28 AM]

provided equity or sustainability? Business has only provided capitalist exploitation and corruption. Equity is a pillar of what the city stands for. Why would we take things like equity and civil rights and sustainability out of their own, out of their own space to occupy and hold and put them in the pocket of business entities, of business interests other than the fact that those are the interests that heavily fund certain people's campaigns, I'd hope that you say there is no other reason. There is no good reason to do these things. There is no good reason to refuse the community investment budget that we collectively and collaboratively put together. You always say bring us solutions, don't bring us problems.

Well, it, we brought you solutions and you've ignored them. And then we get a new mayor and his and his backup city manager who is interim and

[11:39:30 AM]

then what do you do? You cave in . You sit here and entertain this nonsense because our city is not a fear centered city. Our city is healthy and loving. This is the same city that didn't need dps. This is the same city that doesn't need black people dying in the street. This is the same city that doesn't need people overdosing everywhere, that doesn't need people being homeless. So why would we ever trust the same business interests that have dominated this city for the last 20 years?

>> Thank you, sir.

>> Why would we have them? Response ability for equity and sustainability and justice. Why unless you're hoping to make a little bit of money off of it to. So maybe the question is how bought and sold are you?

>> Thank you. I'm going to call the next speaker. Beverly, are you here? Okay. Tammy olujobi and then Karla perito. Tammy

[11:40:34 AM]

olujobi.

>> Morning, y'all.

>> Here today from Leslie Paul's district. Just to add my voice to the chorus of folks that stand against this budget proposal, specifically against the merger of the equity office, the small business minority resource department, and the civil rights office.

>> I work with a community org called ccu.

>> That's communities of color, united and since the pandemic started, much of that work has been focused on mutual aid and political education.

>> So I get to see firsthand on a regular basis how our of color community stays struggling to access basic needs.

>> The equity office, the office that no longer would exist under this budget has directly aided the work that we do in ccu through their many grant program, we were able to get over 50, households with over 200 kids and 200 adults culturally specific fresh produce and home goods without

[11:41:34 AM]

any strings attached. That's every month we do that work through through the rise fund program.

>> The direct cash assistance helped many of these same people that are working class that we provide food for money to keep their lights on, gas in their car and their homes cool.

>> All through their guaranteed income pilot program. We've helped these same community members even more keep roofs over their head and the equity office couldn't have made these programs without the structure they have in place now. A separate department with a direct ear to the people, the city manager, the city council and the mayor. I don't want my money and I know the people that I work with in ccu don't want their money, their tax dollars spent bulldozing these departments and the crucial work that they do. I don't want my money to be a weapon against the progress the community has scratched and clawed and fought for over the years. Thank you.

[11:42:35 AM]

Karla pereira zo Fran tattoo J Lila peoples, if any of you are here, please come down to the front.

>> Janice Bookout.

>> Good morning.

>> Or afternoon. Janice Bookout director of Earth day Austin and co-founder of community resilience trust. And I'm also uplifting my colleague Miriam Connor, who couldn't be here. These four offices need their full authority, autonomy and support to do their excellent work and continue to improve on it. Signers of our public statement, including 63 organizations and 200 leaders whose collective reach is over 200,000 people, include all council districts and a spectrum of lived experience, including communities of color, low income, gender non-conforming Singh, unhoused immigrants and people with disabilities and multiple sectors political, social, religious, mutual aid,

[11:43:37 AM]

media, health. Civil rights policy. Environment. Business justice. Resilience and the arts . Please ask these questions not yet mentioned on the message board were the offices in question asked for their subject matter experts before making these changes? Why are these changes? Why are these changes inconsistent with the reports put out by these offices and the and the founding documents with which they were established? What does the city manager have the authority to recognize? An office created through a city ordinance such as this office of civil rights? Beyond the city manager's stated perception that early stage community engaged isn't beneficial. What other rationale is there behind ignoring the intent of the resolutions council comments, budget approvals and ordinance that establish these offices as independent has the city manager thoroughly reviewed the work and various reports from these

offices? Project connect equity tool, climate equity plan, resilience hubs and the equity dashboards of 37 departments have we fully considered the work that you would be disrupted? Please ask these

[11:44:38 AM]

questions on the record and deal with these realities. As y'all were about to break the record for over 100 degrees, we need these for days, over 100 degrees. We need these offices in full power to survive the next 30 years of climate change , complex societal problems require multi-perspective stakeholder engagement equity builds community health. Sustainability requires diversity. Resilience is life saving and cost effective, and civil rights must never be demoted. Today, you heard similar points from the equity officer, former equity officer and Texas's leading expert in racial equity. Remove the restructuring from the budget. Thank you. I support the Pío and community investment budget and bring water to your unhoused neighbors. Please Carla Peredo Peredo.

>> Are you here? What about Fran? Tattoo okay, moving on. Katya Guzman. Jalila peoples.

[11:45:44 AM]

Hello hello.

>> Okay, there we go. Good afternoon, city council.

>> My name is Katya Guzman. I am here as a director of academia quarterly and as a resident of district three. I am here to ask for your immediate support of the hispanic quality of life budget recommendation to expand funding for our culturally diverse program through an allocation of \$550,000 to academia quarterly. Thanks to the generous funding received from the city of Austin, we successfully enrolled more than 150 students into our summer coding program hosted at Sanchez elementary. This is five times the amount of students we were able to enroll last year as the kids code is a culturally sustaining indigenous STEM program, serving second to eighth grade students attending schools. This summer, students learned video game design, digital monetization, monetization, blockchain technology and dance America in both English and Spanish in particular, our AKC programming is designed for largely immigrant, indigenous Latinx, Black and emerging bilingual

[11:46:45 AM]

students. This achievement was also made possible through our valuable collaboration with the Mac, the Mexican-American Culture Center and Austin ISD. Our partnerships have enabled us to offer complimentary breakfast and lunch services as well as transportation to and from the camp. Academia is only one example of the kind of community programs your constituents are here asking you to invest in

throughout the past four years, as a teacher at aztec code, I have seen a profound impact on our students, providing them with invaluable opportunities for personal and academic growth by equipping them with essential coding skills and fostering a community centered learning environment. We have witnessed a remarkable boost in their confidence, self-esteem and sense of belonging. Many students have not only discovered a passion for technology, but have also gained access to potential career paths that were previously inaccessible to them. This program is helping bridge the digital divide, empowering the students to become active contributors to Austin's growing tech economy and leveling the playing field for a brighter future. I urge you to continue

[11:47:45 AM]

investing in our communities that are providing direct services to empower our children and teachers in Austin, academic Leslie is devoted to educating, empowering and inspiring the next generation of leaders in stem. Lastly, I invite you to witness their achievements at our summer graduation Sunday, August 6th, from 9 to 11 at Sanchez elementary. Thank you jalilah peoples, are you here.

>> Okay, Maria, under Angela Valenzuela and Luz Alvarez Sims . Please come on down and just state your name. Hi

>> I brought some supporting documents.

>> Can I share them with y'all? Yes

>> If you hand them to the clerk, they'll distribute them. Thank you. Go ahead.

[11:48:45 AM]

>> Hi, everyone. My name is Maria del Carmen onda and I am the project manager and teacher at academia valley. I'm also just completed my doctoral program at the university of Texas at Austin's education leadership and policy program. So I am here to support academia and the hispanic quality of life resources advisory commission recommendation for allocation for \$550,000 for academia.

>> Quietly, academia quietly, as katya has mentioned, is a language and cultural revitalization project for second to fifth grade, emergent bilingual students in Austin, independent school district. And so since its inception in 2014, academia has enrolled over 1000 emergent bilingual students, trained over 40 indigenous latinx public school teachers, and hosted over 250 professional development workshops, initiated academia grow your own bilingual leadership and development program for teachers of color and successfully implemented a research and community university community partnership between Austin independent school district, UT Austin college of education and the UT Austin history department and the greater Austin community.

[11:49:48 AM]

The \$550,000 funds provided by the city of Austin will allow us to expand and reach culturally relevant programming to new schools. Recreation centers and other within our community programs. What this planning, what this funding we plan on expanding our asset code summer program. Right now we have 150 students as we're speaking at Sanchez elementary school, and we want to grow our program to 300 to 400 students in the fall, in the spring, we usually service 50 emergent bilingual students. We would like to expand and have 250 students. Additionally per the community request and per part request, they wanted us to go and train teachers within the community to create like a professional relevant, culturally relevant teacher professional development workshops. And so just collaborating with those centers and we want to train at least 100 teachers as such, we plan to serve over 500 students and 100 teachers. So my dissertation focuses on latin-x indigenous aid teachers. So within this

[11:50:49 AM]

section, please bear with me. As you know, there's also a teacher shortage and that's so I yield my time. Thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem, if I may.

>> Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

>> I just like to make some brief commentary this kind of backup information, when you bring us information is so very helpful. My staff and I can pore through this and actually make something actionable happen. This is very helpful. So for other commenters, if and when you have the opportunity, I realize not everybody is able, but you should see how thorough this packet is. Everything we need to know about your organization, what your mission statement is, it's all contained here. So so helpful.

>> Thank you very much. Thank you. And you know, help me support the next generation of leaders of black and brown youth within the Austin independent school district. Thank you.

>> Absolutely. Appreciate your commentary today. Thank you.

>> Packets stuck down there because we got this but not the folder. Get this.

>> I appreciate your comments.

[11:51:51 AM]

>> Council member harper-madison and I will say also with emails , if you have reports you want us to see or links you want us to visit, make sure to include those as well because it makes it easy for us to digest the.

>> I will email it to each one of y'all and to your staff. Thank you, councilmember qadri yeah, I think it was already addressed, but I appreciate y'all coming to our budget on all this Saturday.

>> I don't think there's enough packets on the dice for everyone, so if you don't mind emailing our office, yes, I can give you councilmember Velez and you can pass.

>> It has all those documents I'm taking your stuff, chito.

>> Okay.

>> Thank you.

>> Next speaker Angela Valenzuela, followed by Luz Alvarez Sims and then professor Emilio zamora. Yes

>> Thank thank you so much. And we do read represent a community based effort. I'm Angela Valenzuela. I'm a member of the faculty at the university of Texas, but I'm a member of the community and have been involved

[11:52:51 AM]

for quite some time now. We got started as academia quietly back in 2013 when people in the community were concerned about the literacy issues facing our our children and also teachers and just sort of the turnstile process that's not helpful at all with the memory and the curriculum, the investment going away because teachers are leaving the profession.

>> And it's even gotten worse, as we know, in the context of the pandemic. And so what we were doing earlier on as early as 2014, when we were first founded, was is creating capacity among the bilingual dual language educators, was by bringing them together to develop curriculum to prepare teachers to teach the curriculum through the partnership with the district. We make all of what we develop available so that it's available district wide that it proved to be enormously useful during the pandemic when we had

[11:53:53 AM]

stuff that could that could just go readily online that then teachers could avail of themselves shelves of Spanish, English text aligned. It's a professional career. Tulum and the district at you know praise god has helped us all of these years and strongly supports us. But because of declining revenues for the district, we're down to a very precious few dollars now of support. And that's because they like us right? That's because we're we're sincere partners, although they have consistently contributed in other ways through providing transportation Ann, through providing a pay for teachers who give of their time . In our Saturday school, we are a camp, we're a Saturday school. We're a curriculum development project. Or there's a different pieces to it and you'll see it in the book. And we're expanding. We're in a growth

moment right now. It's really, really exciting and a testament to our worth. If I can just say this to track back on what Dr.

[11:54:55 AM]

Una was saying is that we have saved the district thousands of dollars by retaining teachers. We haven't lost a one. Okay. In ten years. Now we're entering ten years of existence. It's between 20 and \$30,000 to replace one teacher, one teacher. And so, you know, add it up and we only add value to the community.

>> Thank you so much. Thank you .

>> Luz Alvarez Sims, professor Emilio zamora, Patricia Nunez.

>> Hello. Council members.

>> I am Luz Alvarez Sims. I'm a 15 year veteran, dual language teacher, ten years of which I have served in aid, and I've had the honor of serving as a teacher in academia program since 2016.

>> And through this time I've seen the positive impact this program has had on our community of latinx students, their families, volunteers, researchers and with teachers. Academia is a bilingual and

[11:55:56 AM]

cultural revitalization program for fourth to fifth grade students attending aid. We offer instruction in Mexican American studies, tejano studies and stem curriculum, all which provide the academic support children need throughout the school year. It also provides enrichment for students on culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies, which views our multilingue students through an asset based lens. Since the start of the program, we've served over 1000 multilingue students have provided curricular resources and professional development for teachers in the Austin area and have published several academic research articles supporting the efficacy of our program. It's vital to our community to ensure that the city prioritizes funding for academic Leslie program, which will ensure that our multilingual students continue to have an enriching and enriching space that supports their academic growth, but even more importantly, provides a space where student cultural identity history and languages are valued and celebrated. Students are engaged in culturally sustaining curriculum. Through our program that integrates artistic hands on activities for students to celebrate their heritage

[11:56:57 AM]

language, learn their local history, and become active participants in their community . We and we engage in activities outside of the classroom as well by visiting our local museums, city parks, the

university city, the pow wow, the capitol and more. And I've personally experienced and witnessed the joy that students and families have when they come to academia. My parents have shared how this space makes them feel like they have a community that supports them outside of school. I've seen parents take pride in being experts in some of the lessons on identity, immigration and indigeneity and this positive connection with home and school empowers our families and students as they navigate academic spaces. I also want to highlight that academia will also continue to be a collaborative, a collaborative academic space for teachers in Austin ISD and the surrounding areas to create and implement a curriculum that's culturally sustaining for our students and their families. So I just want to end by saying it is vital to fund this program, and we thank you for your continued support. Thank you.

[11:57:58 AM]

>> Professor Amelia zamora, Patricia Nunez and Carmen Yanez. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

>> And thank you for your service.

>> Mayor, council members.

>> My name is Emilio zamora.

>> I'm a professor of history at the university of Texas at Austin. I've been also a public servant, loyal to the city of Austin and a number of capacities.

>> I won't go into that, but I'm most proud of the work that we're doing with with academia quietly.

>> We're now in the 10th year of operation.

>> We already have some important documents, records that say most everything you need to know about who we are.

>> But you've heard also from some of the young people that are coordinating many of our activities, including a teacher, of course, and Angela Valenzuela, one of the co founders alongside with me of the academia quality. What I want to do is simply briefly comment on where we're going.

[11:59:00 AM]

You already know who we are, what we do. You might want to know about some things that I think are exciting in the future of academia quality. They're not necessarily part of the program currently, but I think we're working in that direction. Ann one is that I'm really excited about developing multiethnic ethnic curriculum. We already focus on tejano studies, women's studies and indigenous studies. We want to expand in the future towards a more robust curricula that talks about instances of collaboration and cooperation between different groups in Texas history. One of them has to do with the undergrad

railroad to Mexico. It included a lot of poor whites and African-Americans. Obviously but also very prominent, currently participating were the Mexicans who were expelled or thrown out of places like Austin because of

[12:00:01 PM]

their support of the so-called fugitive slaves. We want to develop curriculum so that we can expand in that direction. Ann I think it's very exciting. I think we need we also want to promote the idea of quality as a model that could be used within the district in conjunction with the district and in dependent of the district. So that other communities can then assume some agency Kathie in promoting educational opportunities, opportunity for our youth. Thank you very much. Thank you.

>> Patricia Nunez, Carmen Yanez and Jessica Robertson. If your name has been called, you can go ahead and go to the podium. Please just state your name for sure.

>> Hey, I'm Jess Rodriguez

[12:01:01 PM]

Robertson.

>> I live in district seven.

>> I'm here to also speak against the budget as proposed specifically against the lack of rental assistance and tenant support.

>> And so I've been working really closely for the last eight months with a friend of mine. She's a trans veteran who is 80% disabled and she is constantly on the brink of eviction and just circling the drain of irreversible poverty and what I've seen working with her and what she's up against and what support services there are and are not is just a fraction of the dozens of organizations who consulted on the community investment budget . They have the experience and institutional knowledge of how to best serve folks in her position. But what I've seen is that when you live not just paycheck to paycheck, but day to day, whether or not you're going to get food, whether or not your air conditioning is going to work, whether or not you can take a shower.

>> The wheel of the budget doesn't just become a pie chart.

>> It's kind of like a wheel of outcomes.

>> And looking at this right now, what I've seen is that it looks like the chance that her

[12:02:01 PM]

number, you know, that her dial lands on help it gets smaller and lands on incarceration or arrest for poverty related reasons has increased it dramatically.

>> So this is very stressful to me. So by defunding both the upstream prevention of homelessness by tenants, debilitation, stabilization, excuse me, and resources to address homelessness on the ground, we're moving towards a community where poverty, poverty is directly criminalized and families are pushed into desperate and precarious situations. I think this budget is obtuse and regressive. I'm a collector of vintage clothes. I love stuff from the 90s, but I can tell you that right now, from when we're buying stuff from the 90s, we're paying 2023 prices. So I think we need to keep our heads where we're at right now and address the increasing homelessness, the struggles that people that are subject to predatory, predatory management by by that is emboldened by state policies. Like we just have to be better and do better for them. I guess. So that's about it.

[12:03:04 PM]

>> Carmen Yanez, Jessica Roberts , Ann, Susana Carranza.

>> If your name has been called, please come down towards the front and state your name at the podium. Good morning.

>> I'm Susanna Carranza. I live in district nine.

>> I like most of folks today.

>> I oppose the budget as published.

>> I agree on how this budget steers the city in the wrong direction. The voters has have spoken again and again that we want more emphasis in equity help the prevention and not policing. We also would re emphasize that any increase in police funding can never be taken back because because of

[12:04:04 PM]

awful state laws that were passed in the 87th cycle legislative cycle. So it's really absurd that we're throwing more money in a way in a place that we can't take back by moving civilian positions into the police. I think it's really sad that we are mostly ignoring the recommendation from the community investment budget, where a coalition Ann of organizations burns that are on the ground doing the work are recommending where the money can be spent. But to really focus on prevention of homelessness and poverty by really getting the funds upstream and not just dealing with much more expensive fixing like the old saying, one ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We are just kind of investing in the wrong thing. So please oppose this budget and

[12:05:05 PM]

please stop with this consolidation of offices that really should remain standing of the on their own, specifically the equity and civil rights. Like there is no. So it makes no sense to kind of bundle that under a business centric office. Thank you.

>> Carmen Yanez, are you here? Okay I think someone's waving. Thank you. Jessica Robertson. That was her. Sorry sorry. Apologize. So Rosanna Carranza, wait. Okay sorry. Eric Byrd, la Tasha black. So Susan Spataro. Okay. Please just state your name at the podium. That was really. Afternoon.

>> Mayor and council. My name is

[12:06:05 PM]

Eric Byrd. I am here as a representative of the Austin area urban league, partnered with the cib to help develop the community investment budget. And I'm also in Austin.

>> I'm a native austinite and a citizen. I think that takes the forefront Burt matter of fact, I was born less than a mile from here at Brackenridge.

>> Paige some of you may remember Brackenridge, right? I have a speech, but I don't know if I'm going to say it. I think I'm just going to talk to you because I happen to know that your people do.

