

Public Health Committee (PHC) meeting Transcript – 2/7/2024

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[10:01:09 AM]

he takes it. Okay. Planning. >> Are we good? Perfect. All right. Good morning, everyone. It is 10:01 A.M, and I'm calling the meeting of the Austin city council public health committee to order. It is 1001 on Wednesday, February seventh, 2024. And we are here in the city council chambers. Welcome, everyone to our public health committee meeting of our first public health committee meeting of the year is our first. Yeah, I guess it is February. Look at that. Welcome and I'd like to recognize our newest member of our public health committee, councilmember zo qadri. Welcome. We're thrilled that you have joined our public health committee. Today we have a relatively short but very important agenda. We will hear from our homeless homelessness strategy officer, David gray, and also discuss some board appointments. We will have to go into executive session, towards the end of our committee. And then I'd like to recognize that

[10:02:09 AM]

then I'd like to recognize that we are joined here by dozens of community members who will be sharing some remarks with us here shortly, and would like to welcome them. Thank you all for being here this morning. So to lay out our agenda for today, we're going to start with public communications. Then we'll take a look at the meeting minutes from our last committee meeting for approval from there we will have community members come present to us and join us for the update from the zo office. That's the homelessness strategy office and endeavors. Then we will go to move on to central health appointments, followed by item number three, which is a discussion on the sobering center board appointments where we may well, actually, we will be in an executive session for both items. And so any questions on the agenda. All right. So I guess we will start first with public communications and may the clerk's office please start us off with this. Speaker. Each speaker will have two minutes for their remarks. >> Good morning, madam chair.

[10:03:10 AM]

>> Good morning, madam chair. The first speaker up is Chris Edelman. The second speaker will be Antonio Romero. When your name is called, please come to the mic or to the podium. You will have two minutes. Chris Edelman, Antonio Romero, Thomas Woodard. He has two. >> Good morning. Committee. My name is Thomas Woodward and that's me on that graphic right there. Yeah it'll come up. I've been my name is Thomas Woodward. I've, I'll get to that. I've been on several advisory boards. I've been involved with, agency oversight. And, I worked for six years with the challenger

[10:04:11 AM]

years with the challenger newspaper and informing the community of, how to correct our issues here with the homelessness. We are government by the consent of the govern. I had submitted recently about, the cold weather shelter, food modifications for the nutritional, deficiencies. And I appreciate those offices that had responded to that. That's me on that, graphic up there. 2022. I temporarily put my stuff in a city storage facility and a city employee, had taken my stuff, which had rendered me homeless. And that's why I'm here. Yeah. The downtown community court, I had in regards to this issue, right here, I continued to keep them updated in regards to the theft and the behavior going on there. And, Jeremy Myers, who is the supervisor of that, retaliated against me by

[10:05:12 AM]

retaliated against me by informing his employees that I was telling him about their theft and they were coming after me. That goes to show the integrity of the downtown Austin community court. Okay. The continuum of care, which all this operates under needs to be modified. I'm going to work with hud on modifying that. Continue to care the continuing the need to do something. These agencies over the years, I mean, I've been involved in advocacy for the past ten years and, these agencies should be working themselves out of business and not expanding, they, you know, we've had ten years of stagnation in regards to, well, we'll go back to 2018 when I had to file an injunction against the city contract for front steps because of, behavior that was going on within front steps. Front steps was eventually moved

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Front steps was eventually moved removed from the city shelter. As regards to that. And then we took that leader and then we put them that leader in the homeless strategy office. As my time up. >> Thank you. Speaker next speaker up is Logan green, then Fran, titu, Sasha. Rose, if you are here, please come to the mic . >> All good. Okay. Hi, everyone. I'm Logan green and I'm a social work intern at central presbyterian church. I frequently talk with and work with our neighbors experiencing homelessness who tell me about the barriers they have accessing shelter and so from working with our unhoused neighbors, I have become aware of the lack of cohesion and communication between city run shelters, including the marshaling yard, for example, and the marshaling yard and other city run shelters , the marshaling yard and other city run shelters differ, and their individual entry process, which creates confusion in a

