



**October 19, 2023**

## Questions and Answers Report



Mayor Kirk Watson

Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison, District 1

Council Member Vanessa Fuentes, District 2

Council Member José Velásquez, District 3

Council Member Josè “Chito” Vela, District 4

Council Member Ryan Alter, District 5

Council Member Mackenzie Kelly, District 6

Council Member Leslie Pool, District 7

Council Member Paige Ellis, District 8

Council Member Zohaib “Zo” Qadri, District 9

Council Member Alison Alter, District 10

*The City Council Questions and Answers Report was derived from a need to provide City Council Members an opportunity to solicit clarifying information from City Departments as it relates to requests for council action. After a City Council Regular Meeting agenda has been published, Council Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of departments via the City Manager's Agenda Office. This process continues until 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the Council meeting. The final report is distributed at noon to City Council the Wednesday before the council meeting.*

## QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL

**Item #8:** Authorize an amendment to a contract for continued interment and burial services with Interment Services Inc., to extend the term by two years and to increase the amount by \$2,065,000 for a revised total contract amount not to exceed \$11,011,000.

### COUNCIL MEMBER KELLY'S OFFICE

- 1) *Which fund does the money from burial fees go into?*

Revenue generated by Cemetery Operations goes to the General Fund.

- 2) *What is the total amount you could charge a family for an adult burial?*

A weekday burial costs \$2,649.50. A weekend burial costs \$3,284.50. These costs do not include the cost for the plot of land or an additional charge for burial on a City holiday of \$1550. The cost variances are related to increased staffing costs associated with overtime or contractual costs associated with weekend and holiday burials.

Fees should not generate revenue in excess of what is needed to operate the program. The Parks and Recreation Department has been advised that any fees in excess of the verified cost of service may be considered an unauthorized tax.

- 3) *What fund does the 20% for additional space purchased go into?*

Revenue generated by Cemetery Operations goes to the General Fund.

- 4) *What is that 20% additional space charge used for?*

The purpose of this surcharge is for cemetery maintenance.

- 5) *How many adult burials are projected for 2024?*

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) typically has between 425-500 burials a year. Roughly, 100 burials have been cremains, which PARD will now assume responsibility for. Therefore, PARD expects between 325 – 400 adult burials this year under the agreement.

- 6) *Please provide the number of total adult burials for the last 5 years.*

In the last five years, Cemetery Operations has had 2,353 burials.

**Item 11:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for defibrillators, accessories, supplies, and services with ZOLL Medical Corporation, for a term of five years in an amount not to exceed \$10,050,000.

### COUNCIL MEMBER ALISON ALTER'S OFFICE

- 1.) *Please describe how this item may be used to help expand OCMO and EMS' bystander training efforts for city staff, particularly in areas of the city where there are higher incidents of heart issues and other issues requiring defibrillators and emergency interventions.*

This contract is not related to the expansion of public education efforts. This item is to execute a contract for the purchase and maintenance of advanced life support cardiac monitors/defibrillators on ambulances, and automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Some of the AEDs purchased are utilized for public CPR training, however, the majority of this contract is for equipment for direct patient care.

**Item 14:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for an immersive interactive training room including maintenance and support services with Echo Healthcare Inc. d/b/a Echo Healthcare, for a term of one year in an amount not to exceed \$793,280.

COUNCIL MEMBER ALISON ALTER'S OFFICE

- 1) *Where do you intend to host / install this immersive interactive training room?*

The immersive interactive training room will be installed at one training facility and in two mobile units. The facility is located at 4201 Ed Bluestein in the Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS) training facility. The two mobile units will be installed in custom trailers that can be moved throughout the city, county, and region

**Item 26:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for a residential rate advocate with Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. d/b/a Raftelis, for a term of two years in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANESSA FUENTES' OFFICE

- 1) *What is the identified residential rate advocate's outreach plan for community engagement?*

Austin Water (AW) is conducting a comprehensive cost of service (COS) rate study to review the methods for determining fair and defensible rates for utility services, with a number of entities involved. The process includes a cost of service rate consultant (NewGen Strategies & Solutions) through a contract Council previously approved, along with a residential rate advocate consultant to advocate on behalf of residential customers, and a public involvement committee to review the cost of service methodologies used to allocate costs amongst customer classes. Before finalizing the COS study, AW will conduct extensive stakeholder engagement through focus groups, virtual meetings, and presentations to key organizations. AW is currently developing a coordinated stakeholder outreach plan that will include stakeholder outreach by AW, NewGen and the proposed residential rate advocate (Raftelis). Once this item for the residential rate advocate contract is approved by Council, AW will work with the recommended rate advocate to finalize the rate advocate outreach plan.