>> And you're not perfect, and no one behind me knows what it's like to sit in your seats and right now you have a very tough , critical decision whether or not to accept this budget or parts of it.

>> And you're hearing things from the community and they're telling you no.

>> And you're hearing things in the offices and they're saying yes. And it's political and it's personal and it's emotional and it's business. That's tough. The

[12:07:08 PM]

I guess the thing I want to bring to your attention or you may or may not have considered it with everything going on, is your legacy. So how often do you ask yourself as council people, what legacy am I leaving? Because when this is done, no one's going to say the city manager budget passed. They're going to say council approved this budget. Usually the last action is the one remembered. So they're going to say mayor and council approve this budget. So if there are ramify actions five and ten years down the road that are a result of removing the office of civil rights or the equity office, you're going to be remembered as the people who did it. Have you considered that ? And if you haven't, think about your

name in history. My name probably won't be in history for standing up here and probably no one else but your names will be etched in history in stone forever. So I'm not

[12:08:09 PM]

even at time, but I think I'm done. Oh, there we go. La Latasha black.

>> Susan's Bottaro, and then Carol Guthrie. Okay

>> My name is Latasha black. It's my first time up here, so bear with me. So I was born and raised in Austin, so I've witnessed Austin go through significant changes from the rising living costs to the gentrification. And now we're faced with the proposed consolidation of the civil rights and equity department and the other important departments. That's along with that. I believe that all of them should remain independent. I want to speak specifically about the civil rights and equity office, mainly because as we know in history with civil rights and equity, my people have marched blood, sweat and tears. So for it to be consolidated as if it's nothing that is traumatic in itself, we are trying to rise as amongst the community and heal from the past. And this is

[12:09:09 PM]

nothing but a setback, Austin said it back. So I just want to bring that to your attention. I do want to put also that, as far as the equity office, it started with no budget, no staff, and now it has a budget dedicated staff and has made impactful contributions to our community and I feel like we need to be held. People should be held accountable for the wrongs that is committed and we must address it in order to bring about change. So I want to go back and put a little bit perspective on just the history of America, period. We've come. It seems like patterns are still continuing and we know that history repeats itself and that's what it feels like. So I would say that the American history is has been about minimizing black culture and contributions and black achievements and being co-opted by white elites. But I feel that such as, for example, Christopher Columbus claiming to discover America black wall Street and even the transformation of east Austin. I think that our heritage has been

[12:10:10 PM]

overshadowed and disrespected and this is systemic oppression, which is the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaged, advantaging members of a dominant group. So again, that is also alarming. Getting rid of us, getting consolidating civil rights and equity. And increasing police budget make it make sense. It sounds like we are being set back to the 1963. Please mayor, can we allow for miss black to come to complete her thought I'd really strongly encourage our community members to come and do this. I know it's nerve wracking to stand at that podium for the

first time, but I really appreciate that you're here and I really appreciate that you're taking the courage and the opportunity to speak before this body that does make these decisions. Please complete your thoughts. All right. Thank you. I appreciate that. I think that we must recognize the broader implications of the decisions and how it affects our community. And we must learn from history and we must strive

[12:11:11 PM]

for a better future where equality, equity, inclusion and love to guide our actions. And we must collectively address the afflictions that have affected our community, both historically and presently. And I urge you to reflect on this, these decisions and has it. Well, let me read y'all. My bad. I urge to reflect on the impact of this proposed consolidation and consider its implications is because this is about our principles of civil rights and human dignity. So it goes deeper than just a budget. This goes about this is about history. This is about my people and some of y'all on the podium. This is about it. And this is also a reflection of what Austin is right now, because there's no representation of people who look like me. So I just want to let y'all know that it feels like a slap in the face as a black woman, as a black community member, to be slapped in the face to say that civil rights and equity and our minorities who have built this country to be consolidated to be consolidated, that does not make any sense to me. So please make it make sense. I hope y'all do

[12:12:11 PM]

the right thing. God bless. Thank you. Susan Spataro, Carol Guthrie, and then Alexander Soltero.

>> I'm probably going to be the only one talking this way. As I listened to budget hearings and I listened to a lot of things at the state, you know what? They focus on are the people who are getting the services or want more money. And I get that. But what you don't talk about is the people from whom you are taking the money. And those are the people that aren't here today. And so I kind of like to talk for those people. You have a community of activists. Of course you should listen to them. But there is a huge community out there that are not them. And where are they today? They're working. If they don't have enough money, they get a second job. They do not commit crimes. They do not use drugs. They're doing all they can to survive here. And it is difficult. Rent.com in September of 22 said that Austin had the fourth largest out.my gration of

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any city in the country. So while we talk about net in-migration, we're forgetting that the people that are working and trying to stay in their homes and trying to pay rent are being thrown out of our city. To me, municipal government starts with public safety. Other things don't count if you don't feel safe, if you

can't go to a park, you can't come down here. You can't go to a restaurant. You can't go to a mall. It's getting that way in Austin, Texas, we looked at many of the proposals that you heard today and those were implemented in in in the end of 19 and 20. To me, they've been an abysmal failure. Murders have gone up. Crime has gone up. I just heard yesterday that auto thefts, they said, well, auto thefts have gone up 34% in the state. But 64% in Austin, Texas . We can't ignore those things. And city manager, I give you credit for looking at this budget and trying to make it work like a family makes it

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work. You don't. I know you're having to do things that are hard, but there is not an unlimited supply of money out there. I think consolidations in reorg works are good if they're effective. I like the fact that you said a couple of weeks ago, we can't just look at dollars. We need to look at performance. I so think you're right there. So I thank you very much. And if I can ever help you, call. Thank you, Carol Guthrie and then Alexander Soltero. Good afternoon, mayor and council. My name is Carol Guthrie and I am with the American federation of state, county and municipal employees. Thank you. City manager for the 4% pay increase . I do agree with that. We are concerned Ed that our essential workers have been left out of the budget. We know that these essential workers are not first

[12:15:15 PM]

responders, but they are first on the job in a crisis in bad weather, through covid. They were here every day and we felt like they should have been compensated, dated, especially in light of the fact that in going through the budget, it appears that each sworn police officer will receive a \$2,500 stipend. Ed that's something that we can look for our essential workers that would be great. The part of the budget that we absolutely, absolutely disagree with is the consolidation of the civil rights, the equity office and our this does not make sense. We fought for years and years to get the civil rights office. It was established with an

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ordinance we thought that would protect the office and allow it to grow and flourish. And here we are today with the stroke of a pen and by consolidating under our it does not make sense. Yes, the equity office was here for the community. The tools that they use keep all of us in check . And of course, I don't have to explain to any of you about civil rights. We all need and want our civil rights and it does not need to be consolidated into another department. Thank you, miss Guthrie.

>> Alexander Soltero.

>> Good afternoon.

>> My name is Alexander Soltero.

>> I am a resident of district one.

>> I am an educator at a title

[12:17:18 PM]

one high school in Austin, and I've been working there for over a decade.

>> I do work with students. The population is comprised mostly of youth of color and I am here to support the community investment budget and specifically support the equity department remaining its own entity. The timing of this merger is terrible. Seeing how our government has just recently signed into law the banning of dei programs at state universities as well as the supreme court just now overturning affirmative action. We're now seeing the banning of books and teachings of diversity and systemic racism. And regardless of how intentional this merger is, it gives the public the perception that racial equity is not a priority for cedar city leadership. Pardon me. And it is being diluted within one department in which it may struggle to get priority access to executive leadership along with working at this high school, I also run an extracurricular club. It is a student government and leadership program. I have worked with current and former

[12:18:21 PM]

council members along with representatives where my students have the opportunity to learn about local government and the legislative process as I've grown with this program over seven years, what I've learned the most is that my students have grown and learned that they are part of a community, that they have a voice in a city, and I struggle to think how I explain our city leadership's proposed decisions to minimize decision making power of the equity office in a way that doesn't reinforce what society is constantly telling them. That there isn't a place for them in government and true democratic, participatory decision making processes. I was born in San Antonio. I grew up and was raised in Dallas and I chose Austin to call my home. I chose Austin because I always saw it as the most Progressive and growing city of the three and the harm that this merger does leads us to go backwards and not forwards. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, may I

[12:19:21 PM]

please, sir, would you mind connecting with the district one office?

>> I'd like to hear more about your extracurricular program. Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you , mayor.

>> That concludes all the speakers. All right.

>> Thank you. I thank everybody that came to speak. That's why we wanted to have an opportunity like this. The next opportunity to speak will be in an afternoon so that those that it's more convenient for them to speak in the afternoon and I'm off the top of my head. I'm not remembering the exact date right now, but I'll I'll announce all of that when we come back and make sure that everybody has all of the upcoming work sessions and end dates for testing and speaking. When we come back, members it's 1220. Unless there's an objection, I would suggest we recess until 1:00. Take a break until 1:00. And I don't hear any objection. So,

[12:20:22 PM]

mayor yes, sorry.

>> The clerk over here, we did have someone come up that said they were they had stepped out and we called their name. Would you like to let them go ahead and speak? Sure sure. Alicia, please go ahead to the podium.

>> Hey, let me catch my breath.

>> Okay?

>> Hello.

>> My name is Alicia torres, and .

>> And I am a part of the grassroots leadership team for the Austin and mujeres luchadoras. And. I'm here to speak as to why this proposed budget should not be adopted. And to speak against the reorganization of the equity civil rights, sustainability and resilience offices.

>> Like many people have pointed out, this budget, like our city

[12:21:23 PM]

is currently at a cross point in which we are being asked to choose not what but who we are.

>> Prioritize Singh. As council members, you have read the budget. You know whose needs are being funded and whose needs are not. And the question is whether you as council members will succumb to the current political agenda pressure and vote against our collective community safety , well-being and will honestly any actual chance that actually living a dignified life rather than just surviving this budget does not fund the everyday things that would actually improve our quality of life as austinites. Things like alternatives to first response options, direct assistance initiatives for those in the most need to actually prevent homelessness, which is often cited here in this office, and displacement through

programs like rental assistance, bill payment assistance and other forms of direct family funding, such as the guaranteed basic income and also things like parent support specialists in

[12:22:25 PM]

initiative to help families navigate, but not just aid, but city as a whole. Given that a lot of the kids currently in our public schools are kids coming from the immigrant community, the immigrant community that I work most closely with, these are the things that actually we create a people first budget and this is not the current proposed budget. It's not doing any of this thing. So I ask, is this a budget that you can honestly stand behind and really what I want to share is that I have had the privilege to work alongside people from the equity office and can say that it needs the autonomy that it has held. So please do not reorganize and keep this three offices as independent as the need for when they were first created. Still if not more so. It's needed and present today. Thank you. So the next opportunity for public

[12:23:26 PM]

comment is on August 1st at 3:00 pm, we will hold a public hearing on the maximum tax rate at that on that time, at that time.

>> And we will also now allow for public comment for beyond the maximum tax rate for anything that you might want to the public might want to comment on that will be at 3:00 pm on August 1st. The work session will actually start at 10:00. But the public comment will be at three so that we can accommodate those that the afternoon is better than the morning. Yes, mayor pro tem, I would just like to offer a gentle reminder that when we set the maximum tax rate, that doesn't mean we're setting the tax rate itself.

>> So sometimes there's confusion in the public that we've preemptively decided what that rate will be. But all it does is say this is what the maximum will be. It won't go over, but it might be under.

>> Very good. Thank you.

>> Or the same councilmember harper-madison just out of curiosity, when would be the appropriate opportune city to make commentary about what we've discussed so far now or after

[12:24:28 PM]

the next round of speakers?

>> Well, we're finished with speakers. The next thing we're going to do is have staff make a presentation and we'll dig into the general fund. At that point, I would think that probably is when we would have the discussion as opposed to just having a discussion now and then coming back and having staff make a presentation.

>> I appreciate that. Respectfully I think some of the speakers in the room, I'd like to address them directly, if that's appropriate, then then go ahead.

>> Thank you kindly. I just tried to answer your question, but go ahead.

>> Well, thank you. I appreciate you offering me the opportunity. I just wanted to say to our speakers, who took the opportunity to come out today that we absolutely appreciate your concerns and take them seriously. City manager, respectfully, given the amount of interest and concern of the reorganization of our civil rights, equity, sustainability and resiliency offices, I think this might be an appropriate time for us to offer further clarification as soon as we're

[12:25:29 PM]

able to. I think the concerns being raised are valid and that given that so many voices, especially brand new voices who've never come to city hall before, I love that y'all are participate. And this is exactly what it's supposed to look like. And so I would say that the dozens of organizations and the very, very many residents that are raising concerns with us, with the city, which, by the way, I want to just remind when we say the city, you know, it makes it sound like we're all this one big conglomerate, but to somebody's point earlier who said there's nobody up here who looks like them, here I am. I'm the only one. I'm on my second term being the only one up here who looks like me. And so I definitely don't want there to ever be any, what they say. Don't let the smooth taste fool you. I oftentimes do what I have to do as a policy maker. I never

[12:26:29 PM]

identify as a politician. Politicians will lie to you. I'm a policy maker. I'm going to always tell you the truth. Which means I may not always be your favorite, but. But there's no lack of considering Ann. I just want to make sure that people understand that. I do think that we owe our concerted occupants the opportunity to have their questions appropriately answered and their feedback received. So thank you for everybody who came and spoke today. I really do appreciate it.

>> Councilmember Fuentes, thank you.

>> Thank you. Councilmember harper-madison, for your comments. And also wanted to echo the comments that you just shared yesterday. Councilmember Velasquez and I had a budget town hall in southeast Austin. It was well attended and great turnout, great feedback that we heard from our

community. But what came up quite a bit during that conversation with our community were the changes with proposed with the with the consolidation of the equity office, civil rights office and

[12:27:31 PM]

snbr. So I too would like to the city manager to speak to those changes and the rationale behind it. It is a topic of interest from our community given the level of feedback we're hearing, not only today, but via email and also at our budget town halls. And then also want to share my thanks and gratitude for everyone who has come out, who is participating in the town halls, who shared their feedback online, who has been emailing us a budget priority as I am right there with you and understanding the level of importance of adopting our budget is and that it not only sets the priorities and shows our values as a city, but also sets the expectations for the level of services that our city deserves. So I appreciate your time today. Thank you.

>> All right. And I'll reiterate , we really appreciate that's the purpose of having these public comment opportunities and the reason we're having them. I also want to say that the town hall meeting that councilmember Velasquez and councilmember Fuentes last had last night, it

[12:28:32 PM]

was a very well attended event. And so congratulations on that as well. I know other council members are also doing that in their districts. And so if you as a member of the public, if you want the opportunity to hear a presentation and to make comments, that's another avenue. That's available. So please look to see whether there's going to be a town hall meeting in a specific district, because that's a very useful tool unless there's objection. What I would suggest is that we recess until 1:00 and come back in at that point in time. Without objection, we are recessed until 1:00 pm. It. Is 1229.

[1:00:44 PM]

Joining us virtually. And we have a quorum present. With that, I'll turn it to the manager for.

>> Thank you, mayor, members of council. I want to just to as a as we begin the discussion this afternoon to clarify some things that were said this morning during the testimony from our citizens. First of all, I want to I want to thank everybody that came and spoke. I think this is part of what our process is, is to hear from comments from the community about what we may have gotten right or where they think we may have gotten some things wrong. One of the things that was raised earlier today had to do with the creation of this new department, which include the three offices, which is the office of civil rights, office of our small minority and business affairs. And the office equity office. First of all, let me just say that that the small and smb R that office has been at the forefront of opening doors in

[1:01:46 PM]

this organization for a long time, where historically underutilized businesses were denied an opportunity. And I think by combining these three offices, they'll have a great synergy to be able to make more progress on those key issues that the community is so concerned with. We will also take time between now and adoption and even post adoption to continue to meet with the members of the community. I've got two meetings on Friday and I have an additional meeting on trying to get a meeting set up on Monday. So we can continue to hear the concerns of what these issues may be. But but this process of combining, creating departments, we did this recently with the budget office. The budget office was standalone. It is now part of the finance department. But we see Kerri Lang as a budget officer, just like we'll see the these offices, the officer equity officer, the officer for office of civil rights will continue to have an office title and will continue to attend department head meetings. So it is not a diminishing of their status or their authority. It in fact is just part of a larger

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organization. So I wanted just to clarify that. Also, we wanted to probably before we get into our presentation to talk a little bit about the anomalies within the police budget so that we can get that clarified, because I think there is some clarification that's needed and certainly some misunder. The budget process is a complex one and it offers we can provide some context for how those numbers, why those numbers look the way they do. And so we'll do that in just a couple of minutes. And in addition, we want to talk about also the rental assistance. I think there were some concerns that that that fund is less in this budget than it was last year. And so we also have some comments about that will clarify how we how the what the how that rental fund is being used now and we'll be using it in the new fiscal year, fiscal year should the budget be adopted as we proposed? And finally, let me say, I'm mindful that we that the managers office, not me, the office presents the proposed recommendations to the Austin city council. It is not my budget in the end, this is the mayor and council's budget. Once it's adopted, we understand that we're mindful of that and it's

[1:03:48 PM]

really our intent to do to give you the best information so that that policy decision can get made. And it's our job to execute on the budget, as is adopted by the mayor and council of this city. And with that, let me turn it over to Ed Benigno Kerri Lang and Eric Fuentes.

>> Thank you. Thank city manager for speaking to the change, the restructuring of those three departments, those three divisions. One question that I had regarding the changes without seeing the org chart or how it's going to be configured , is that the chief equity officer is an executive level position

and the comments that was raised by our former and first chief equity officer, Brian Oakes, who was on the call who testified earlier and his comments struck a chord with me in that he pointed out that having an executive level position Ann, the chief equity officer under an individual who would be at a director level, might take away from the ability

[1:04:50 PM]

for the chief equity officer to participate in high level conversations and be part of those meetings.

>> And councilmember, that's a good a good comment. And though I've not had a chance to visit with Brian, the equity officer will continue to be an equity officer. They will continue to have all the authority they have today. They will continue to help us organize all the different programs that need to get organized to achieve those objectives. Now the only thing I'd say is when you put it yourself into a larger organization that lens may change a little bit in terms of what needs to be offered and how we make progress. But that always would be done in connection with and in visiting with all the various constituents that are involved in that and that effort. And so but there will continue to be an officer, just like they'll continue to be an office of civil rights as we have now. And so I think his comment was he would he would be saddened if he was the last equity officer that the city had. And that's just and that's maybe a misunderstanding in terms of the way we presented the budget. But I'm happy to talk to him to tell

[1:05:52 PM]

him that that's not the intent.

>> So with the proposed changes, it is a consolidation, not a merger.

>> It is a creation of a new department. There'll be a new director and then there'll be an equity officer. There'll be an officer, and there'll be an officer for civil rights. And those three offices have to work with that new director to work through all the issues and all the synergy that comes from that. Those programs that are very related to one another have similar objectives with perhaps some different emphasis. And that's that's I mean, there's nothing in each division will retain their respective funding and respective staff, right? Yeah. All the staff has moved over. No staff have been eliminated. Now some staffs are. I think has been around a lot longer. So it has a larger staff, but that's just a that's the nature of what's already been approved in the budget.