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which creates confusion in a feeling of uncertainty with their unhoused neighbors. And so this lack of cohesion between shelters creates a system that feels unfair, where some may be able to access housing before others purely based on who they know. And so I believe it would benefit our unhoused neighbors. If there were there would be greater collaboration and coordination among the city's shelters. And I believe by establishing a strong community communication channels and, and standardized protocols, we could give our neighbors attempting to secure shelter a better chance of doing so. And prevent them from falling through the cracks. And also, I'm concerned about the planned closure of marshaling yard in August. Our unhoused neighbors have expressed to me the benefit of this shelter and other shelters and providing a safe place to rest. And so without Austin already having a shortage of shelters, I hope to see the marshaling yard stay open as a vital resource for our unhoused neighbors. I believe that working to, create a coordinated system of city run shelters and

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system of city run shelters and keeping the marshaling yard open will create a more compassionate, efficient, and effective support system for the unhoused population in our city. Thank you for your work in addressing homelessness and being part of the effort to address this issue that affects members of our community. >> Next speaker is Sasha rose. Fran titu, and Jesus Gonzalez. If you are here, please make your way to the mic. Ricky Leva, Carmen Yanez. Brand titu, Sasha rose, Jesus Gonzalez. If your name is called, please make your way to the mic. Ricky Leva. >> Good day. My name is not really important. It's my experience. I've been homeless in multiple states and seven plus cities. I've seen multiple models of, like homeless

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models of, like homeless shelters and. And the biggest problem that I've seen is, there's not enough. There's not enough, infrastructure. To like, be there when it happens. Now, if you want to, solve homelessness, you gotta have to kind of do it with infrastructure where we don't have the square footage available. To serve our, our unhoused neighbors, time and the quality of life should be considered because it's also a turn off, you know, a lot of individuals like myself have been through the prison system and also the CPS systems, and we have a lot of, PTSD and trauma from our experiences. And I myself intentionally don't use shelters that remind me of, the prison, facilities or, my foster home when I stayed at the haven

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home when I stayed at the haven for hope, shelter down in, San Antonio, one thing I didn't like about it was, the police presence. There were a high number of police presence and it just made me very uncomfortable. Well. So I would wait till the overflow shelter opened up at 10:00 and use that their facilities where they didn't have the same amount of police presence as now, a lot of our, issues on the streets has to do with, like our diet, and we don't get the best diet. And our bodies are kind of paying for it, man. Like we don't have that. It >> All right. Thank you. >> Next speaker, Carmen Yanez Kisa. Prince Lisa Rhames. Good morning, council members.

[10:11:23 AM]

morning, council members. >> I want to thank you for your service on this committee and your attention to this important issue, because I know you all care greatly about these community Luz. You are hearing from a lot of directly impacted folks, and I encourage you to take their recommendations really seriously and to pause in this investment of \$2 million to McKinsey, which I know you know, could double the rental assistance that the City could immediately support. Some people from being out on the street right now could help get people off the street right now. And a lot of these folks know exactly how to make that happen. You know how it is in our communities when you hire an expensive consultant and they come, who do they come to? They come to our people and they ask us for everything we know so they can put it in a report for you. This particular company has no trust. Why why? Because those of us who have been hurt by the privatized immigration, an incarceration system, those of us who have lost people to the fentanyl crisis, those of us who have watched our neighbors

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have watched our neighbors evicted from apartments that are demolished to build expensive, dense units. This happened in your district at Eberhardt. They couldn't even get that postponed. But I met with those tenants and they are the people who are ending up on the streets because they don't have

another place to go. So I urge you all to look at this company and its history of getting involved in creating problems that it then comes in to get big contracts to assess how to solve. Because that is a track record with McKinsey on those three issues, I say that as a person who has watched people suffer at the hands of the private detention system of immigrants, I say that as somebody who lost my homie from the two three that I went to prom with in LBJ to a fentanyl overdose, who lost, whose family lost his little brother. Five years later, in November. And I say that to you as somebody who has watched too many people renting in Austin for years, those folks in district two, they went to palm school.