**Item 28:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for preconstruction and construction services for the Austin Convention Center Redevelopment project with JE Dunn/Turner, a joint venture, in an amount not to exceed \$1,200,000,000.

## COUNCIL MEMBER VANESSA FUENTES' OFFICE

### 1) *How will council be kept apprised of the project as it goes along?*

The Project Team will be conducting extensive stakeholder/community engagement through the design process and will regularly update City Council and the community on our efforts. To that end, and recognizing the significant lift this engagement will require, the Project Team is bringing on board a communications firm to assist with the engagement throughout the life of the project. The Project Team will prioritize providing City Council and our community with updates on the project via quarterly reports and biannual in-person presentations. In addition, the Project Team will create a continually updated dashboard for City Council and the community to reference as the project progresses. The dashboard will be created in the planning and design phases, and it will be available until completion of the project.

### 2) *How has the design and scope changed?*

The Austin Convention Center Redevelopment Project scope has not changed, and the design development will begin once a contract has been executed with the approved Architect. Council provided Project direction in June 2021 with the passing of Resolution 20210610-096 and with the approval of the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) methodology (Resolution No. 20210610-005).

The Project Team incorporated Council's direction in the scope of services which include the goals of the Palm District Planning Initiative, the University of Texas' Center For Sustainable Development's "Frameworks for Placemaking", the Urban Land Institute's Technical Advisory Panel, the Panel Report for the I-35 Corridor, the Downtown Austin Alliance's Downtown Vision, the Waterloo Greenway/Waller Creek Design Plans, and other City of Austin initiatives including citizen input in design processes, sustainability, Urban Design Guidelines, Great Streets, Art in Public Places, family-friendly features per policy direction in Resolution No. 20120301-051.

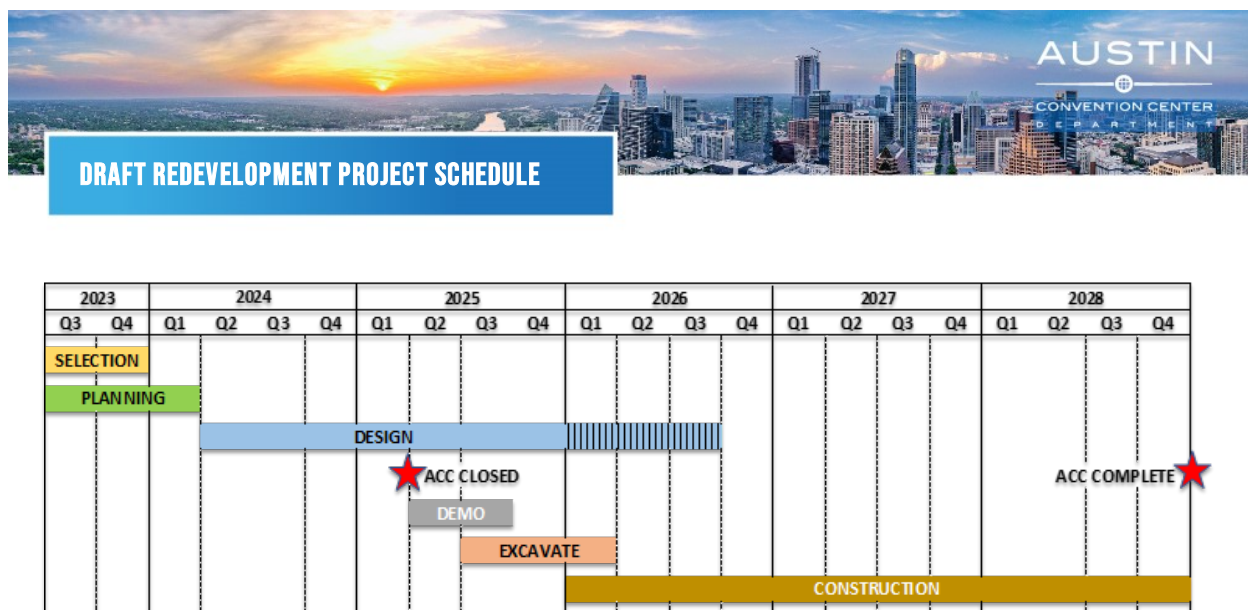
### 3) *[Please provide a] review of how we are financing it.*