>> Okay.

>> So there's no intent to diminish or take resources away or any of that stuff. Now, the only thing in terms of autonomy me but this would have been whether they're in a separate

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independ, I mean, an office outside of a larger department. I have slowly begun to, to exert myself. If in my judgment, where things have operated outside of the parameters of what I think, the way I think a city ought to be operated, the city administration ought to be operating might, in my judgment, we shouldn't be in politics. That's not our job. And I know there's some confusion about when I say professional staff. We are a professional staff. But we need to understand the politics and policy. It's not our job to be to be being politicians or making political decisions. The political decisions get made by this body and we help by providing information and participating in the discussion. But ultimately, the policy decisions and the politics of this city is driven by the mayor and council and so, as I have found, departments that I think are outside those lines, I have been gently saying to them, that's not our job. Our job is to provide a professional recommendation Ann and it's for

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the council to weigh all the to have their judgment in terms of whether those recommendations are accurate or not, weigh the input from the community in terms of what we ought to be doing or not be doing.

>> So in your view, are you suggesting that what the equity office and civil rights office have been operating have been outside of.

>> I'm not suggesting anything I said. As I said, as I have been manifesting and exerting my authority within this organization, I haven't certainly done it, not done it with I've done it in other areas , but I've not done it here. But I think part of this the job that you guys asked me to do was to become more responsive as an organization, to try to be more professional, as an organization, to not be putting council members in a political in a political corner. So that you have I don't we don't intend to do that. I think what we've got to do is not play the politics to be professional and I know there are people that are wanting us to advocate for things. Our job is to make a professional judgment, a professional recommendation, but to not be the advocates for something that we think is

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outside our purview.

>> And so and that may make some people who may be doing that, I don't know that they are, but may be doing that.

>> They may be. That's just going to be a different a different approach and a different emphasis. But I don't think it's fundamentally different than what we should be doing.

>> Well, thank you, manager, for your comments. I certainly would love to continue the conversation around the proposed changes. What gives me a lot of pause right now is understanding the state climate that we're in. You know, knowing that the state legislature has banned diversity and inclusion courses at universities across the state. For me, you know, I'm thinking through what type of message does it send as a city for us to consolidate these very three important divisions. And so I just want to be able to talk through that with you and our community. So I appreciate your commitment to, you know, having those community meetings. Yeah, absolutely.

>> Councilmember Kelly, thank you.

>> I just want to take a step

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back real quick from the meeting and just say to my daughter, who's at home watching happy birthday today or tomorrow is her 14th birthday. And I am just so proud of her and the beautiful, bright young woman that she's turning into. She's often here at city hall with me. And so if you've seen her, you know that she's at least interested in what mommy does. And I'm very much looking forward to being the mom of a freshman at Westwood high school this year. So thank you very much for the recognition.
Mayor

>> Certainly. And I'll say to your daughter too many times, we're interested in what mommy's doing. So. I tease councilor member harper-madison. You're muted. Please. Unmute it.

>> Can you not hear me? Yep.

>> Now we can.

>> I've had the opportunity to sit across at a gala table with the young Westwood warrior and let me just tell you, we're going to have somebody who's a

[1:10:56 PM]

real fire starter just like her mama so happy birthday, baby girl. Thank you.

>> Council member.

>> Anybody? Yes, councilmember Allison alter.

>> Happy birthday, Rebecca. Freshman year is a fun year. I wanted to ask some questions about the organization. Let me start with the equity office and the other offices there. So I want to understand. So we are combining the three offices under an umbrella and what will the status of the person who's over the three offices be and what will the reporting structure? Because if I I'm not sure I know that the equity officer serves in the executive capacity. I'm not sure if the civil rights officer also does that. But

then you have a director for over someone who's serving, an executive who's not on there. So can you clarify how you're thinking about that?

>> Sure. Happy to. Yeah, happy

[1:11:59 PM]

to. First of all, there's a tradition in the city of Austin when offices are combined that those those serving in those capacities that were previously be standalone continue to have the status that they had before. And we intend to utilize that model again. And there was some concern that this somehow did not that these would cease reporting to me. Well, I came on board in the middle of February. These offices did not report to me. They reported to an acm and they will continue. So this new unit is going to report to an acm, but it's in the city manager's office in terms of in terms of it will be an assistant city manager. That would be the layer between me and those offices. But on any issue, when it is that our office, specifically my office, needs to be involved, will be involved. And in terms of going to department head meetings, they'll continue to attend department head meetings. They'll continue to be able to make presentations to our executive staff on things that

[1:13:00 PM]

we that they think are important in terms of that sensitivity, that we may not have as an organization. So that'll that kind of work is going to continue. Snbr the small and minority business affairs office , even though the because of the judgments that are being made at the courts, we're we're having to adjust that. And we made a there was a plan or not a plan, but an item adopted this last week where we're going to have to make some adjustments. But that office continues to be at the forefront of trying to open doors for business for people who have just not been able to have the city contracts or city resources that they previously had and the office of civil rights people continue to make their complaints the way they do now. And my office will be involved when that officer deems it appropriate for me to be involved. So I don't really see any functional difference than what's happening now. Now what I think will be different rather than just reporting relationships is you have three offices that that have a unique perspective and a work program

[1:14:01 PM]

that is very that that are actually have a lot of synergy and when we develop our goals or objectives then measurables of what we're trying to achieve in each of those units they'll be able to work together to get that done. And it'll be a greater cooperation that they have now and they'll be able to work across the departmental, I mean across all departments as they deem appropriate to make sure that we make

the advancements that are needed. And I will say that there are some things in terms of implementation Ann that are that are dear, near and dear to this council about that relate to equity, that we've been very slow on, even with an equity office, I can point to the example of colony park where it sat basically idle because we did not move with the dispatch that the council wanted us to just the other day I got a chance to go to lakeside, which is the little community just east of colony park. We've had all kinds of departments go to

[1:15:02 PM]

that neighborhood and fundamentally we've not been able to deal with just basic sanitation, public safety and code issues in an effective way with that community. We even though we have been there again , I think that when I said a minute ago how I'm going to get involved, I want to get involved when I think that we've not moved in the way we've needed to move with with enough dispatch and unity of purpose. And I think that's what our intent is. And again, it's not to diminish, but to add it's additive, not diminishing. Thank you.

>> I appreciate the clarification. And I imagine we'll continue this conversation in various ways. I did also want to ask about the sustainability office and the resilience office being moved into planning. And if you can better communicate your vision and how they will be empowered to do the work that was envisioned for both those office, the sustainability

[1:16:02 PM]

office predates my time on on council. The resilience officer was something that council member pool initiated and I co-sponsored. These are, you know, offices that have been really stepping up as we're dealing with climate change and the challenges for our community. And I'd like to just better understand your rationale , what you're envisioning and how you see this, empowering them to advance the work that I think we all want to see advanced.

>> Yeah. Let me take a step back in terms because one of the things that's that's a common thread with all these offices is that when you're, you're out there as a single office with a relatively small staff, it is really difficult to get not just get air time, but to make the progress inside a large complex organization simply because you just don't have the that necessarily that capability. So I think one of the things is by combining and bringing into larger departments is to have a greater emphasis and greater really force to make to make

[1:17:04 PM]

things happen with respect to equity, not equity, but sustainability and resilience. When we do when we begin the planning function that we just separated the department from housing so that we can do a singular focus about a plan, reimagine Austin or whatever the Wright title will be when we get into that work. Is that these two offices resilience and sustainability will be part of that process, and part of it is to not to not have something that sits outside of that plan, but inside the plan. And then we get the resources that are going to be necessary to achieve the objectives that the community wants. And I think, again, it's because that that process in terms of sustainability, I started we started to focus in my office just recently through the budget process so that we could understand and what we really need to do to move the needle. And I think now then being with those offices, being part of the planning department will be able to have the right focus. We're working on a lot of

[1:18:05 PM]

different things that affect land use, but it also ought to affect the sustainability issue. It should affect how we connect across the organization for a whole host of things with the watershed department, with the water department, with the energy department. So there's things that we're going to be able to do differently. And we've done in the past because they'll be part of that larger organization. And our intent is to have a better system and a better approach to achieve the objectives that we need to. And so that's I mean, that's the reasoning. And I think that I've had a chance to talk to our interim sustainability officer, Zach. He's recommended a book to me, which I'm reading. I've recommended a book to him for him to read, and we're going to get together to figure out how we how we can work better together. And then and Laura's, she's in our office now and I visit with I at least see her 2 or 3 times a week. So I think I'll continue to do that. And I think that they understand what we're trying to do. And I think they're going to understand what it means to play team ball.

>> And there are a couple of other offices that were combined. So we have labor relations and cmo. Can you also speak to those labor relations?

[1:19:07 PM]

>> We I think that's I mean, maybe somebody can enlighten me. I think that's sitting wherever it was before I, I didn't combine it. I wasn't I've been combined.

>> But there was an organization.

>> But the office, the office of the to the. Daniel the innovation office.

>> That's an innovation office. I was asking about labor relations.

>> Yes. Good afternoon, mayor and council. Rodney Gonzalez, assistant city manager. Labor relations is still underneath me . It will be a part of human resources which is underneath me . But human relations, labor relations will be a part of human resources and. I'll take that off line.

>> And then. Thank you.

>> Councilmember Ryan ultra and I have a question related to the hr since we're talking about a little bit with APD, and I can wait until we get to that point if you think that'd be better or

[1:20:09 PM]

I can ask it now.

>> I just I don't know what why don't we why don't we see if some questions might be answered perfect in the presentation or, or combined or whatever.

>> And, and then I think it'll be a more complete opportunity. So I'll recognize the table in front of me. Mr. Benigno, if you want to start us off, I would like to start us off.

>> Mayor and just a few additional pieces of context I'd like to provide in light of the community testimony that we recently received and one of them had to do about rental assistance. We heard from a number of folks about a reduction in rental assistance funding. And so the context on that funding was, of course during the covid years when there was such an economic turmoil and we had federal funds coming in, we were able to ramp up, allocate some of those dollars to rental assistance programs to help people keep people in their homes as those dollars dried up as part of the fiscal year 23 budget staff proposed allocating \$5 million of one time dollars to allow

[1:21:09 PM]

those programs to continue. From the Dyess council increased that one time allocation to \$8 million just last night, council meeting, council approved the contract to begin on allocating those dollars out. So I think it was the actual number was \$7.8 million. That's the contractual amount we're working to finalize that contract with the vendor. And once that once that's in place, those dollars will start being expended during the course of next fiscal year. Now I think there absolutely needs to be a council discussion maybe here this this this budget cycle about whether those one time dollars should be made into ongoing dollars and how we're able to fund that. But the previous allocation from council in fiscal year 23 was one time that contract was just approved and the dollars are going to start flowing out in the months ahead and extending into next fiscal year a couple of things about the police department budget. I know there's a lot of interest in that. And there is a substantial increase in the police department's budget. But

[1:22:09 PM]

I do want to highlight none of that's related to increasing sworn personnel staffing. There is, of course, 11 positions we're proposing in the training division related to the Kroll report recommendation and changing our approach to cadet training. So we're funding that. There is \$1.2 million in the budget to continue van eenoo the Kroll report work to do the next phase of that work that money is in the management services budget. So the money to do the study as it's always been, will be controlled by the management services group to make sure we're getting the results that we want and that we have that separation between APD and the folks that are doing the study. But the implementation of the study training related matters, we did put that in the police department's budget. Some of the other factors driving the increase are what we call built in cost drivers. They kind of just are what they are. And so in fiscal year 23, in recognition of the fact that we had such high attrition and we

[1:23:10 PM]

had such growing rate of police , sworn police vacancies, there was a 4% wage increase that was offered to our police officers, I believe that was in around March. And so part of the increase is we now need to annualize that amount in not not in this current session but the prior session. I think it was the 87th session. We were really fortunate to get significant reforms made to the police retirement system. They were essential reforms. They were reforms that lowered benefits for new hires and increased member contributions. But it also increased the city's contribution substantially. So 7 million of that increase is statutorily required. City contributions to the police retirement system. And then you will see one one speaker I remember spoke about the building services people being moved back into the police department budget. What had happened previously is we moved our building services positions , human resources. A lot of the support positions as we moved the ftes out of the department

[1:24:13 PM]

and put them into either the human resources department or the building services department . Those people still continue to do the work they were doing for police and through our cost allocation methods, which we have to follow, rules in terms of how we allocate the support costs out. Since those positions were fully supporting the police department, they still ended up paying for it in their budget was the same. So that that idea of putting the positions in there, it does increase the police department's wages, but it lowers their their share of the cost allocation. And so it nets out to zero. And so I think those are just some of the things we heard from the speakers that I thought I could address. And if you want to get back into the conversation about the reorgs, I'd be happy to speak about our experience in the financial services department, about how how we reorganized and became one single department. But I still have a budget officer, executive level position sitting right next to me who's responsible for the city's budget. And so I could maybe provide some context about why we did that in

[1:25:14 PM]

financial services and how it's worked and why I think we're getting a better result as because of that combination. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Carrie. Remember today's focus is on the general fund. We've got another work session scheduled next week where we're going to deep dive into the enterprise departments. But Carrie is going to give us a review of a little bit deeper dive than she did last week. Onto the general fund department . We have a lot of directors behind us. Our our suggestion would be to kind of do it in chunks. And so we'll talk about is it community services first, we'll first talk about our community services department and then maybe pause and have council discussion about that, then move on to public safety departments, pause, have a conversation about that. If that works for the council, if that works, and with the comments you just made, I think we're going to need to take a minute and have a couple of other questions.

>> Of course. And yeah, I got him. I got him. I'm going to first call on, councilmember Ryan alter and then councilmember vela. So I just want to follow up on one thing

[1:26:14 PM]

you just said there, related to the air cost allocation rules are those are rules, the state's rules.

>> What what were those rules?

>> There are federal guidelines . Sorry, there are federal guidelines regarding cost allocation plans. They're called the office of management and budget or omb, 87 rules. And so organizations like the airport and how are we taking the support cost and equitably, fairly allocating them out to the departments we allocate out a fair share to the airport. If we if we allocated more more cost to the airport, for example , these staff that only support the police department, if we were to allocate some of those costs to the airport, the FAA, if they were to come in and audit our plan, would say, what are you doing? Those people aren't aren't supporting the airport department. So the way we usually allocate costs is know for, you know, for information technology we might allocate out that cost center by the number of personal computers , pcs that a department has. If you have a lot more employees and a lot more pcs, you're going

[1:27:15 PM]

to pay a larger share of that. Of that internal support function for finance. You know, it might be accounts payable, you know, we would allocate out that cost center based upon how many transactions you have. And so particularly with regarding federal grants, we have to be really real careful that we do everything in accordance with the a87 guidelines.

>> And so as it relates to these hr positions, were they in the police department at one point we moved them out and they were in the police department and their wages were in the police department.

>> Then we moved them to hr but allocated all of that cost right back to the police department. So it didn't change their budget at all. And now we're proposing to put the positions back into the police department. Their allocation will go down, but their wages will go up. So in if we left it the way it was, where we continue to allocate the cost to the police department, but we keep them within hr, would that still comply with the omb guidelines?

>> Yes. Yes.

>> Okay. Thank you, councilman.

>> But I'd like to add one of the reasons we did that council

[1:28:16 PM]

member was is the hr function wasn't working. We had police officers that were not paid overtime time and for overtime that they worked the dedication or the focus of that office. Once it left, the police department was under different supervision, did not work as well. That's why we made the decision to so that it would be under the authority of the chief of police and that administration. We did the same thing with building services. And so and that was so that it would be we would have a more effective functioning area. And so that's an aside from the from the guidelines, accounting guidelines, but it was more of a operationally why we did it.

>> Councilmember Vella, then councilmember qadri. The \$7.8 million in rental assistance from that comment, then we have not spent any of that money as of this point.

>> We're just contracting out

[1:29:16 PM]

with the vendor that is correct . What did we have other rental assistance monies that we have been using prior to that? You know, separate and apart from that allocation.

>> Councilmember, I need to defer that to our housing department. If they have the answer and are here.

>> Okay. I just wanted to clarify because we, we budgeted that money. I mean, September 1st it kicked in, but that was an August decision. And councilmember, I think we owe you we owe the you and the council an answer as to why something that was appropriated and beginning October of last year, beginning this fiscal year, why it took us the time frame, it did.

>> I don't need to get into that discussion right now, but we will we will provide you that information.

>> Ann appreciate that.

>> Councilmember qadri thank you, mayor.

>> I'm pretty sure I know the answer to it, so I'll make it really quick. But the, the project, it's not being extended

[1:30:16 PM]

for a second year. Is that correct? The basic basic. Correct that it has not been extended.

>> Great.

>> Thank you.

>> Councilmember Allison alter.

>> Thank you. I just wanted to clarify something with my colleague Ryan alter's comment. So even if you kept them in support services, the cost, which is the thing I think that is concern which is increasing, which is part of APD's budget would stay the same because you'd be allocating that cost right back. Yeah. To APD so they wouldn't have the ftes, but they would still have the cost. So moving those positions around and as long as you're following the guidelines, the federal guidelines for cost allocation, you're not reducing APD's budget in any way the way that that's being handled now.

>> That's correct. Okay

>> Thank you.

>> In terms of the shift, the only you know, for the I have

[1:31:18 PM]

some experience in this, too, because the financial group, about 20 finance related people and police, the people that process their transactions and payroll and time slips for one year. They reported to me. But you know, their budget was still allocated back to the department. The people that supported the department still sat in the police headquarters supporting them. The only thing, you know, technically difference was their fte count showed as part of financial services and they reported to me, quite frankly, that reporting arrangement of having the folks that support the police department report to me was somewhat of a disconnect.

>> Can you also provide us with the year over year increase for APD and what you think accounts for that with actual sort of numbers? So some of it's the pension. Some of it's the wage, the 4% wage increase. Some of it is the 11 positions. You said it wasn't the Kroll report. What are the other pieces that are driving that difference?

[1:32:19 PM]

>> I mean, and just kind of big chunks. There's also was a one time incentive that was part of the retention package for police officers last year. But the incentive didn't kick in until this next fiscal year. That was \$2,500 per officer, and that's \$4.2 million. And then there was also the cadet incentive was another line item that was \$2.6 million of funding for fiscal year 24. As part of that program of incentivizing cadets. It was a \$15,000 total incentive, paid out in four chunks. If they made it all the way through their their field training. Okay

>> It would be perhaps helpful if we can have that those details in writing so that.

>> Yeah, I'd look at page 315 of the budget document. And if you need more details than that, we're happy to give it to you. Those are the significant changes. It doesn't reconcile to the penny, but those are the big chunks. But we can give you more details if you'd like them.

>> Councilmember Ryan alter and just so that I'm clear, kind of

[1:33:19 PM]

my concern is less about the top line number of the APD budget, but what the legal implications will be in terms of what information is and is not protected that that we heard about from some of our testimony today.

>> So I'm sure that's something we can dive into. But that's that is my concern, not on the function, but on what are the rams allocations.