[10:13:25 AM]

they went to palm school. They're our elders. So please reconsider this contract. You can help people right away with the money. >> And I remind speakers, if you would please announce your name as you begin speaking, please announce yourself for 92 district nine outreach liaison Austin mutual aid. >> I thank the committee for this time today and for a chance for us to all come together and seek solutions. I echo my friends concerns about McKinsey and I'm going to be echoing many of the concerns burns that we have about Marshall yard. I understand it, serves a purpose. I run a pop up shelters and help run a shelter for three weeks during Yuri and from that model, I have been coming to council for a couple of years now saying, please consider the smaller service providers and what we suggest are smaller person person oriented shelters. Emergency shelters, halfway homes. We need to serve our domestic violence victims immediately upon need, which is not happening right now. And also respite care people are

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also respite care people are dying because they have nowhere to go, from surgery. And it's heartbreaking. And there are I can promise you, if you gave us the \$9 million, we would set up small shelters in every sector of Austin. People would show up to help us. I'm a chef. I have fed 500 people at a time. It's really quite easy with the dedicated staff to make amazing meals. Austin mutual aid alone has 23 cooks at a volunteer to step forward, and we deliver meals. Secondly, I want to discuss the sweeps and how may we start to, work with APD instead of at cross-purposes? I myself feel threatened when I'm out in the streets and I'm stopping and I'm talking to people. APD comes up and talks to me, and the next thing I know, the area where I was is cordoned off. No offer of assistance. Just I feel threatened, constant. Our survival gear is being thrown into the, you know, the whatever you call them, they're being thrown away. So let's find a way to keep APD from being rogue. I'd like to say that this does not refer to our constable, who people on the street have been

[10:15:28 AM]

people on the street have been telling me they feel protected by. So hats off to any constable that wants to step up and advocate for the unhoused. But please, let's have conversations with APD just to stop this. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Next speaker. >> Hi, I'm Sasha rose Austin. Also with Austin mutual aid. I want to talk about a few things. One, the McKinsey study is incredibly concerning to me. That's a lot of money. We've had a lot of studies done. They're done nationwide. The homelessness is the reason for homelessness is pretty easy to see, especially if you just go jump in our Facebook group, access to rent assistance is incredibly difficult to access. Elton is overwhelmed. They're not getting people people are not getting replies. That lottery system that is currently using is not a true equitable prioritization method. And that's something that I'm seeing system wide. We do not have an equitable, prioritized method for access to shelter, for access to care like Fran said,

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access to care like Fran said, our respite care, our, domestic violence victims are all being overlooked. It's basically an ableist system where if you, you know, either you're in a geographical area for the healing initiative or you're able to present yourself in person, that's not an equitable system. Y'all, we are not prioritizing the right people for a shelter, and we don't have enough shelter. And the sweeps have been incredibly harmful. Just this last week, we had somebody we had an area that was an established camp. There were people that were dumping things into that location. Tires everywhere. APD showed up, the day before. They were very aggressive. They came in and they all they did was demolish the trailer that was there. They didn't pick up any of the trash. They demolished it. It's actually giving an ability for our cruel and dehumanizing Singh. And we are working our butts off. We, help support 1600 people. This last free. So these cold weather shelters, this needs to be a more citywide. We

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needs to be a more citywide. We can recognize that the one embarkation center is not effective. And requiring people to navigate the city to get to that space, to have access to what is basic needs of sheltering in these extreme weathers is incredibly inequitable and inefficient. It's inefficient. Y'all. Y'all, y'all rely upon us to help you get these people into shelters, and then your time is up again. >> I'll call Carmen Carmen Yanez , Keisha prince, Lisa Rhames, and jj Ramirez. If you are here, please come to the mic. Hi. >> Good morning, mayor and jj Ramirez. I'm an organizer at vocal Texas. Committee members. We have been doing outreach for months, talking to dozens of residents at the marshaling yard . And I've been hearing, but we're here today speaking in public communication because, again, people who are directly impacted are not being invited