In August 2019, Council approved (Item 148 on the August 8, 2019 agenda) an increase in the municipal hotel occupancy tax rate (HOT) from 9% to 11% in support of an expansion of the Austin Convention Center. This 2% Chapter 351 HOT, along with the 4.5% HOT and Convention Center facility revenues, comprise the financing revenue for this project. The current plan of finance for the Convention Center expansion is considering the issuance of multiple series of bonds between 2026 and 2029 as construction occurs and construction cashflow is needed. Bonding capacity is being modeled with a focus on a minimum HOT revenue to debt service ratio of a 125% (or 1.25x debt service coverage), which is the minimum coverage ratio for an A bond rating. Currently, the City's Convention Center credit has a bond rating of "A", which is attributable to strong trends in HOT revenue, robust debt coverage ratio levels, and good financial management. The actual debt service costs will depend on a variety of factors including the ultimate cost of the Convention Center redevelopment and expansion design, bond structuring, and interest rates on the bonds (which is directly related to credit ratings and the interest rate environment at the time of issuance). In addition to debt that will be issued in support of this project, the Convention Center will contribute funds available for this project from the Capital Fund over the construction period, closing the gap between the bonding capacity and the estimated project costs. The Convention Center has worked closely with HVS Consulting, Conventional

Wisdom, the City's financial advisor (PFM), and the City's corporate financial team to develop and vet projections for this project, and they will continue to provide guidance and support throughout the process.

4) *[Please provide an] Estimate[d] construction timeline.*

At a high level, the below graphic shows the current draft timeline for the construction schedule. The planning phase began January 2023 and produced a plan for executing the project. The design phase will run from mid-2024 to almost the end of 2026 with different parts of the project being permitted just ahead of the sequence of construction (demo plan, excavation plan, structural plan, etc.) to reduce overall project time. Demolition will begin after SXSW ends, spring 2025, with excavation following and continuing through spring 2026. Construction is to begin spring of 2026 through winter of 2028 with the Convention Center planned to open in 2029 in time for SXSW 2029.



5) *[Please provide an] Interim plan for employees and operations while the CC is closed.*

**Operations:** The Austin Convention Center Department will continue to operate during the construction period, working with area hotels and Palmer Events Center to accommodate current, planned events.

**Employee Plan:** The Austin Convention Center Department (ACCD) is an enterprise department comprised of 301 full-time staff positions. As such, ACCD is not funded by property taxes, sales taxes, or transfers from the electric and water utilities. The ACCD does not anticipate any staffing reductions of full-time employees during the time of closure as it will coordinate with City departments to reallocate personnel temporarily to assist with any service needs through the City. Additionally, ACCD staff will be used to manage the redevelopment and expansion project, work with current and future clients to maximize booking and planning events within the new facility and train our staff for a successful reopening. Finally, during construction, ACCD will assess holding full-time vacancies, which are due to attrition or retirement, for longer

periods during the time of the closure to further control costs. It is important to note that ACCD successfully managed expenditures during the initial years of the COVID-19 pandemic and will endeavor to do the same during the time of the closure.

**Item 30:** Authorize negotiation and execution of a contract for power generating equipment with Genserve LLC d/b/a LJ Power, for up to four years for a total contract amount not to exceed \$20,500,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANESSA FUENTES' OFFICE

1) *Please list out all identified locations under this contract.*

Below is the list of generators that staff plans to order on this contract. These generators are in addition to the generators that have already been ordered on MA NA230000006 in support of Resolution No. 20230323-060, which directed the City Manager to perform an inventory of emergency generators and assess the operational functionality of emergency backup power at Austin Fire Department and Austin-Travis County Emergency Services stations. MA NA230000006 is the existing contract for generator inspections, maintenance, and repair used to order generators.