>> Okay. Before before we do what we he said we were going to do, I want to recognize state representative Cheryl Cole, who has joined us. She's also a former council member and mayor pro tem. So thank you for joining us. Always good to see you. And now I'll recognize you . Thank you, mayor.

>> Thank you, mayor and council Kerri Lang, budget officer. If we can go ahead and pull up the slides and I'll see if my clicker works today. So in

[1:34:23 PM]

addition to the conversation that has just been going on, we're going to talk about several things focusing on the general fund will go through the timeline again to talk about, you know, exactly where we are on the timeline, what the next steps are. And we'll do a quick general fund overview and then start digging into the department highlights and talk about some next steps. Again, and I'll go through this very quickly. Of course, today is the 26th. We're going to focus on the general fund. And then on August 1st, we will, along with the council setting the tax rate, we will have another work session where

we'll focus on our enterprise departments and then on August 10th, the council will then meet again and talk about your continued priorities and any amendments that you all have in preparation for us getting approved, document or approved budget on August 16th. So just looking at the quick general fund overview. This \$1.3 billion

[1:35:25 PM]

proposed general fund budget, this is just again showing the breakout of the different departments in the general fund . Public safety again is 62% of the total budget. And then you see the breakdown of the other departments. When you look at the others of 7.2, I just want to give a quick breakout. That municipal court is 3. The remaining animal services forensic science, housing and planning are each 1% of the total budget. And so we want to begin the conversations we're grouping them in different work functions. We're going to begin the conversations with community services that will include animal services, library, parks and recreation, Ann and we'll we'll kind of go through each department and as Ed mentioned, then take a pause. So if there are any questions regarding these departments that you all can have some discussion about what those questions are. And we have the directors here prepared to have dialog with you as needed. So when we look at the

[1:36:29 PM]

animal services budget, there are total proposed requirements. \$20.2 million is increasing for fiscal year 24. We have four positions that are converting temporary positions to permanent positions that will work directly with the animals. That one position that is set there to improve data reporting capacity as animal services has seen increased reporting requirements over recent years, this position will support that function and assist with technical assistance for their software. The animal behaviorist contract that is to be a stopgap. As you all know, it's been some difficulty for the department to find permanent permanent staff for the animal behavior. So this is a stopgap, one time funding for that function and then contracted funding for security officer for the animal shelter during their business hours just to increase security in that space. When we look at their revenue, they have we want to just as we're talking through the departments, we want

[1:37:29 PM]

to talk about the revenue related to each department. And so the total revenue for the animal services office in particular is \$2 million. The Travis county is relatively flat for fiscal year 24. And then we're seeing some decreases in the animal adoption fee revenue , but that's related to the waiving of fees when the shelter is at full capacity. Moving forward with public health, as we're looking at their \$122.9 million budget for fiscal year 24, we see that they have 1.5% increase. We are showing an increase in

their our ftes as well for the fiscal year, primarily due to the new dove springs public health facility that is currently scheduled for completion in the summer of 2024. That's seven new positions for that for that facility. Katy and then we see the \$1.2 million increase to fully fund the

[1:38:31 PM]

southbridge shelter operations as we will be having continued conversations. I know that there were questions last week about the homeless budget and the changes that are made year over year to that budget. We are prepared to come or we're preparing to come to you all and have a further discussion about the homeless appropriation and spending in particular. Next week as well. As you all know, there's an interplay between grants and capital and operating funding for homelessness. And so we want to make sure that we are, as we're having this discussion, we are really looking at, you know, the standardized methodology to show the spending year over year. And so next week we're prepared to have that come. We'll be prepared to have that conversation with you. In addition to that conversation, as we're looking at public health, you'll see the increase in the youth employment that was funded in fiscal year 23 as a one time. We are changing that or switching that over to ongoing funding for the youth employment living wage within

[1:39:31 PM]

the support services area of public health. We are seeing an increase in four positions within our finance and contract management division where they are looking to increase their dedicated personnel for their social service contracts. One one employee or one staff for medical billing and then one to address increase the increased financial workload that the department has seen. The position that is that you're seeing to streamline plan reviews is that is in their environmental health services division and it's going to be dedicated to the development services department's team that is working on streamlining the city owned cip review and then again, each each department that has revenue will kind of highlight what their overall revenue projections are. For fiscal year 24. It's 11.8 million for public health. They are anticipating a small reduction in in the Travis county Ila, but food permit

[1:40:31 PM]

inspection fees are anticipated to increase for fiscal year 23 and the other major revenue from birth certificate fees will remain flat. Looking at the cip spending for the public health department Swint again, I mentioned that dove springs will be completed in in the summer of 2024. It is 2018 brydan project. It will include wick office child care center immunization clinic and then the public health capital rehabilitation program for our capital. Oh, excuse me, capital rehabilitation fund is providing public health with 4 million of projects for hvac and roofs. That's at several of their locations, including

rosewood Zaragosa, blackland, south Austin neighborhood center and on the Betty Dunkerley campus, the domestic violence shelter

[1:41:31 PM]

will continue its work. It was the shelter was purchased in in April of 2022. And we are beginning design with construction planned to begin in 2024. Anticipated anticipated completion of the domestic violence shelter is summer of 2025. Moving forward to Austin public library, the \$70.3 million budget for fiscal year 24 includes an expansion of the enhanced library card program. The program is currently at southeast little walnut creek and saint John branches. It will be expanded to the central library. Cepeda and manchaca branches. And with this expansion that you're seeing here and then there are three custodial and maintenance positions that will allow for that work to be done across the different library system. And then as well, there are some security costs or security

[1:42:32 PM]

security investments that are being made where two positions are being used to increase safety as well as a contract with Travis county to provide service at central Teresa's and little walnut creek over the next fiscal year. Again, the revenue for Austin public library is \$657,000. The passport program is the largest revenue and is seeing a slight decline or decline in fiscal year 24. But the other revenue for the department is remaining relatively flat. As we think through the cip or we look at the cip spending plan for the library is continued work on the renovations to Falk library and other branch libraries, and that is going to be a total program cost or project cost of \$19.4 million. However, 6.9 million is anticipate dated in fiscal year 24. Again with the capital

[1:43:33 PM]

rehabilitation fund. There are several projects across the library that will look at renovations and improvements for those facilities and then funding for furniture and fixtures and equipments across several libraries as well. Parks and recreation has a \$125 million budget, which is an increase for fiscal year 24. We are seeing a small decrease of one position decrease in the parks department fte count and that is due to the implementation of elimination of positions that have been vacant for more than two years. However, there is continued investment in the parks department through this 1.2 million security grounds, maintenance and land management. I'll go through that a little bit more on the next slide. But we're also seeing the operations costs related to the opening of

[1:44:35 PM]

gibbons pool renovations and the new colony park pool, as well as increase in the funding. One time funding for the software, the recreational software for the department, the parks and recreation revenue is looking to increase or is anticipating to increase about \$3.5 million in the coming budget. And we're seeing overall all revenue for the parks department increasing to pre-pandemic levels. And so we're just seeing, you know, more use of the parks, more involvement with our programs. And that's being that's being reflected in their increased revenue. So going back to that \$1.2 million investment that we're seeing, these are primarily for temporary staffing for the different areas to look at security improvement in particular. Is \$400,000. That includes temporary staffing and equipment grounds, maintenance. Again, temporary staffing to start working on the grounds

[1:45:37 PM]

maintenance needs for the for the department as well as the. 500,000 for temporary staffing equipment supplies and restoring restoration contractual services . As for the land management strategy. Part has a large cip program and this is just a portion of the items that are being invested through the cip program for the department. Again the aquatics, the pools that are being brought online, there is a \$10.5 million spending plan to complete colony park and gibbons. We are beginning work on phase two for the Mexican American cultural center. With that total 2018 bond project being \$32.5 million. Again, Barton springs bathhouse rehabilitation, Ann and several other capital rehabilitation projects across various recreational facility

[1:46:37 PM]

phases, including the millennial youth center. Those are all the community services department and work groups. And if council has any questions or want to have some discussion, we're happy to start that. Now.

>> Why don't we do that? Not good presentation. Thank you. And council member vela, I think you had a question. Is that correct?

>> I do have a couple of quick ones. I just wanted to also say that the layout on that presentation and the summary showing the top line with increase and the increase in ftes, and then the second page capital projects, that's just a really great simple, straightforward way to make the presentation. Props to staff for a very good job doing that. Quick question on the parks department. Does the do the revenues, do the revenues from the festival, do are those reflected in the parks

[1:47:38 PM]

department budget. Foundation

>> Yes, we have the director coming down to help us.

>> Hello, kymberley kymberley Mcneely, serving as the director for the parks and recreation department.

>> So the to answer your question, councilmember vela, the acl festival is a festival that is part of the Austin center for events program program. And so therefore that particular festival does pay its appropriate fees to the parks and recreation department for rental of the space and any associate ticket fees which are outlined in the revenue budget. I could look those all up very specifically. And then there's also a number of other reimbursement fees that are paid. So many other departments for ems services for the APD services, the fire, those sorts of things, the public safety services that allow that event to happen. So any of those revenues that are collected just like every other revenue that we

[1:48:39 PM]

have for a facility rental, is then entered into the general as part of the general fund. So it is reflected in that was it 17 point million dollars? Yeah. Yeah. Whatever. That 17.6, \$6 in revenue.

>> Okay, great. So and that was the, the fundamental question was the, the revenue that we do see from the acl festival is reflected in that \$17 million figure that was just shown.

>> Yes. Yes.

>> Okay. Even though so ace is the coordinating, I guess, department for, you know, lack of a of a better word. But ultimately parks is department that kind of receives a revenue . Is that correct? Yes

>> We receive we receive revenue for the spaces that are rented specifically for the implementation of that particular festival. So.

>> Okay, if we could get a detailed breakdown of that, that would be really helpful. Yes

[1:49:40 PM]

thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem.

>> I'm sorry, this question might also be for director Mcneely. I had been talking to council member Allison alter. I think our offices were talking about the land management and open space portion of this. And I know the city manager spoke to it at a previous meeting, but can you help me understand a little more about what positions are identified in that land management plan? Because I believe it has not

come to council yet, right. It's still in the board and commission phase or did a board or commission see it recently?

>> The parks board was able to review that. They reviewed that. They received a briefing some time ago and they received they voted actually a vote of approval to bring it forward to council in the future. But to answer your specific question, so the land management plan, the city the city manager's proposed budget are are proposed budget includes funding of about five, five, about half \$1 million, \$500,000 for land management specific work, including

[1:50:42 PM]

temporary staffing, equipment, supplies and restoration. And also, I can provide for you a five year plan of how we would build upon what we've doing this year so that for future years we would be able to build upon this year's work that would be inclusive of additional positions that particular plan does outline a number of positions. Burns and what we've done is we've been able to secure funding for this year and then build upon that for the next five years.

>> Okay. And so can you tell me when that's coming to council for approval or is it not yet determined and it will come probably sometime in September in order to accommodate everybody's schedules?

>> Okay. Okay. I'm curious about that.

>> And I understand that it takes some time to set up a new office or expand the positions that are already there, because we already have. I think, one fte working in that space right now. Is that correct?

>> So in our land management, we have three ftes. We have somebody who who is the program manager. We have an individual specifically dedicated to the

[1:51:43 PM]

things that are throughout the park system that have to do with individuals experiencing homelessness. And we have another coordinator that is dedicated specifically to land management.

>> I see.

>> Okay. We may have some more questions on that through the q&a because I think some of us would be interested in making sure we've got those ftes allocated at the exact right point in time. Once the full plan is adopted. So that we can get that implemented and expanded. I know there's a lot of open space. That part has been able to purchase and we just need to make sure that as resource recovery and our emergency operations departments work through some of the issues that happen when there's freezes and storms and things of that nature that we've got enough staff for pard and other other departments to be available to mitigate for what happens. After all, the tree branches start breaking. Sure.

>> So if it's the will of the council, I'll provide the budget office the information associated with the five year plan. Okay. The five year staffing and budget plan. Not not the land management plan.

[1:52:44 PM]

>> Okay. I see that. That would be great for us to be able to evaluate. Thank you.

>> Councilmember Fuentes, then councilmember Ryan alter and then councilmember vela.

>> Thank you, colleagues. One of the issues that me and my team have been working on that I've had a chance to connect with councilmember Allison alter on, is a priority for us during this budget cycle is around our social service agreements that we have through the Austin public health department. We know that child care is a shared priority of this council and what we are seeing is that through the social service agreements that we have in place, including one of them with the ready families collaborative that serves about 2000 children in Austin, they have not had an adjustment for cost of living in the city since 2018. We know that inflation has gone up, demand has gone up, programmatic costs have gone up. And they the workers and the individuals providing these services are have a critical role with the with our children. And so we will be bringing forward a budget amendment that

[1:53:44 PM]

looks to provide a cost of living increase as part of those service provider contracts. So I just wanted to daylight one of our budget priorities.

>> Great. Thank you. Councilmember. Councilmember Ryan alter.

>> Thank you very much. I just have a first kind of global question to make sure I understand. I'm how I'm reading the document in the thousand page budget that you sent out on the table that talks about for the capital budget, there's a column that tells this year's appropriation and then later down there's a column about the spending plan. And I'm just those two numbers don't match up. But in this the number for the capital budget is related to the spending plan, not the appropriation. I'm just trying to understand what that difference is. How come if we're doing the capital budget, we're not appropriating that amount?

>> So when we appropriate dollars for the capital budget, we usually appropriate the full funds in one year so that we can

[1:54:45 PM]

make sure that even though these are multi-year years, because these are multiyear projects, we appropriate the full funding up front to make sure that the projects don't have a lull in between approvals. And so we appropriate the full amount. And then you'll see the spending plan each year based on how much of that full appropriation we plan on spending for the next fiscal year. And so what council approves is the new appropriation Ann and so what we saw for fiscal year 24, we're seeing \$1.8 billion in new appropriation Ann but spending is planned at 1.6 billion. This may be spending from previous years, appropriation or spending from the current appropriation.

>> Makes sense. Thank you very much. I have an animal services question. If I could ask real quick. How Lang chief animal services

[1:55:46 PM]

officer how can I help you? Good to see you again. I was lucky enough to come out and tour your space not too long ago. And my question is that we have some funding in here for new people and a new secured city office or security patrol individual and Ed. You know, when I went out, it felt like the greatest challenge was space that y'all were facing. So I just wanted to ask or understand, I know we need people to help. Do the services that you all are doing, those that critical work but is in the balance of people versus space. What is the real dire need right now that y'all are facing?

>> Well, currently we this budget and these appropriations for the additional staff get us to the standards for kennel that are required. So I think this this is a great first step for

[1:56:47 PM]

us to have the appropriate number of staff for the kennels that we have currently got.

>> It. Okay. That that's my question for you. I have another question for our pard for kymberley. Sorry, I should have . Wildfire mitigation. Is that not solely within pard or y'all? Also working with the fire department where so the parks and recreation department plays a role in fire wildfire mitigation specifically as it relates to parkland, we have resources dedicated in the land management portion, and we also utilize work crews. For shaded fuel breaks that are part of our triple C program.

>> And then you're absolutely

[1:57:47 PM]

right, there is other wildfire management activities that are happening throughout the city that we are part. We coordinate with, and that happens through the fire department also, Austin water has a does

some work that has to do with wildfire management and it's escaping me. But a watershed protection also does some some of that. So we are constantly coordinating with those other departments and Travis county and the state of Texas to be able to manage those activities, to mitigate wildfire risk.

>> Okay. I was at a neighborhood meeting last night over in Barton hills, and we had a good discussion about the Barton creek greenbelt and their wildfire mitigation and just some concerns from that community. So we can talk offline about that. And that those are my questions for this round. Thank thank you, councilmember.

>> Councilmember vela, then councilmember Velasquez.

>> Yes, director Mcneely, this

[1:58:48 PM]

is for you too. I just wanted to touch base about the.

>> There's a chair right there.

>> Okay, great.

>> Thank you, mayor.

>> So what what does the. I understand that we've got \$200,000 for shade structures in our parks. What does that \$200,000 get us?

>> So the 200. It's \$210,000. And that is going to provide us a shade structure for two specific locations that we indicated previously in an answer to a council question regarding how we what would be the two priorities I'm looking up right now, those two parks council member bell I just need one second. There is also a part of that memo which I'll be happy to resend to all the council members that it it showed a prioritization list of all the needed shade structures and that was based upon the budget rider that you all provided us last year to take a look at where shade was needed and to include both artificial shade structures

[1:59:49 PM]

or shade structures, and also where we might be able to plant trees and those sorts of things have more natural shade. Sorry I got a lot of stuff here. I apologize. Oh, no, you're all right.

>> And I think it's a ponciana neighborhood park in the buttermilk neighborhood park.

>> Yes, sir. You are right out, right?

>> Yes, sir.

>> So? So both of those those two particular locations will will utilize the full \$210,000. Okay

>> I will. I've got the memo in front of me. I'll look at the. The plan. I. I would prioritize. Honestly, my sense would be if we could give you 2 million for shade structures. I would like to give you as much as the department can realistically put up in a fiscal year. We needed it before. Obviously, this being one of the most brutal Summers we've ever had. It just highlights the need for shade structures. And again, I mean,

[2:00:50 PM]

the discussion that we're already having, having, but I really want to make an investment in shade structure so that our parks are usable through the summer months.

>> Thank you. Councilmember councilmember Velasquez.

>> Mike thank you, mayor. My question isn't for director Mcnealy. I had a question about make a run for it.

>> If I were you.

>> I had a question about the 2.2 million for capital rebuilding station. You had indicated that part of that was going to the millennium and do you have a dollar amount for that? The millennium actually is parks and recreation.

>> Oh, man. If you but if you could repeat the question, because I was doing something else because I thought, oh, I'm off the hook. So the 2.2 million for capital rehabilitation Ann is going capital rehabilitation projects.

>> Part of that was going to the millennium, is that correct?

>> Yes. So the millennium has a roof, a brand new ac Ada repair or Ada improvements. They also

[2:01:51 PM]

have some lighting improvements that are happening. And they they also just recently received some new flooring. I could list out all the projects for you, but those were off the top of my head. Thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem. I I didn't have my hand up. Oh, I thought you did. Sorry. I'm sorry. Council member Kelly did. I was going to go to her after, after the, the, the hand that you had up but and then councilmember Fuentes.

>> Okay, so it's my turn.

>> Yes, it is.

>> Thank you. I just wanted to double check. So council member Ryan alter, I just wanted to highlight that I have concerns about space at the animal center as well and question number 52 in our budget, Q and a is related to a second animal center to cost plan and build as well as staff. So I'm not necessarily considering that for this budget, but it would be nice to know so that we can kind of forecast that as we grow as a city. I absolutely believe we need the space and it hasn't been answered yet. So I'm not going to challenge any of our city staff to answer that in

[2:02:52 PM]

front of us today. But I did want to bring your attention to that. On slide four of the presentation, it talks about the, the police budget compared to all the other budgets. There's a nice pie graph. And so I'm not sure who should answer this, but I think it might be helpful for the community to understand why the police budget is one of the largest parts of the budget that we have. I think it's important also to know how much staff salary comes out of that budget as part of that percentage because of the number of personnel that are in that department. Is that something that you might be able to speak to? Mr. Van van eenoo yeah, I can speak broadly and tell you that I think the police department's budget is maybe, what, 36 point something percent according to that slide.

>> Overall, the public safety is around 62% of the total general fund budget. Neither of those numbers are are out of line with what you would see in other large cities. It will vary. Some and it's not an apples to apples comparisons because no two general funds are exactly the same. And a lot of most cities

[2:03:53 PM]

public works, for example, would be part of the general fund. Well, that changes the percentages, but just broadly speaking, something around 60% is not out of line with what you would see in other jurisdictions in terms of how much of the budget goes to public safety. And it really gets down to the mission. Wright the Austin energy is the biggest budget in the city and the scope of what they need to do, the services they're providing, you know, buying the power to run all the lights throughout the city. It's an expensive operation in the scope of the services and the 24 hour round the clock coverage provided by our emergency personnel is different than it is for other departments. The financial services department's budget would be three times as big as if we had to operate 24 hours a day. But we don't. So for all those factors, that's why it's not at all unusual to see that the largest percentage of a general fund budget going to those services.

>> I appreciate that and I know that other people in the community will appreciate it as well. So thank you for taking the time.

[2:04:53 PM]

>> And one more thing, particularly for our general fund departments and really for our for our public safety departments. You asked about the percentage of the money that goes to personnel budgets. It's 85, 90% for a for most general fund departments where it's really a service driven, you know, employee driven service as opposed to some of our utilities will have very, very large capital budgets and debt service budgets. But still the majority is staffing and those operations as well. But in in general fund departments and in particular public safety departments, you'll see 85 to 90% of the budget is for staffing.

>> Thank you very much for that explanation. And then lastly, I'd just like to say that I really appreciated seeing the annual animal behavior list position that we are contract ING for, that there is money allocated for that. That was something that we all approved that I brought forward in last year's budget. And I think that it will really help out the animal center, especially with some of those animals that are adoptable but have minor behavior issues that can be corrected. That's going to bring great value to our city. Thank you.

[2:05:53 PM]

>> Thank you. Councilmember councilmember Fuentes, thank you.

>> I want to join councilmember Bella in expressing my support for increasing the amount for shade structures in our city after this summer. We've had several weeks of record heat being in a heat dome for several weeks in Texas and in Austin. We know that with climate change worsening that we should be looking at becoming more resilient as a community in providing more shade. Structures will go a long way in ensuring that austinites are able to enjoy our city facilities and have a place to go during this extreme heat. So I would support you. Councilmember Bella, on helping increase the amount dedicated to shade structures. The question I have for director Mcnealy is around splash pads, something that an item that has come up from my community is wanting to get an additional splash pad in southeast. And I'm curious how much does that cost and any other considerations?

>> Burns so a splash pad can cost anywhere in upwards of one

[2:06:55 PM]

half million to more depending upon the site development that is required.

>> So what kind of Ada accessible is the infrastructure available at that particular location? I would have to I would have to go back and talk to my team to get you a better a better estimate. But that's what we would start with something small, very modest at a half million could be more depending upon all of the site development processes. That would have to happen. Okay good deal.

>> Thank you. And the other question I had was around the enhanced library card. I wish representative Cole was still here because I would share with her. She actually brought forward the first resolution back in 2014, keen on exploring the creation of a municipal id card. So I'm very happy to see that it's moved forward. It's taken us some time, but now we're at a point where we have a pilot program in place and this budget proposes that we expand to the enhanced library card. So I'm curious, do we have a list of the locations to which those

[2:07:55 PM]

the three additional libraries that will have the enhanced library cards?

>> I do. Give me one second to flip back. So the new expansion will be at central library. So Paige and manchaca. They are currently at southeast branch, little walnut creek and saint John branches, so it'll be six total. Wonderful thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem.

>> Sorry to squeeze in here. It's a quick follow up. Is the equipment necessary to do those ? Is that mobile in any way? Could there be pop ups at other city libraries or is it really hard to move those around? I'm asking specifically for Hampton branch.

>> I will have to defer to the library director weeks is here.

>> Good afternoon. Roosevelt weeks, director of the Austin public library. Yes, it is

[2:08:56 PM]

mobile. We are getting equipment that is mobile where we can move it around. But that equipment costs about \$10,000 per location and so we will have a mobile device to do that.

>> That's great to hear. I know district 8th may not have as high of a need as other districts, but I certainly have constituents that are interested and it's citywide.

>> There's a need citywide. Thank you. Thank you, mayor pro tem.

>> Thank you, director councilmember Allison alter. Then councilmember qadri, and then councilmember Ryan alter.

>> Don't go anywhere. Director weeks. Good afternoon. So I wanted to I have appreciate the presentation and I appreciate the issues that my colleagues have highlighted. I wanted to ask director weeks, we've had some conversations burns about the capital spending for the library and shortfalls relative to the need for some of the projects that were in the 2018 bond in. And we've been trying to get some clarity on some of

[2:09:57 PM]

those. But can you speak to what the gap is for some of those renovations? I know there was a group that old quarry was in how much of a gap is there still for that funding to actually do the projects where they need to be with the additional funding that we that we've gotten from the budget office, we are able to close that gap at old quarry library.

>> And so everything that we had planned for that facility, we will get done. Okay and that's including furniture and fixture .

>> Great thank you. May want to walk through all those numbers but and I hope that we can take care of the gaps that there are for any of the other libraries as well. Thank you. Mr. Weeks on that. I wanted to echo on Austin public health. What councilmember Fuentes mentioned about our interest in doing a cost of living increase for some of those child care related core contracts and then I wanted to turn to parks. So if director Mcneely can join us, that would be great. Thank you, mayor pro

[2:10:58 PM]

tem for raising the land management plan. And I certainly hope that this plan gets to us soon. I know I believe it was delayed because of the zilker discussion. Et cetera. And it's been to the parks board, the land management plan. We just. I'd call your attention colleagues, to a letter we just received from the Travis county fire marshal in support of this land management plan would remind you that this plan comes out of a 2019 audit of our wildfire risk and what we needed to do for wildfire prevention. It is the single remaining piece of advice that was in that audit that we need to do. It was directed by council to move forward with the plan and it is critical for our wildfire prevention. It's also critical for environmental climate change reasons and for use for our parks and preserves. And so I just want to underscore hand in the money that's allocated. There are no ftes in that that

[2:12:01 PM]

are assigned in the budget, in the proposed budget.

>> That is correct.

>> Okay. In your experience, is it easier to hire if you have a full time position than a temporary position to get the quality of person in those roles that you need to have to do the work and to be able to do it over time, especially in this kind of work environment.

>> And I think that given the amount of funding that we've we've had, we'll put together strategies to allow us to do the best that we can do with the funding that we've had. I think that I don't think it's a yeah, I think that I think that, yes, full time staff staff is a is helpful. However we are we will put together strategies that will allow us to hire the best qualified individual pool to get us through this timeframe until we can get to the next part of the budget, the next segment, the next tier of being able to then hire the additional staff, hopefully full time staff.

[2:13:02 PM]

>> So I'm looking forward to seeing the plan which I haven't seen in terms of the funding, but I will say that we have waited long enough if we are going on, I don't know how many days of 100 degree plus weather, we can no longer neglect taking care of these lands. It is a tinderbox waiting to happen without people in there. You said yourself we have three people in there. One is doing homelessness, one is doing something else like how many acres do we have that we're covering with this plan?

>> The department has approximately 10,000 acres of land that of open space land that we would would be covered under the land management plan.

>> So I very much think that we need to be accelerating implementation of this plan, and that includes having the full time staff. If anyone has tried to hire or has heard about the challenges that we're hiring, having for hiring, I think we will be much more effective in doing that with the full time ftes and we'll be looking at that. We just cannot wait on

[2:14:04 PM]

this. The other thing that I wanted to ask you about, Ms. Mcneely, is the cip spending from the last year. Can you tell me, do you know how many acres of parks and parkland, greenbelts, etcetera we've added over the last year?

>> I don't know that number off the top of my head. A lot. Not that doesn't answer your question. Something on the order of 500 acres sound about right?

>> Yeah.

>> I would have to ask my team to. They might be texting me as we speak. If you'd like to go on to the next question. And I bet you they will. They will let me know what the answer is.

>> Okay. My next question is how many new maintenance positions did you get this year?

>> We received temporary funding for maintenance positions and vehicles that we would be able to money to be able to purchase some vehicles, I beg your pardon? Rent some vehicles to allow us to effect be able to move through the system to supplement our maintenance. Yes.

>> Okay. So when you have the

[2:15:08 PM]

answer for the land, I'd like to continue the conversation about maintenance. My sense is that there is a very large gap between the amount of land that has been taken in which still needs to be mowed, still needs to be taken care of. And if we don't want tinder boxes, we have to address that. And that's not even to mention like mowing fields so people can play and other kinds of things that we have to be putting more resources into for the maintenance. So I'd love to have that number and we can see the discrepancy there. In terms of what you're getting, we brought this up before our last year with the capital for park not being known the o&m expenses that go with the capital for park not being taken care of. And I appreciate that positions were added or opportunities were added for given and colony park and the Mac. But we have land that gets brought into our system and we have absolutely no allocations that are taking

[2:16:08 PM]

place for how we're servicing that land and we have large amounts of it. We cannot address issues like greenbelts that are wildfire risk without taking care of these places.

>> So we have 25 new properties that were purchased, purchased via using parkland dedication funds and that totaled about 438 acres of land. We did purchase some land using bond funds. I don't have that number here, but you suggested an acreage of 500. That's probably very close. Councilmember yeah. So city manager I would just suggest that we're bringing in 500 acres and we're not providing the resources equivalent that we need to take care of them and then we're being asked to kind of wait on implementation or to slow roll the start of the implementation of the land management plan.

>> And I don't think that's addressing the needs that we have in our system and investing in the future for both for our park users, but also for climate

[2:17:09 PM]

change and wildfire resilience. So I think we need to be thinking about this. One of my colleagues pointed out, you know, let's take a look at the fee. S and what's been added. And, you know, every other department has on this sheet got an increase. Pa did not. And yet we took in 500 acres of land. So something is off here and I think we need to be putting more resources to take care Shaw so what what I might suggest for just for consideration is that when we do get full time positions, it does take a certain amount of time.

>> They're funded at three quarters of a mound, right? And then it takes a certain amount of time for us to be able to hire those individuals. And so from a standpoint from where I'm standing, the reason why temporary funding is also acceptable in this year as we gear up for the future years is because it would take us some time to be able to hire those those full time employees

[2:18:10 PM]

through our processes. And so I hear you loud and clear, councilmember. I just want to make sure I give you some assurances that this is very important to us and that we will do the best that we can and be as strategic as possible with our temporary funding. There's still opportunities, though, you know, to say that that's not enough funding.

>> You could be you could be contracting out certain pieces of this. I mean, we're just falling, falling and falling behind in what we need to go. And I understand that that is the line that you need to tell us. But we have to make choices about the investments that we're making in our park system and in the future for climate change.

>> Councilmember qadri, I have more comments and questions, but I want to go off of what councilmember Zavala and Fuentes had mentioned about the streets , the shade structures I was looking.

>> It's been in the triple digits for god knows how long. I think in a day or two it's going to be a very cold 99 degrees. So thank god. But outside of that, you know, we're safer. We're

[2:19:11 PM]

suffering from heat like we've never seen before. So, you know, I think working on getting shade structures out at bus stops would be great. I had an opportunity to travel a bit during a few a few weeks back, and I saw in certain cities where they had structures. Shade structures at bus stops, but also had missed. That was like almost continuous for I never saw it stop and I think that could bring a relief to a lot of folks who either might take shelter. You know, at that bus stop or might be waiting for a bus to come by the other comment I just wanted to quickly make and I don't need director Mcnealy to get up, but we all know about the tragic incidences that had happened around Rainey street. You know, very thankful for the interim city manager, Garza and his staff and the mayor and his staff on helping with that. But but very thankful for director Mcnealy and your role in making everything as good as it can and working with

[2:20:11 PM]

the families. And I saw in the proposed budget, there's already funding for the you know, you know, the trailhead, you know, projects. So I just want to say thank you. And I feel like we don't say that enough to you. And so many other departments. But, you know, from the bottom of my heart, everything around that area, like, thank you so councilmember Ryan alter well, this might get a little old, but I too, just wanted to echo the shade structures.

>> I have two young kids. My youngest, Atticus Burt, is also tomorrow while he's turning two. So not not quite high school, but the number one question when we are deciding which park to go to is which one has shade. There's a reason we go to garrison. There's a reason we go to dick Nichols. It's because they are not going to say, I can't get on this slide. It's too hot and so every child across the city should be able to have that. And we know right now that's not the case. And so

[2:21:12 PM]

anything we can do to increase at all our neighborhoods, being able to have those parks is essential. And that's doubles for splash pads. We love to go to the splash pads and all all our kids and all corners of the city should have that ability. And so I just I can't stress that importance enough. I do have one one follow up question on. Park rangers. Someone asked me the other day if we still have park rangers and I didn't know the answer to that question. Do we have park rangers?

>> Yes, we do have park rangers.

>> We have 20 park rangers as park rangers by design. And from the inception of the program, back in 2010, our individuals who have voluntary compliance authority with the exception of writing parking tickets so they are able to monitor the park and

[2:22:13 PM]

ask individuals to voluntarily comply, voluntarily comply with rules. They don't have a resting authority. They don't have the authority to ask individuals to present id or to identify themselves. They are in many cases, they are effective in educating individuals by why it's important for them not to throw their trash or why we wouldn't want you to smoke in a park. But there are some levels of things that happen in the park that I think our community would like for our park rangers to address, and they do so to the best of their ability through voluntary compliance.

>> And do you totally switching gears, but another question I had for you. Do you have as it relates. To when I I'm thinking water management for our parks. The other day I was driving by one of our parks and the it was 1 or 2:00 in the afternoon, the sprinkler was on and it seemed to me not the best time to be watering the lawn. Now maybe it was new sod so it needed, I

[2:23:14 PM]

don't know all the details. Right. But do we have somebody in your department who who is responsible for or kind of looking at our policies and practices as it relates to our resource use, whether that's water or electric city to make sure we are minimizing that resource use? I don't know that we specifically have a single person.

>> I think that in the case that you're speaking of, we everybody is responsible for using resources responsibly and to be considering the climate and the situation that we're in. I would have to say that was likely very much a mistake. And now everybody knows about it. So guess what? We'll make sure that doesn't happen again. But it is very helpful when people do see that. Just to call me directly or let me know so that we can take care of it because you never know. Sometimes controllers, if they're on an automatic controller, it just gets messed up or something of that nature. Thank you.

>> With that council, we'll go to the next part of the budget presentation and I'll recognize our panel.

[2:24:16 PM]

>> Thank you, mayor. Now we'll move forward with neighborhood services and we'll begin the discussion with our housing department. And this slide reflects a decrease in the housing department's proposed budget with the splitting of housing and the planning department. And so you'll see 58 positions are moving into the reestablished planning department. However, there are three new positions that are being added to housing to reflect the needs and to make sure they have the baseline support that they need as a newly separated department. We want to kind of talk a little bit more. There was some questions about anti anti displacement investments and what we're seeing in the budget for fiscal year 24. And so the housing department has to primarily fund primary funding sources to address anti displacement project connect funding include, you know, funding for the acquisition, \$11

[2:25:16 PM]

million for the acquisition of land and preservation of land for future major affordable housing efforts. And along the project connect lines and then 5.5 million for programs and strategies that need to stabilize and maintain existing residents along those lines. \$2 million to develop a long term affordable renting and ownership housing program connected to project related to project connect out within the housing trust fund, there is the 800,000, about \$750,000 for emergency tenant relocation and that is part of the housing trust fund. And operating and capital housing trust fund. And then we have here the displacement prevention navigator. That is not new investment. That's ongoing funding. It's a pilot program that will continue funding or will continue going on through fiscal year 24. When we look at

[2:26:17 PM]

our cip spending for the housing department at the spending plan includes \$87.2 million to cover the rental housing development assistance, ownership, housing development assistance and rental housing development assistance continuum of care. These two photos here show a couple of those projects and one is the live make live, make apartments and go in the go valley neighborhood that has 62 units under 60. Mfi and then the city heights and dove springs has 179 units under 80. Mfi and 128 units under 60. Mfi and both of those are part of both the 2018 and the 2022 bond public improvement bond programs. Moving on to planning as a newly reestablished department that they are receiving about 58

[2:27:18 PM]

positions to restore that department, as well as new positions for the sustainability and resilience office and then some support positions for current and long term long term planning in that department. The \$1.6 million in revenue that you see here reflects the revenue that was separated in the housing is just moving into the planning department as a new department, and that revenue is estimated to remain pretty flat for fiscal year 24. Looking at cip spending for the planning department, that 25 year update to the great streets plan that's focused on the downtown Austin area streetscapes and this is to begin that update process. So it will the department will start that planning in fiscal year 24. The 1.1 million for the northeast Austin district. It anticipates fully expanding that project cost in fiscal year 24

[2:28:18 PM]

and is for the long term plans for investments, regulations and public private partnerships in that northeast Austin district. And finally, I think there was a question about the funding for itod plan for fiscal year 24, and that's the 500,000 that you see there. So now we're opened up for discussions on our neighborhood services council members.

>> Councilmember Fuentes, thank you.

>> I appreciate the spotlight on our efforts regarding anti-displacement. One thing that I noticed that was in the highlights sheet in the budget was 600,000 Eid in one time funding to mitigate displacement of small businesses and I'm wondering if someone can speak to the or is that, I guess that would be in a different department update perhaps since it's small business. Where did you see that this is on? Well, I have a it's the significant new

[2:29:20 PM]

investment section of the budget. I think it's like page 40, 41, 42, 43.

>> Give me a second. Let us get there. For and as you're pulling that up, you know, I think what I'm curious about what we can do more of is how we're helping the iconic businesses of Austin, but also just your local mom and pop shops stay part of the city.

>> We know that Austin is evolving and growing and there's a lot of changes happening. And so trying to better understand what we can do here locally to help those small business owners stay in Austin.

>> Thank you. Council member. And that funding is in the economic development department and so we will have them here next week to have that conversation. Okay. Okay thank you.

>> Well, I guess preview to Eid

[2:30:23 PM]

. Mayor pro tem.

>> Thank you. I appreciate the call. Out to the 500,000 for the equitable transit oriented development planning efforts. Is this all the positions that were mentioned in the memo that director Middleton Pratt had put out? I can't remember the number if it was four or 5 or 6 ftes. Is that covered under this 500,000. She's coming up. I good afternoon.

>> Mayor and council Lauren Middleton Pratt planning director. So the 500,000 is just cip. That does not cover any new fte positions.

>> Okay. Are there ftes that are added within the other parts of this budget? No knowledge. No, ma'am. Okay so maybe I'll put in a Q and a about how that works with no ftes, but cip money.

>> Okay.

[2:31:24 PM]

>> We do have staff in that department, in that division. We're just not getting new ftes for that effort.