Location	Address	Location	Address
<b>APD East Substation and Forensics</b>	812 Springdale Rd	<b>Fire Station 15</b>	829 Airport Blvd
<b>APD Evidence Warehouse</b>	4708 E MLK Jr Blvd	<b>Fire Station 18</b>	6311 Berkman Dr
<b>APD North Substation / Municipal Court</b>	12425 Lamplight Village Ave	<b>Fire Station 19 / EMS 08</b>	5211 Balcones Dr
<b>APD Patrol Building</b>	701 E 8th St	<b>Fire Station 20 / EMS 02</b>	6601 Manchaca Rd
<b>APD Police Headquarters</b>	715 E 8th St	<b>Fire Station 21</b>	4201 Spicewood Springs Rd
<b>APD South Substation</b>	404 Ralph Ablanado Dr	<b>Fire Station 22 / EMS 12</b>	5309 E Riverside Dr
<b>BSD HQ</b>	411 Chicon	<b>Fire Station 23 / EMS 13</b>	1330 E Rundberg Ln
<b>City Hall Unit #1</b>	301 W 2nd St	<b>Fire Station 25/ EMS 10</b>	5228 Duval Rd
<b>City Hall Unit #2</b>	302 W 2nd St	<b>Fire Station 26</b>	6700 Wentworth Dr
<b>EMS Station 01 - DC 04</b>	3616 S 1st St	<b>Fire Station 31</b>	5507 FM 2222
<b>EMS Station 03</b>	1305 Red River St (Brackenridge Hospital)	<b>Fire Station 36 / EMS 15</b>	400 Ralph Ablanado Dr
<b>EMS Station 05</b>	5701 N. Lamar Blvd	<b>Fire Station 40 / EMS 29 - DC 03</b>	12711 Harris Glenn Dr
<b>EMS Station 14</b>	7200 Berkman Dr	<b>Fire Station 41 / EMS 35</b>	11205 Harris Branch Pkwy
<b>EMS Station 17</b>	2307A Foster Ave	<b>Fire Station 47</b>	4200 City Park Rd

<b>EMS Station 24</b>	4010 FM 1327	<b>Fire Station 48</b>	14312 Hunters Bend Rd
<b>EMS Station 33</b>	4518 James Wheat St	<b>Fire Station 49 / EMS 20</b>	11112 Old San Antonio Rd
<b>EMS Station 38</b>	3400 Andtree	<b>Fire Station 50</b>	7019 Elroy Rd.
<b>Fire Station 01 / EMS 06</b>	401 E 5th St	<b>Fire Station 51 / EMS 40 - DC 07</b>	5410 W US Hwy 290 Service Rd
<b>Fire Station 02</b>	506 W MLK Jr Blvd	<b>Fire Station 52 / EMS 41</b>	4601 Westlake Dr
<b>Fire Station 03</b>	201 W 30th St	<b>Fire Station 9</b>	4301 Speedway
<b>Fire Station 04</b>	1000 Blanco St	<b>Public Safety Training Campus</b>	4800 Shaw Lane Bldg. I
<b>Fire Station 07</b>	201 Chicon St	<b>Public Safety Training Campus</b>	4801 Shaw Lane Bldg. J
<b>Fire Station 08 / EMS 07</b>	8989 Research Blvd	<b>Public Safety Training Campus</b>	4802 Shaw Lane Bldg. K
<b>Fire Station 10</b>	3009 Windsor Rd	<b>Techni center (TC) Main Bldg.</b>	4201 Ed Bluestein Blvd
<b>Fire Station 11</b>	1611 Kinney Ave	<b>Techni center (TC) Chiller</b>	4201 Ed Bluestein Blvd
<b>Fire Station 12</b>	2109 Hancock Dr	<b>Town Lake Center</b>	721 Barton Springs Rd
<b>Fire Station 14 / Special Ops</b>	4305 Airport Blvd		