>> Okay. Okay. That makes more sense. Do you know how many staff are currently in those positions right now? And they're all filled right now? Yes, ma'am. Okay. Thank you. You're welcome.

>> Thank you. Thank you. Mayor pro tem councilmember Ryan alter , and then councilmember vela, then councilmember harper-madison.

>> I have a question for our housing staff. Actually, I have two questions, but. My question is, first off, hello. How much of any of our investments through our various incentive or incentive programs, the wrong word are assistance programs are return funds. So they're loans that were paid back in some form .

>> So that is a change that Rosie Truelove, director of the housing department, that is a change that we have implemented in the last couple of years to have our funds be instead of

[2:32:25 PM]

deferred forgivable loans, they're now repaid at the completion of the affordability periods. So those funds have not started recycling back. We do have a couple of instances and I'd have to get you specific projects or dollar amounts where we have been in a position where the bond loans have been paid back, but we don't see that coming in until many, many, many years down the path. Well, I was really excited to see that \$5 million in the new revolving loan fund that I think is a really great idea that I know the mayor has pushed for that allows us to recycle those funds and continue to make new investments with the same dollar multiplier.

>> So that's going to be and that will be in partnership with the Austin community fund. And my second question relates to the housing trust fund. Is that pretty much a not in terms of how we would think of a trust as having a corpus and spinning off money. But really it's a pass through dollars come in, dollars go out, correct. Okay. That's my question.

[2:33:25 PM]

>> Councilmember Vela, then Councilmember Harper-Madison, Director Truelove, the question, I think, or for you to dovetail off of, Councilmember Ryan Walters question on, how much is in the housing trust fund, give me a second to see if I have that piece of paper printed and Mandy, if you can answer and just thinking.

>> But I was just, along with that and I believe these funds are under and again, I don't need an answer, but I think, my, my sense of the, of the dice is that we, we want to continue with rental assistance. I know there's a discussion of do we need to go ahead and just kind of, you know, put out a portion of rental assistance into the budget, you know, year after year, regardless of, you know, the source of federal funds, you know, but with that, I think just in an accounting may be the wrong word, but just a presentation about where, you know, are those funds because I know we have different sources and I know, for example, like

[2:34:25 PM]

the Abilene and Austin, program has continued to operate. So if we could get a breakdown of exactly where we are with those monies, how much is left, how much is carried over those kinds of things like that, I think then we could make a better and sharper decisions as we're engaged in in this budget process.

>> Absolutely. We will include that as part of q&a. We have a large number of the dollars that are part of the housing trust fund come in through our density bonus programs, and they they have restrictions on them for what we can use them for. Some of them are geographic, some of them are program related and we'll be happy to provide some more information about that rather than go through a large number of data points from the podium.

>> Councilmember, the whenever you get it just the total number in the housing trust fund, whether he or on the budget is fine.

>> Thank you.

>> Yeah we'll do thank you.

>> Councilmember councilmember harper-madison. Yeah.

>> Thank you, mayor, for the recognition. But again, Ann,

[2:35:25 PM]

like I've said before, it shouldn't let these brilliant people go before me because then they ask all my questions. Will ask the planning director. Well, first of all, I'll start with saying thank you for your collaboration with our approaching the northeast Austin planning effort. Really excited to see that that's being highlighted in your department, in your department's budget. My question is though, the \$3 million that committed to do comprehensive planning updates, can you expand on that allocation please?

>> Yes. So we are looking forward to doing extensive community engagement at hire on a consultant to help us look at our existing Zones, existing plans that we have in Eid in the document today and help us to expand and work with the community to update our current imagine Austin plan in really

[2:36:26 PM]

appreciate that response.

>> And I don't know if you're still counting down the days how long you've been here, what what day number.

>> Ah, I shouldn't have I'm sorry.

>> Well, I will say, you know this northeast Austin planning effort is specifically directed at, you know, just reconciling for historic disinvestment and I hope that we continue to make it a priority. Katy I really appreciate the efforts that you've put forward in your however many days it's been, and just recognize that there are some things that I'm not hearing us talk about that that caused me pause. And so I appreciate my colleagues questions about exactly what we're talking about when we talk about historic

disinvestment and displacement dollars and I wish that we were having more conversations about assets in the community that are

[2:37:27 PM]

city held assets that were not putting any dollars towards that are absolutely planning housing and land development issues. So what I'll do is I'll spare you, you know, the right now, but my staff will definitely be in touch. The other question that I would have is so when we talk about how we do the allocation of funding around itod, so thank you mayor pro tem for bringing that up. The allocation of dollars. If we could just get a little more for the community, I mean even us not calling it itod equity transit oriented development is what we're talking about. And if we could just get a little more information about how those dollars would be allocated and do we have we don't have our team here, but what I can do is follow up and get you a breakdown of how we will be spending that that fund. Thank

[2:38:29 PM]

you. I appreciate it and thank my colleagues. But also appreciate it. So if that's something that can be shared with the entire body and just for as a point of clarification with the \$3 million, that staff has requested for the comprehensive plan update that is exclusive of the 1 million plus dollars for the northeast district effort.

>> So when you say exclusive of it's not the 1,000,000 million is not a part of the \$3 million that we're putting forward for the comprehensive plan update that 3.1 million for cip spending.

>> And then we have the 1.1 million for the northeast. Austin district plan. And then 500,000 for the equitable transit oriented development planning efforts. Yes, ma'am. Those are all completely separate from one another. It's not a combination of efforts.

>> Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much.

>> I appreciate that clarification.

>> You're welcome.

>> Thank you. Councilmember harper-madison Ann. I think that takes us to the next broad topic

[2:39:30 PM]

. Just address.

>> Hello. Eric Nelson, division chief with FSD budget and performance. Just wanted to address council member vela's question about the housing trust fund. It has seven and one half million dollars in planned spending in fy 24 and net of that it has an estimated ending balance. Of \$12.9 million. Public safety.

>> I don't think your microphone is on. Thank you. Happy to help .

>> So we'll start with the emergency medical services department in fiscal year 24, we're proposing a \$124.3 million budget that includes incorporating the office of the chief medical officer, which is 19 positions transferring into the ems department at \$4.1 million. Goodnight ranch. The

[2:40:31 PM]

fire ems station is scheduled to open in fiscal year 24, which will show an increase of 12 new sworn positions for the ems department. And then you'll see the annualized cost for the fiscal year 23 ems labor agreement as we annualize those costs for fiscal year 24. That's \$2.9 million. And the department is also receiving three civilian positions to work on their recruiting work within their recruiting division to help improve sworn recruitment. And then finally, three sworn positions that will a pilot program was approved by council for fiscal year 23. That is going to be an ongoing program at the airport. Those three new positions are \$0 to the general fund as the airport will cover the cost for those positions. And then as you can see, the revenue for the ems department is \$47 million. As you all know , the bulk of that or more than half of that is transport fees.

[2:41:32 PM]

And Travis county Ila is a good portion of that of that revenue as well. We do see an overall increase in transport in the transport fees for ems, for fiscal year 24. And our projections as well. When we look at the cip spending plan Ann, it is to cover continued major renovations across multiple ems or joint fire ems stations as that 20.9 million are ongoing projects that were a part of the 2018 bond and include ems stations. 1.5, ten, 13 and seven in fiscal year 23, the council approved the whole blood program. And this is this 1.4 million includes funding for the equipment for that, as well as equipment for the simulation program that the department has . The department is also getting

[2:42:32 PM]

one time budget stabilization, rehabilitation, budget stabilization fund dollars for replacement of their zo monitors , and then some deferred maintenance dollars for their existing station as as we look at the fire department, they are increasing their budget about 2.7% at \$235.7 million. Again the goodnight ranch fire ems station that includes 16 new positions for the fire department. They are there is an

addition of \$2 million in overtime that is being added to their fiscal year 24 budget to address increased overtime costs to assist with the long term backfield that they are dealing with. And then \$328,000 for Eid replacements. When you look at the revenue for the fire departments, it's at \$14 million. It's looking at about a 3.95% increase compared to this

[2:43:32 PM]

fiscal year. Cip planning shows beginning of the construction for the canyon creek, the fifth and final fire ems station that will be built per per council ordinance and then 6.5 million for continued structural work and repairs at the ems station excuse me, fire station 22 and the electrical repairs at the fire station number one at 5.2 million. Forensic science is a small but mighty department. \$14.3 million budget for forensic science. It is increased ING \$316,000 is being budgeted in that department as new investments to automate their fingerprint id system. And then we have the municipal court

[2:44:33 PM]

department at \$39.5 million. We are showing two new positions and social service contract funding for the downtown Austin community court for intensive case management and rehabilitative services, as that department has. A \$2.6 million in funding in revenue excuse me, which is basically court fees, city ordinance, traffic fines, things like that. And then we have the police department at 476.5 million, a 7.1% increase for the police department. 11 new positions, as has been talked about a little bit earlier today, to implement a portion of the crow report recommendations. These new positions that are being added for support services and building services as and Pio functions back into the department. \$2.6 million for a cadet recruitment incentive.

[2:45:34 PM]

Those are the funds that council approved in the in the APD pay package earlier this year. And then full funding for the sworn wages that were implemented in fiscal year 23. The revenue for the police budget is 1.4 million for fiscal year 24. This is just breaking down. Last week in our conversations there was a request for more information on what the 11 civilian positions would be doing in in response to the crow report recommendations. And seven of those positions will be in the training academy looking at curriculum development. There's a program manager to manage the field training program and then four positions will be data and information technology units for research and planning and open data reporting. Then there is a portion of \$128,000 that will be a contract for outside experts to come in and teach specific cadet classes. And then finally

[2:46:39 PM]

there was council member. Alter had some questions about the victim of crime act grant funding and this this program has been it concludes excuse me , in 2023 in its current state it is the city is developing a new three year project. There are currently ten victim service. His counselor or positions in that program. The new project will have we request five positions. The two counselors, the three victim navigators, the police department is available to fund three of the five remaining positions that are currently in the program. And the city is actually waiting to receive notice. So we won't receive notice of the ongoing funding for that program or the acceptance of funding for that program until September.

[2:47:39 PM]

>> Apparently. There it is. Council member qadri.

>> Great. Thank you, mayor. I have a few questions. First question on 911 call takers. Will we see a pay increase for those folks.

>> So it's not a budgetary matter, but our human resources department is working on a classification series for those call taker positions that would result in in pay increases.

>> Okay, great. And then I had two more questions. I had noticed it was there's about. 440,000 \$440,349 for various tech contracts and the police budget. What what specifically are those for? Could you guys elaborate on where that money will be allocated in terms of what tech stuff? So sorry, is there someone from the police

[2:48:40 PM]

department. Great. Thank you.

>> Good afternoon. I'm Michelle Smith, the assistant director for the Austin police department. The contracts, the majority of that \$443,000 is related to the axon contract, which is body worn camera and interview rooms and a small portion of that is also sorry, I'm looking for my notes. I think it's related to digital forensics storage imaging, storage, data storage. Got it.

>> All great. Thank you. And then my last is there anything else it's used for? Those are the main two things. The body camera and the forensic storage. Digital forensic storage and interview rooms. And the interview room. Yes, sir. Thank you.

>> I believe that's all of that

[2:49:42 PM]

\$400,000. Yes

>> Got it. Thank you. And then my last question and maybe you can answer it if anyone else can. The 11 news civilian position is to improve training and data reporting. Is there a reason there are an APD and not an Pio?

>> So that unit is the data officer for APD. So he oversees . That's Dr. Jonathan Cregan. So he oversees the data for APD, which is our records management system. So all of those positions will report up through him. Got it.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Councilmember councilmember harper-madison Ann, councilmember Ryan alter. And then councilmember vela.

>> Thank you, mayor, for the recognition. One of the things I wanted to bring to the attention of the body and the general public, just generally speaking, looking at the statistics, our ems professionals are not retire saying they are quitting. And I'd like to know whether or not there's some opportunity for us

[2:50:43 PM]

to do some specific analysis around and why they're not retiring. You know, if we're looking at making specific investments around ems, I'd like to know why our ems professionals burning out, then moving forward with the deck. I was wondering if, if I have a member of the downtown Austin community court here today. I use an acronym. Sorry deck downtown Austin community court. Do we have one here?

>> Yes.

>> Someone's coming forward.

>> Thank you.

>> Hi. Good afternoon. Robert kingdom, the court administrator for the downtown Austin community court. Hi Mr. King.

>> Thank you for answering my questions today. I'd like to for you to be able to discuss the impact for the two new positions and additional service social service funding included in this

[2:51:43 PM]

budget. What would it actually do and whether or not I'd like very much for you to be able to speak candidly to whether or not it's sufficient for the city wide expansion that we just recently passed.

>> Sure. So the two new ftes for the clinical case managers will, of course, provide two new staff members that can carry a caseload generally of 15 to 16 individuals at any given time. That may cycle throughout the year. We do serve fairly acute individuals in our intensive case management program and so the to be clear, I don't mean to cut you off, but when you say fairly acute individuals, what does that mean? Sure. That means that the individuals we serve generally have three or try occurring disorders, a chronic medical condition, a substance use diagnosis and a mental health diagnosis as well. So they are some of the most vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. And so need intensive

[2:52:45 PM]

case management in inventions. And so that's why our caseloads are relatively lower Shaw compared to some other service providers, just due to the acuity of the individuals. And so we can see whenever two new case managers come on board, they will pick up a caseload of 30 new individuals as we may have 5 to 10 clients cycle off of a caseload throughout a year where we're able to pick up 5 or 10 more. So that may may be anywhere from 35 to 40 total clients throughout the year. Just depending on the circumstance and how quickly we can house someone, how quickly we can assist them maintaining their housing. But unfortunately, there are some individuals who do fall off a caseload. They may relapse or unfortunately, we have some clients who do pass away and that's just a another way that that creates an opening in our

[2:53:46 PM]

caseload. Now, the two new positions came at an initial request from our downtown Austin community court advisory board to help us address our wait list, our wait list currently sits anywhere between 350 to 400 individuals. Ralls what period of time, if I may ask? So that's active as of right now. And so how long do those people wait?

>> So people we find waiting on our wait list over a year or more generally, generally speaking, whenever we have, like I said, new openings that that come available.

>> So just because of the size of the wait list, you know, we're seeing individuals there for two years or more right now waiting for housing assistance and case managers, Swint, behavioral health assistance and assistance and substance use treatment.

>> So not to ask you for too much, but how do we fix that? What do we need to do as a body

[2:54:47 PM]

to fix a two year wait list for people who you're saying are the most vulnerable?

>> So if we apply our our our measure from our caseload that each staff member can carry, if we have 350 individuals on the caseload on the wait list and each case manager can assist generally 15 to 20 individuals per year, we can just, you know, do do that math. I believe with our advisory board when they were developing their budget recommendation, this fiscal year, they looked at a total need of 12 case managers over all, along with the support of services or the wraparound services. So it's not only the staffing to provide the case management assistance, but but we don't want to create a bottleneck. So once they come into case management, we need to be able to provide the wraparound services that they need because we can't do everything in house, nor should we. And so we look at partnering

[2:55:48 PM]

with other agencies and organizations to provide peer support, court assistance to individuals. We do also provide some housing assistance through a rapid rehousing program or a permanent supportive housing program. And then we have been funding some inpatient substance use treatment for the past decade. That is specifically targeted to the clients that are being served through the downtown Austin community.

>> And council member, if I might just add to the comments, this is clearly the work that just was outlined a minute ago by our administrator, who clearly is in the health care lane. It's a lane that we left, that we left in 2004 when that responsibility was taken up by central health. These case managers that you have, which I and I'm familiar with, the case management programs that we had at the hospital system that I worked at, this really we need to find a way to organize that so that it so that we can understand how all the different assets that the city has.

[2:56:49 PM]

Because I know the health department has similar assets, but then we need to sit down with central health and say these 400 individuals that are on a wait list that are suffering from acute illnesses, behavioral health illnesses, as well as addiction issues, we need to have you step up and help us understand how you can help us deal with these individuals who might otherwise fall into homelessness if we don't get assistance from you. Now part of this is that I haven't had that conversation. Ann in fairness to them, I need to have that conversation with them. But this is one of the things I mentioned last week when we unveiled the budget is that we needed to begin to develop our lane of work, which is where the city's responsibility is, and then where the other agencies, whether it be the county, the va or central health, integral health, all of these have to help us in different areas. So we can divide up this work in a way that is manageable. And we intend to do that over the course of the next few days. Just from what I learned, what you just talked about, I appreciate your contribution.

>> manager and I think that's one of the things that I'm trying to say. I think there's some adjacent issues. So

[2:57:49 PM]

for example, anecdotally, I have constituents that they don't go to their primary physician. They call ems. So now they're on the line for this bill for taking an ambulance to the hospital for a thing that they could have seen their general practitioner for. But they don't know. So I'd even like to know if we're making any investment in just educating people around, if YOU GOT A SPLINTER OR GOT THE FLU, YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CALL AN AMBULANCE AND GO TO THE E M S INDIGENT HEALTHCARE COST IS ENORMOUS, AND SOME OF THESE FOLKS REALLY GET HIT HARD WITH THESE BILLS.SO THAT'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE FOR US TO CONTINUE AS A CONVERSATION, LIKE TEACHING PEOPLE HOW TO GO, YOU HAVE MAP, YOU HAVE THESE OTHER, YOU KNOW, MEDICAL PROGRAMS THAT YOU'RE ELIGIBLE FOR, TEACHING PEOPLE THAT CALL AN E M S AND GETTING IN AN AMBULANCE IS NOT THE RESPONSE FOR EVERYTHING.

[2:58:49 PM]

AND I'VE NEVER HEARD US PERSONALLY, I'VE NEVER HEARD US TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT THAT.UM, SO THAT WAS, I'LL LEAVE THAT THERE.UM, SO THEN MY OTHER QUESTION WAS ABOUT, UM, GIVE ME JUST A MOMENT.UM, WHEN WE TALKED ABOUT POLICE, SPECIFICALLY THE CROW REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS, THE NEW INVESTMENTS, IT SAYS 128,000 FOR OUTSIDE EXPERTS TO TEACH CADETS SPECIFIC COURSES.IT DOESN'T SAY WHAT SPECIFIC COURSES.HI, GOOD AFTERNOON, MAYOR AND COUNSEL.WE CAN FOLLOW UP ON A, WITH A CCB Q ON THAT ONE.

BUT FROM INITIAL STANDPOINT, I CAN SPEAK TO HISTORY OF POLICING, UH, HISTORY OF RACISM IN, UH, AUSTIN, TEXAS.AND SO WE WANTED TO HAVE CONTENT EXPERTS THAT COULD COME IN AND DIRECTLY SPEAK TO THOSE TYPES OF, TO TOPICS AND MAKE SURE THAT THE CONTENT THAT'S BEING DELIVERED IS COMING FROM THOSE THAT PROFESSIONALLY PRACTICE IN THAT FIELD.WELL, CERTAINLY YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT, YOU KNOW, MY OFFICE AND BRINGING FORWARD WHAT WE BROUGHT FORWARD, WHICH PRODUCED THE CROW REPORT, WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY PRODUCED A GIANT REPORT AND THEN A SECOND REPORT, AND NOW WE'RE MOVING INTO OUR THIRD PHASE OF THE REPORTING, BUT NOT HAVING ANY INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT SPECIFIC CLASSES Y'ALL ARE TALKING ABOUT.

[2:59:47 PM]

AND THEN US RECOGNIZING THAT THERE'S BEEN SO MUCH PUSHBACK FROM FOLKS AT THE CADET ACADEMY TO TEACH WHAT IT IS THAT THE PAROLE REPORT SPECIFICALLY OUTLINED AS ESSENTIAL ITEMS. I THINK IF WE DON'T HAVE GOOD DATA, THEN WHAT ARE WE WORKING WITH? THIS IS JUST, I MEAN, I REALLY RESPECT THE WORK THAT YOU DO.UM, I RESPECT THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A HIGH LEVEL BLACK FEMALE AND POLICING THAT MEANS SOMETHING TO ME PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY.BUT I ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT, YOU KNOW, I'M NOT TRYING TO TAKE YOU TO TASK, BUT I AM SAYING IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT SPECIFIC CLASSES WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, DO WE NEED 'EM? WE DON'T NEED 'EM.I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO VOTE ON RIGHT HERE.SO JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE TO EXPRESS MY CONCERN THERE.YES, MA'AM.THANK YOU.

COUNCIL MEMBER RYAN ALTER, AND THEN COUNCIL MEMBER VELA.THANK YOU VERY MUCH.UH, ALSO QUESTION FOR POLICE AS IT RELATES TO THE BUILDING SERVICES LINE.AND IN THAT LINE IT'S EIGHT, UH, INDIVIDUALS PLUS SUPPORTING BUDGET FOR JUST SOUTH OF \$2 MILLION.

AND I'M ASSUMING EACH OF THESE INDIVIDUALS IS NOT PAY AND BENEFITS \$250,000.SO WHAT, CAN YOU BREAK THAT OUT FOR ME IN TERMS OF WHAT IS THE ACTUAL KIND OF SALARY SIDE VERSUS WHAT IS, WHAT IS THE SUPPORT AND WHAT IS, WE CAN BREAK IT OUT FOR YOU

[3:00:49 PM]

IT'S ALSO CONTRACTS.THESE ARE FOLKS THAT ARE DOING MAINTENANCE WORK AT, UM, AT POLICE FACILITIES, SUBSTATIONS, AND IT DOES INCLUDE CONTRACTUAL WORK IN ADDITION TO THE STAFFING.BUT WE'LL, WE CAN BREAK THAT OUT FOR YOU AS A COUNCIL BUDGET QUESTION.

PERFECT.THANK YOU VERY MUCH.AND THEN THE ONLY OTHER, UH, QUESTION OR, OR REALLY MORE THAN ANYTHING, A A COMMENT RELATED TO POTENTIALLY EXPLORING, UM, ELECTRIC POLICE VEHICLES, WHETHER THAT'S SQUAD CARS OR SOME OF THE VEHICLES THAT Y'ALL USE THAT AREN'T NECESSARILY OUT 24 7, UH, AND PERHAPS A PILOT PROGRAM.I WILL BE EXPLORING TO TRY OUT A COUPLE ELECTRIC POLICE VEHICLES AND SEE IF THAT'S SOMETHING THAT WE CAN MOVE FORWARD, UH, IN THE FUTURE FOR OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT TO INCREASE THEIR, THEIR SUSTAINABILITY.THANK YOU.COUNCIL MEMBER, COUNCIL MEMBER VELA, THEN COUNCIL MEMBER ALLISON ALTER.UH, THANK YOU MAYOR.UH, THERE'S, UH, AN ITEM FOR AN OPEN DATA STAFFER IN THE, UH, POLICE BUDGET, UH, OPEN DATA REPORTING, POOR POSITION FOR THE DATA AND

[3:01:52 PM]

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNITS, OPEN DATA REPORTING.UM, WE ARE, UH, MY OFFICE IS, UH, ABOUT TO BRING, UH, AN ITEM QUITE POSSIBLY AS A, AS A BUDGET AMENDMENT.I KNOW, UH, WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS AND, AND, UH, WE TALKED ABOUT THIS AT A, AT A WORK SESSION, I THINK INVOLVING THE D P S. BUT YOU KNOW, WE, WE HAVE THE CHIEF'S MONTHLY REPORT, WHICH IS SENT OUT AS A P D F, BASICALLY.UH, WE REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY GOOD PUBLIC DATA WITH REGARD TO,

UH, POLICE STATISTICS OUT THERE.SO WE HAVE A, A DRAFT AND WE'LL GET IT, UH, OUT TO ALL THE, THE RELEVANT FOLKS HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.BUT WE WANNA DIRECT THE, UH, CITY MANAGER TO CREATE A, A OPEN DATA PORTAL WITH, AT A MINIMUM, YOU KNOW, THESE NUMBERS OVER TIME SO THAT WE, UH, CAN HAVE A, A DATA SYSTEM SIMILAR TO SEATTLE, SIMILAR TO, I BELIEVE SAN ANTONIO ALSO HAS A, AN EXCELLENT, SO THINKING ABOUT THE BUDGET THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THAT, UH, THAT DIRECTION TO THE CITY MANAGER, IS THAT WHAT THAT OPEN DATA PERSON IS, UH, SUPPOSED TO BE DOING? UH, YES

[3:02:57 PM]

SIR.PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT WE, UH, DON'T HAVE A CURRENT SYSTEM IN PLACE RIGHT NOW THAT MAKES IT EASY FOR THE COMMUNITY TO NAVIGATE.AND THE PURPOSE OF THOSE POSITIONS IS TO NOT ONLY STAND UP, BUT THEN ALSO SUPPORT THE INFORMATION THAT WILL NEED TO GO INTO THOSE OPEN DATA SOURCES.OKAY, THANK YOU.AND THAT I APPRECIATE IT THEN THAT WE'LL BE COMING FORWARD.SO WOULD YOU NEED A SEPARATE ALLOCATION TO FUND A OPEN DATA PORTAL OR THAT THAT'S ESSENTIALLY ALREADY BEEN FUNDED VIA THIS, UH, REQUEST? I BELIEVE THAT REQUEST IS JUST FOR THE POSITION, SIR.

OKAY.UH, I'LL GO AHEAD AND SEND THE DIRECTION THEN, AND, AND I'LL, I'LL GET IT OVER TO THE, UH, THE ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER AND, AND, AND TO THE, THE, THE POLICE CHIEF AS WELL FOR, FOR THEIR REVIEW.BUT I, IF THERE ARE ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS TO FULFILLING

[3:04:00 PM]

THE, THE GUIDANCE SET THAT WE WILL BE OFFERING, JUST, UH, UH, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO, UH, TO, TO, TO GET THOSE, UH, UH, MONIES IN THERE.UM, THEN WITH REGARD TO THE, UH, THE, THE POLICE BUDGET AS WELL, UH, AND I KNOW THERE'S BEEN

SOME BREAKDOWN OF THE DIFFERENT AMOUNTS, LIKE OBVIOUSLY THE 11TH FUNDED POSITION, THE OPEN DATA POSITIONS, THOSE KINDS OF THINGS LIKE THAT, UH, THE, THE, THE \$22 MILLION INCREASE IN THE BUDGET.IF, IF WE COULD GET, I GUESS JUST A, A A BETTER IDEA, I KNOW YOU MENTIONED \$7 MILLION WAS FOR THE RETIREMENT TO, UH, MAKE SURE THAT THE, THE RETIREMENT FUND IS, IS, IS, UH, WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE. UH, OUT OF THAT IS FOR THE 4%, UH, RAISE THAT WE DECIDED ON BACK IN, UH, MARCH.UH, OBVIOUSLY, YOU KNOW, WE'RE ADDING POSITIONS TO THE CADET THAT'S, THAT NEEDS TO BE FUNDED.UH, AND, UH, SO IN OTHER WORDS, A, A BREAKDOWN OF THOSE \$22 MILLION.UH, AND, AND YOU KNOW, BY KIND OF CATEGORY, JUST SO THAT WE UNDERSTAND EXACTLY, UH, WHAT WE'RE DOING WHEN WE INCREASE THE POLICE BUDGET, UM, OBVIOUSLY IT'S A VERY KIND OF SENSITIVE THING AND ESPECIALLY WITH THE, THE, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE, THE STATE LAW LIMITING OUR ABILITY TO PULL THOSE EXPENSES BACK.I DO UNDERSTAND THAT WE'VE HELD A POLICE BUDGET

[03:05:47 PM]

STEADY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

UH, AND I MEAN, JUST A REALITY OF A GROWING, UH, CITY AND IT'S GROWING NEEDS, WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO, UH, BOOST IT UP TO, TO MEET, UH, YOU KNOW, CERTAIN MINIMUM, UH, UH, CRITERIA. BUT, UH, FOR THE COMFORT OF, OF I THINK THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE. UH, IF WE COULD UNDERSTAND BETTER THAT A \$22 MILLION BREAKDOWN, THAT WOULD BE GREAT. ABSOLUTELY. YES, SIR. THANK YOU. COUNCIL MEMBER. COUNCIL MEMBER ALLISON ALTER. THANK YOU, MAYOR. UM, I HAD A COUPLE QUESTIONS ON 9 1 1 AND THEN WANTED TO FLAG SOME THINGS THAT I'M THINKING ABOUT FOR AMENDMENT. UM, SO FOR 9 1 1, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH A M MILLS YESTERDAY. WE'VE BEEN MEETING A LOT ABOUT THIS QUESTION, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL PLAN IN PLACE THAT WILL, UM, BE CREATING SOME PROGRESSIONS FOR OUR CALL TAKERS AND DISPATCHERS. UM, BUT ONE OF THE PIECES THAT WAS BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION, UM, WAS THE ZONING AND THE COMPRESSION. ADDITIONALLY, I'M NOT SURE WHETHER THAT PROGRESSION IS GOING, IS ADDRESSING THE COMPRESSION.

[3:06:49 PM]

CAN YOU SPEAK TO THAT? SO WHEN WE ADDED PAY AT THE BOTTOM, WE HAD FOLKS WHO WERE, UM, WHOSE WAGE DIDN'T GO UP YET. I DO. IT'S MS. L SCHMIDT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR WITH A P D AGAIN. UM, WE DO BELIEVE THAT IT WILL FIX SOME OF THE COMPRESSION ISSUES, UM, WITH THE VARIOUS ZONES, UM, OR VARIOUS PAY GRADES THAT WE'RE CREATING. THIS IS A PLAN THAT'S, UM, YOU KNOW, WE'RE WORKING WITH H R D, UM, AND COMPENSATION ON, UM, AS EMPLOYEES GET TO THE TOP OF THE PAY GRADES, SPECIFICALLY IN ZONE FOUR, IT GETS A LITTLE BIT TIGHTER. AND SO COMPRESSION GETS A LITTLE BIT MORE DIFFICULT, UM, IN THOSE, IN THE TOP OF THOSE PAY GRADES AT THE TOP OF THE ZONE. UM, BUT WE DO BELIEVE THAT IT'S GOING TO, UM, ASSIST WITH THE, A LOT OF THE COMPRESSION ISSUES THAT WE'RE SEEING RIGHT NOW.

SO WILL EXISTING STAFF BE REZONED AS PART OF THIS PROCESS? THAT IS PART OF THE PLAN? YES. OKAY. THANK YOU. AND DO WE HAVE A TIMELINE WHEN WE WILL HAVE THAT PLAN COMPLETE? SAME. WE'RE WE'RE, THE DETAILS ARE BEING WORKED OUT LITERALLY RIGHT NOW.

[3:07:47 PM]

AND AGAIN, AS MICHELLE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE COMPRESSION, WE'RE TRYING TO WORK THAT OUT AND MAKE SURE WE'RE TAKING CARE OF, WE'RE LOOKING ACROSS THE, UH, THE INCUMBENTS WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE TAKEN CARE OF. AND, UM, AND THERE'S NO UNINTENDED

CONSEQUENCES FROM WHAT WE'RE DOING, BUT WE HOPE TO HAVE IT IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE END OF, BEFORE THE END OF THIS FISCAL YEAR.AND, UM, ONE OF THE THINGS WE TALKED ABOUT YESTERDAY WAS THE PROGRESS AND, AND OUR ESTIMATE FOR WHEN WE BE FULLY STAFFED.CAN YOU SPEAK TO THAT PLEASE? WE WANNA BE FULLY STAFFED SOON.UH, WE WERE, WE'RE LOOKING, WE'RE TRYING TO, UH, REDUCE THE, UH, THE THOSE LEAVING AND BRING IN THOSE TO, TO REPLACE AND A REALISTIC NUMBER TO BE A HUNDRED PERCENT STAFFED.

[3:08:49 PM]

THERE'S PROBABLY EIGHT MONTHS AT THE, AT THE RATE WE'RE GOING NOW, UH, HOPEFULLY SOONER. UH, ONE OF THE THINGS WE'RE LOOKING AT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVES TO EVEN BRINGING IN FULL-TIME FOLKS IS WE JUST HAD SOME BRAINSTORMING SESSION YESTERDAY ABOUT WHEN WE HIRE CADETS FOR WHETHER IT'S POLICE DEPARTMENT OR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, UH, TO MAYBE COME IN AS KIND OF AS NEW HIRES TO COME IN.

[3:09:49 PM]

AND IF THEY'RE MOVING FROM OUTTA STATE, THEY'RE GONNA START THE FIRE ACADEMY.I HAVEN'T TALKED TO FIRE CHIEF YET, BUT I'M SURE HE'LL BE FINE WITH THAT.IS THAT, SEE THAT THEY THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO COME IN AND MAYBE SPEND FIVE OR SIX MONTHS IN THAT ROLE? UH, IT'S A, IT'S A GOOD EDUCATION FOR AN INCUMBENT TO GO INTO THAT ROLE AND MAYBE BE 9 1 1, UH, OPERATOR FOR THAT PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE THEY BEGIN THE ACADEMY.ND THAT WHILE AT THE MEANTIME WE'RE TRAINING, HIRING, RECRUITING, TRAINING OUR PERMANENT 9 1 1 AND DISPATCHERS.AND AT THIS POINT, GIVEN WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY GOT ALLOCATED FOR 9 1 1, YOU DON'T REQUIRE ADDITIONAL BUDGET TO ACHIEVE THIS PLAN, IS THAT CORRECT? UH, NO, NOT THIS TIME.OKAY, GREAT.THANK YOU.APPRECIATE IT.UM, AND THEN COLLEAGUES, I WANTED TO, UM, BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO PAGE 29 OF THE SLIDES, WHICH IS THE VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT GRANT POSITIONS.THESE ARE POSITIONS IN VICTIM SERVICES, UM, THAT HAVE BEEN FOCUSED.THERE'S 10 POSITIONS CURRENTLY THAT ARE FOCUSED ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CRISIS RESPONSE.

[3:10:47 PM]

UM, THAT GRANT IS UP IN SEPTEMBER.UM, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT WE CAN ONLY APPLY FOR FIVE NEW POSITIONS AND WITHIN THE BUDGET THEY HAVE GOT FUNDING FOR THREE BUT NOT FTES FOR THE THREE.SO AT A MINIMUM, IN THE PERFECT SCENARIO WHERE WE GET THE GRANT, WE HAVE TWO POSITIONS THAT WE NEED TO FUND FULLY AND HAVE FTES AND THREE THAT WE NEED FTES FOR.UM, WE ARE STILL EXAMINING WHETHER THE OTHER FIVE POSITIONS, UM, WOULD BE SERVING THE VERY IMPORTANT NEEDS FOR OUR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS. AND SO WE

WILL NEED TWO TO SEVEN POSITIONS, UM, FOR VICTIM SERVICES DEPENDING ON HOW THAT WORK, UM, FALLS OUT.

UM, I KNOW COUNCIL MEMBER FUENTES HAS, HAS, UM, SIGNED ON TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THIS WITH ME, UM, AS AN AMENDMENT IF NECESSARY, IF STAFF DOESN'T TAKE CARE OF IT. AND I WOULD WELCOME OTHER FOLKS, UM, TO JOIN ME IN THAT. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NEW TO THE

[3:11:49 PM]

DAAS, UM, WE WERE SUED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS FOR HOW WE HANDLED OUR RESPONSES. WE MADE PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS IN BOTH THE SETTLEMENT BOTH LEGALLY AND IN SPIRIT. IT IS NOT IN THE SPIRIT OF THOSE COMMITMENTS AND THOSE PROMISES FOR US TO ALLOW THIS FUNDING TO LAPSE AND FOR THOSE POSITIONS TO GO AWAY. UM, THESE ARE REALLY, REALLY CRITICAL TO OUR EFFORTS TO HELP FOLKS, UM, ACHIEVE HEALING I JUSTICE AS THEY GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS. SO I ENCOURAGE YOU, UM, TO JOIN ME IN THAT. UM, I ALSO WANT TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO, UM, OUR ANTI HATE CAMPAIGN. WE ALL BELONG THAT WE LAUNCHED LAST FRIDAY THAT WAS INITIATED THROUGH A BUDGET AMENDMENT THAT I HAD LAST YEAR, UM, IN RESPONSE TO A SERIES OF HATE AND ANTISEMITIC CRIMES THAT WE HAD AND INCIDENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

[3:12:52 PM]

UM, YOU'LL SEE THE BANNERS OUTSIDE ON THE STREET, UM, AND THERE'S A WEBSITE. WE'RE HAVING AN EVENT ON AUGUST 12TH, UM, TO LAUNCH WITH PRIDE. I HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US FOR THAT. UM, I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS STEP. UM, BUT WE STILL NEED MONEY IN THE BUDGET TO CONTINUE THE CAMPAIGN, UM, AND THE BROADER EFFORT TO IMPROVE OUR REPORTING STRUCTURES AND OUR RESPONSE TO HATE. UM, COUNCIL MEMBER FUENTES AND COUNCIL MEMBER CADRE AND I SERVE ON THE HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. AND WE ARE GONNA BE BRINGING A ONE-TIME FUNDING AMENDMENT TO CONTINUE OUR CAMPAIGN AND OUR WORK TO IMPROVE OUR RESPONSE TO HATE. SO PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN IN THAT EFFORT AS WELL. UM, AND THEN FINALLY, I MAY BE BRINGING SOMETHING FOR E M S, UM, WITH RESPECT TO, UM, THE C FOUR, THE PARAMEDIC PRACTITIONERS, I'M STILL WORKING OUT THE

[3:14:00 PM]

Details on that, if that's interesting to you, please let me know. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Council member. Council member Fuentes. Thank you. And thank you, council member Alison alter for your leadership on the anti hate campaign.

>> I am supportive of your budget amendment and would like to also see that funding continued for educational purposes for our community. The questions I had are around the couple of things I want to echo. Councilmember vela's remarks about, you know, sharing out that this council has approved record police funding these last few years and what we have before us today does include an increase to the police budget. But we've asked for a breakdown so that the public can see the line item amount of that 20 plus million where that would go with retirement funding as well as for the recruitment incentives that we approved earlier this year when the association walked away from the negotiation table

[3:15:01 PM]

. I wanted to see if we can have a comment on how the recruitment incentives have been working. The 15,000 that we added for cadets, have we seen progress in the amount of cadets we've been able to recruit?

>> Yes, ma'am. Thank you for that question. It has enhanced the applications that we have received online. But as we work through and process those applications, burns the attrition rate is about the same. So it has had an increase in interest. But as far as actual new hires, it hasn't come to fruition as as we had anticipated or had liked.

>> Thank you for that feedback. I would be interested in also hearing what additional strategies we should be considering, and I appreciate the creativity around the call takers and having cadets help with that. I think that's really that makes sense to me. But it would be open to hearing feedback on what else we can be doing to ensure that we're able to get to our numbers is

[3:16:01 PM]

absolutely the question I had was around the data reporting in the proposed budget, we have personnel for the open for the open data. We know that the Kroll report recommended that we provide this data in a transparent fashion. I'm curious, did the department think through an alternative? And when and where we should have the data or the individuals placed? And to me, it would make just knowing the mission and scope, it would make more sense for these positions to be housed within in the office of police oversight. So I'm curious, was that an option you all considered or if you could share a little bit more as to why it's important for it to be housed in APD?

>> Absolutely. Yes, ma'am. So understand, when we're talking about data and making sure that we draw that information from those data sources, it's imperative that those be housed within APD when it comes to whether it's axon or versus dcs, which is our report reporting system or whether it's our cad, it is from an operational standpoint, in order to have

[3:17:03 PM]

access to those systems, then make sure that we're accurately pulling that information, information. It's it would be critical for them to be housed within our research and planning team with Dr. Cregan.

>> Is it because to be is it a level of authorization to the software or is it, you know, physical proximity to other individuals within the department?

>> So anyone who would have access to that would need to be just compliant in that. And our content expert on that is Mr. Chip Burleson, and I can have him answer that in a Q and have Dr. Cregan provide additional information to that.

>> Yeah, I think that would be helpful. I mean, I do I am a little concerned about it being within the department. It to me it just seems more aligned with the Pio office. But would like to understand more the situation and all the factors that you all are considering. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you. Councilmember Allison alter.

>> Thank you. I have a question,

[3:18:03 PM]

I think, for chief baker. So it's my understanding that. You've taken questions.

>> Chief.

>> I heard my name called, sir.

>> Thank you, chief. Chief, I. We've had a discussion about the overtime. We had it, you know, a conversation in audit and finance, and then we had a memo about overtime. And the budget adds an additional 2 million to the budget for overtime. That is in important to account for things. But it's not clear to me that that's actually solving the underlying problem. And I'm just trying to understand whether we should be thinking about adding 20 officers or instead of 2 million, like it costs the same. You know what are the pros and cons between those two things as

[3:19:04 PM]

. Joel baker, Austin fire chief, Mr. City manager, honorable mayor, councilmember, thank you for that question.

>> I think the \$2 million is a good start. Got to keep in mind with all the programs and services that the fire department offer this great city is unfunded. It also increased the overtime. For example, when we have a high wildland fire condition. So it's so hot out there. You all mentioned earlier how hot it is out there, how dry it is out there. And so when we stand up additional task force unit to support wildland

potential fire hazards, that's an overtime, of course, that's not funded as well as when we have other weather related incidents or manmade caused incidents that increase our overtime. We don't have the personnel to cover those areas, so we have to hire overtime for that. But I do believe that the \$2 million additional overtime is a great start. So we will

[3:20:04 PM]

need time to really evaluate that and see how that looks. But I think that's a great start for us.

>> Okay. But when we do overtime, we pay time and a half. If I hire 20 off 20 firefighter hours, I'm getting more hours than I would from overtime. I'm at some level, I'm just trying to understand. It doesn't it seems like we're not solving the problem just by putting the overtime.

>> Councilmember there are two things that I'd add to what just chief baker talked about was one is we have to evaluate what you're asking. Two, I think as I understood the auditor's report in the manner in which we handle vacation and sick leave, we need to do evaluate that to see if it could be done differently. That would reduce overtime. So I think there are several things we've got to do. First, to see whether the overtime run rate changes with some management improve improve managerial policies, if you will. And then and then we can evaluate if additional staff are needed. But I would be really hesitant to just land on that one to begin with without more analysis up front.

>> And I just want to be clear,

[3:21:07 PM]

I wasn't proposing that we would do this in the budget, but I do think we have to have that conversation and I'm glad to hear that beyond the memo, there's additional management steps is not clear from the memo that there were additional management steps that were being taken. So I you know, with respect to leave and the other pieces, the you know, the solutions that were put forward in that memo were add to the overtime and hire more firefighters and not a lot was ascribed to the leave. I agree with you that there's potentially a lot of solution in managing how we're dealing with our staff. So I would just really appreciate if we can hear back again, a follow up to that memo. But I do think we need to have this conversation. And if it proves that, just adding overtime, if we have, we have a lot of other programs that we're not the ones that the chief mentioned that that are running on overtime, that you could have regular firefighters in or as we're balancing what we need to do with our staffing, having firefighters who are taking those roles could be more cost effective and I think we need

[3:22:10 PM]

that analysis. It's a lot of money that was additional in overtime during this year. And I and it's not clear to me that just adding overtime helps our firefighters because then they're working more et-cetera is not I want to solve the problem over time, even if this is a first step, I don't think we're done with that conversation. So I wanted to absolutely we'll make sure that we'll put together a plan of action to reduce sick leave and other challenges that we have to turn to opportunities for the department. Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you.

>> Thank you, chief. Councilman Ryan alter. Well, the real for me is related to you.

>> Not a question, but a comment. And from the manager, just as it relates to the recent challenges we've had with air conditioning, if there's anything we need to do in the budget and I know you're on it. And so just I just want to say that if we need to put anything

[3:23:10 PM]

extra in here to take care of the air conditioning situation, I can't imagine driving around, let alone in 50 pounds of gear. But just want to make that comment.

>> I mean, I don't want to speak for the chief, but I know it's on our list. We've got a memo that went out today and yes, sir.

>> And let me add about the acquisition in the fire department. We have approximately 100 pieces of equipment, whether it be SUVs, pickup trucks, fire trucks, area trucks, etcetera. I believe, although I don't know the fleet here now, I think fleet is doing a good job, honorable job in working very hard. But even before council member Kelly brought forth another council member, bring forth the acquisition challenges we were having, our fleet department here in Austin was working due diligence to try to get those ac units up in service. So but as soon as they work on an ac unit, we have another apparatus issue, whether it be the pump go out or the flat tire. So they're constantly working throughout the city. So I'm in full support of the plan that the fleet service has put together for we

[3:24:12 PM]

have the fleet services director here.

>> If she could speak to the issue, because I think that because this is and city manager , I commented on the on the message board post, the ac functionality is not just an issue with our fire trucks. It's also an issue with our collection trucks within Austin resource recovery. I've been at our library in southeast Austin and had the ac go out, so I know it's a it's a system wide facility issue and vehicle issue, but if you could speak to it. So good afternoon.

>> Jennifer walls I'm the director of fleet mobility services. Yes, we have an increase in ac issues in the summertime. That's standard Eid this year, however, there's been an uptick I about 50% for the fire

department. So we're working like you said, diligently to get these vehicles repaired and in service as quickly as possible. So our

[3:25:12 PM]

fleet management strategy, as I indicated in the memo, is to make an operational readiness at all of the fire stations. So what that means is how we manage the fleet and repairs. We must prioritize keeping that operational readiness at all, all of the fire stations. So when a vehicle comes in for repair, we'll put it in a category of will this down? The vehicle will, which throws us into kind of making sure all the fire stations are housed or is this something simple that we can take and get back out and not impact that so depending on the type of repair, we will prioritize that way. So if, for instance, if a ac is down but it's not downing the vehicle itself, it's just something that's kind of ancillary to the response equipment. And then we have another vehicle that comes in that has a transmission problem or a brake problem. We will put the brake problem or

[3:26:13 PM]

the transmission problem ahead of it because that could be out for several days or weeks. And again, that balance of having all the fire stations housed it impacts that our ability to do that. So I just want I just wanted to give you some insight into how we operate and how we prioritize repairs. But the main thing is, is that operational readiness as fire trucks at all the fire stations ready to serve our citizens is, number one, and I appreciate what the fire chief said that fleet and AFD are tied at the hip. We're not called first responders but we're definitely tied to their mission. So all of our technicians and all of our facilities know a lot of the firefighters and they really work hard and they know that mission. They're proud of what support they bring to AFD. So I just want to make that very clear, that they're working around the clock to try to address this problem as quickly as possible while balancing the multiple other accidents and

[3:27:15 PM]

tires and all of that stuff that comes through the door and along with that, with R and public safety fleets, there is that constant demand. And so therefore, it also creates less of a window for us to get a hold of that truck. So for instance, a fire station could get up, start a truck, ac doesn't work, but they're getting calls to go out and serve fire. So you may see a report of an ac, but that doesn't mean they just drive it straight up to us and we fix it. There's a delay because that truck still has to operate and we still have to find a reserve unit to put in its place. And like I said, in the memo, that's a coordinated effort so that we maintain coverage of that area for that fire truck as we switch them out. So like I said, the we

prioritize repairs or maintaining that operational readiness of the fire department. So thank you. I don't know if that's confusing. So go ahead.

>> Very good. Very, very good explanation. Councilmember Kelly , thank you.

>> And I just want to thank you interim city manager, for

[3:28:16 PM]

addressing the memo that I put out about the concerns related to the air conditioning being out in those units. I fully understand and taking an apparatus out of service in order to have it repaired and that you have to backfill that. It's quite like when you take people out of service for training, you have to backfill them so you can still continue the mission of the department itself. So I had a great conversation with chief veirs and Kerri Lang on Monday regarding this issue, and I'm glad to see that it is promptly being addressed. But I guess my bigger concern outside of this is that I do understand that when you are operating on apparatus, it does require a little bit more specialization than it would anything typical of a regular vehicle. And so my concern is to ensure that we have enough mechanics who are certified to work on fire apparatus, but also that they're available at fleet services for when these types of incidents occur. So I'm just wondering if you might have any unmet needs over there that might be able to help not just expedite, expedite ac repair, but also might help just overall maintaining our

[3:29:16 PM]

apparatus because as you're aware, I'm not sure the community is. So I'm going to repeat this part. You know, most of the front line apparatus, as far as the apparatus replacement schedule go our front line for ten years and then they go into reserve for five. So we're looking at 15 years of a fire truck lifespan and we want to make sure that that vehicle is maintained in that apparatus is in tip top shape. And so whatever we can do to maintain the investment of the millions of dollars that we spend on these apparatus, I want to make sure we're able to and that way it can go off to auction and live a happy life out in some field somewhere at a different fire station.

>> Well, I appreciate you. A lot of times when decisions are made about expanding public safety in the city, you know, the fleet component kind of is we buy the vehicle and it ends there. But I appreciate you saying we're looking at like when you get a pet, it isn't you just get them that day. You're looking at 14 years or in the case of a ladder or. Quint it's 20 years. You know, from frontline and reserve. So I appreciate you that, appreciate you mentioning that. Right now, that shop

[3:30:17 PM]

service center six is where fire and ems apparatus are repaired there. Currently I believe 14 technicians that take care of both. They are short on technicians, technicians. They're fleet wide. We have a vacancy of 15. We have budgeted 114 technicians and we have of 15 vacancies. So you're right, we are having there's a nationwide shortage of technicians and we have done everything. We are working with Dale valley. We get a robust amount of automotive students out of there that come into our organization, Ann as interns. And they work side by side with some of our technicians to kind of learn the trade with esd as well. So we've we've decided we have to we have to grow our own because they're just not out there. And so we are working from that angle where we're looking at market study, we're doing an internal market study right now to help see where we're at because we're getting

[3:31:18 PM]

folks that will leave for more money. So we're constantly hitting that to try to try to recruit more people into the field. Typically be a vehicle to technician ratio, ideally would be around 50 to 1 right now with our vacancies, we're around 70 to 1. If we fill all our vacancies will be at 62 to 1. So a lot of times when we don't if we have vacancies, we're not allowed to hire more. I get it. But we don't reduce the number of vehicles in the fleet. So we still have the demand. So if we can get up to get all 115, we'll be at at, at 62. So is there any way that you could email me that information?

>> Sure. I was going to ask if a market study had been done recently, but it sounds like you're working on that. I would like the results of that to come back to council because I had heard that that may be part of the issue over there at fleet that these mechanics are getting

[3:32:18 PM]

paid more to go elsewhere. And yes, I want to do everything we can to recruit and maintain those mechanics because that is a service that is very necessary to maintain operations all across the city, not just at the fire department. So while that memo went out about the air conditioners and fire trucks, it does speak to a larger area of opportunity, I think that we can address on council and do so in a way that's comprehensive enough and long term that our vehicles and our apparatus will be maintained in the best way possible. And those are ultimately investments in the taxpayers resources so that we can respond to calls for service across the city and all ways possible. So I appreciate you. Thank you very much for those comprehensive answers. Thank you. Chief for sending your staff over to speak with me. And thank you again, city manager, for being very responsive to the concerns.

>> Well, I think Jennifer can get you that information. But if it is an hr issue where we need to figure out whether our folks are being paid right. It's the same as what Bruce just said about our 911 that we needed to do a rapid reclass. I mean, so

[3:33:20 PM]

if you'll get with Ed and you guys get with Rebecca, we don't need direction from the council to do that. That's something we should be doing as administrator without necessarily having council get directing us to go do something. That's our administrative duty. I'd ask you guys to go do that and if it's a problem, go figure out a way to fix it.

>> Right? Thank you for saying that because from my perspective of when you look at the bigger picture here, we want to minimize problems like this from happening in the future. And if filling those vacancies and being competitive in our pay will help us to get to that point. I want to invest in that long term because I think it will benefit the community as a whole. So thank you. Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much.

>> Councilmember harper-madison .

>> Thank you, mayor, for the recognition. I just want to say I really appreciate having had the opportunity for the executive insights from Ms. Walls. I mean, in the course of the last three years of us, hasn't of us having consistent conversations around even

[3:34:21 PM]

remediation. So so like I have at 12th and Hargrave a site that we're going to have to do considerable remediation on. Because it's just been, you know, a, a fleet graveyard, but , but I haven't had any instances of a response, in which case thank you for that. I appreciate it. But I think that's another thing we should add to our list of considerations when we have to remediate these sites, use these fleet service sites that sit in the middle of neighborhoods. Now so if we're going to repurpose them and make them for housing, we have to remediate them. We've had diesel fleet on these sites for years. And so that's something I'd like to add to our list of considerations. The one question I do have is, what, what are the considerations around us trying to take our

[3:35:22 PM]

fleet services to be in more energy efficient, the vehicles themselves?

>> We do have a comprehensive electrification action plan as a matter of fact, this Friday we're going to bring forward a grant, hopefully. I mean, I'm sorry, on the first we have a grant that we're needing to about \$500,000 for electrification Ann and of our some of our city fleet vehicles and some of our cng for our aviation vehicles. So we're heavily invested in electrifying the fleet as far as the facilities, we're looking at trying to get a new facility and we appreciate your support. We. Hargrave we've outgrown that space and like you said, we are kind of in an area that is you know, basically residential and we're kind of in a spot. I don't know if any of you have had the opportunity to go out there and visit the site. Anything we get from Wright on the corner, anybody can just drive right

[3:36:23 PM]

down 12th street and it's right there to you, right at Hargrave. Exactly so that's kind of a I mean, I laugh about we say we still have the hitching posts that were there and we park our electric vehicles in front of them. So it's interesting that that's how old the facility is. And we're looking to make a move with your support and that'll go a long way to open up space and make our facilities more attractive for candidates coming here. A lot of times when they they come and they're like, oh, this is this is the shop I'm working in. So so it's been a long time coming that we do need to look at new space. So I think this might be a good opportunity for, you know, us, you know, really encouraging the use of the committees as like resource forces.

>> This might be a good opportunity for the mayor pro tem myself you Austin resource recovery to just really get together and talk about what are the implications here so the

[3:37:24 PM]

combination of I think a lot of folks don't even know that that fleet and resource recovery are thinking about a combined effort and I think this is a really great opportune city for us to use our committees and do a joint committee Katy effort around transport, transit and mobility and housing and really talk through like there are some specific implications about remediation and some specific implications about y'all's future efforts and then thinking through, maybe even our audit and finance folks, like what does it look like to electrify all these vehicles? Oh, I think that's a conversation we should definitely be having moving forward.

>> Yeah, we have data that supports electrification and cost savings, all of that. So we ought to I'm sorry, we ought to visit and take that advice and

[3:38:25 PM]

run it through the committee and we'll bring it back to council. We're here for it. So thank you, mayor.

>> Thank you. Thank you. Council member. Member tirz. With that, I'll make sure the manager doesn't tell me something different, but I think we're at the end of this session. With that being said, what I, I want to do is I want to announce to the public a couple of things. First is I want to reiterate that on August 1st, next week at 3:00 pm, there will be an opportunity for public comment. There will also be a public hearing. We'll do it together. We'll do a public hearing and public comment. The public hearing that we will open will be on the maximum, tax rate and Eid. But we will also at the same time take comments regarding the budget, the next opportunity after that for, for public input. It will be on August 16th at 10:00 am. There

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will be a public hearing on the proposed property tax rate. So. Zo August 1st at 3:00 pm. A public hearing on the maximum tax rate along with a public comment period regarding the budget August 6th at 10 A.M, a public hearing on the proposed property tax rate. Now, having said that, where I'm trying to focus on the opportunity for people to comment, let me run through the entire calendar. August 1st there will be a work session. That work session will be on the enterprise funds, much like what we've done today on the general fund. We will do with regard to our enterprise funds. We will also have the 3:00. That meeting starts at ten, but then we will have the 3:00 public hearing and public comment period August 3rd and eighth if we need them. They have been posted. So that we can have a work session if needed.

[3:40:29 PM]

Otherwise as we anticipate that we probably will not need them, but we'll make that decision like on August first when we're all together and we can have a conversation about that. Then, as I've mentioned, August 16th at 10:00, we will have a public hearing on the proposed property tax rate. But it's August 16th. I'm August 16th through the 18th, 18th that we will end up voting on the budget as we go forward, there will be an opportunity for council to gather on the 10th for us to, as you've heard, discussion about potential amendments, you've heard discussion about potential items from council. It will be on the 16th that we will have a meeting where where we will hope to lay out proposed amendments so that our colleagues will see them be able to comment on them, be able to talk about them. And that will allow us to move with more efficiency when we get to

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the 16th through the 18th. So yes, council member Allison alter , I wanted to ask to make sure that we cover a particular topic for the enterprise discussion.

>> Okay. At audit in finance last week we had a discussion about the Hilton hotel, but in the course of that discussion, it was it was noted that there was a 35% vacancy at the airport . So really vacancy rate at the airport. So we really wanted to dive a little bit deeper into how we are addressing those vacancies at the airport as part of this budget. So if we can make sure that we cover that, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

>> Anything else? Without objection, this work session is adjourned at 3:42 P.M. Thanks everybody. Good work. Session.