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impacted are not being invited to testify on things that they are experts in. We have to come on our own. Right. And I will also remind the committee that we warn the city that a rush temporary shelter plan at the cost of \$9 million, would have problems. And. And I'll let you know that we have members and leaders here who are going to be giving greater detail some of the issues have been brought up, and, really encourage you guys to, to listen to them. But this isn't the first time we've been speaking right. Our leaders met with David gray, met with zo office just recently to talk about some of the concerns they brought up. And yes, some things have been done, but those things should have been handled. Things like, you know, enough showers, good food, should have been handled in the planning process, not now. While those residents are currently standing there. So, I encourage you to read, to reconsider how you're getting your information right. And since and often and one of the major things that we're not hearing being talked about, of the issues is the discharge is happening at night, right? People are getting kicked out at

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People are getting kicked out at night. They're not access to other the other facilities that are here in the city, things like violent storms or people store their equipment to be able to survive outside. That insight comes from people who are directly impacted and why this committee and all other service providers should be listening to people not talking amongst themselves on how you think the city should should help fix the problem. And I also say that on this, on this, Mckinsey thing. Right. What we're hearing is that there's an overall lack of care and compassion in our response system. And with funding being very often the reason that we do not have an adequate program, spending \$2 million on a, spending \$2 million on an institute that has helped companies like Purdue pharma, like, expand the opioid crisis. And just saying, right, our people know what's happening. If you need if you need. >> Thank you. Speaker. Your time is up right here today. >> They know what's happening. >> Thank you. Speaker Suzy Beeson Victoria Marshall, Sam dong. >> Good morning. Committee

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>> Good morning. Committee members. My name is Suzy Beeson. Thanks for the opportunity to testify. I was unhoused on the streets for seven months in downtown Austin. Then I got into the marshaling yard for a months ago. I'm very grateful to be there and I appreciate all the work you've done so far. The marshaling yard has been, they've had a few problems with the food. Most of all, there it is, served cold every day, and it's the same options every day. Culver's domino is Denise taco cabana, church's chicken over and over this past week, we had the Culver's burgers, over against five times in a row, except for the pancakes. But we did. I did speak with David gray, and we got fresh fruit and some snacks, which was very appreciated. Sometimes sandwiches in between the meals. And finally he got us the microwaves last week they were installed. We really appreciate

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installed. We really appreciate that because we can make our own soups and stuff, especially now there's a lot of colds, flus going around because they have a problem with the thermostat. They can't turn the heat down, so it's incubating germs. There is no ventilation. Except this past week they did open the bay doors to get fresh air in, but there's a lot of people just passing the germs back and forth. I don't understand why they can't separate the beds when they have more than half of the empty warehouse. Keeping people away from like during covid, we had distance, basic public health, and now we're right on top of each other, like right next to just enough room to walk between the beds. That's it. A little bit of space in between would help a lot, and keeping things cleaner and spreading the germs. Lastly, I, I'd like to let you know that we have nowhere to wash our dishes. We have to use the janitor closet, which is just a sink on the floor with a mop bucket, and they use that hose to thank you.

[10:22:38 AM]

they use that hose to thank you. >> Speaker. Your time is expired . Mop the floor. >> You know that goes right directly in the mop bucket. >> Thank you. Speaker. Your time is expired. >> Okay. Thank you very much. Bye bye. >> Victoria Marshall. Sam Duong, les Antonelli. Good morning. My name is Victoria Marshall. >> I am a member of boca, Texas. Thank you for your time today. I've been unhoused for two years and I've been staying at the marshaling yard for six months, living on the street has been terrifying. Unsafe for me. Not being able to lay my head down to get proper rest without out danger coming to me. Always on the lookout for other strangers to try to prey on me. This only brought on more anxiety, depression, along with other chronic disabilities. I have physically and mentally. I am now living at the marshaling yard for an unknown time, temporarily. I've been affected by unsafe sanitary conditions,

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by unsafe sanitary conditions, making me sick over and over. The living area, not being mopped, furniture, couches, tables and bathrooms going unsanitized. And employees doing unsanitary acts, wiping toilets down using same towel to wipe down the bathroom sinks and faucets, using the same mop water they use for bathroom floors to give to us who are living there to, to mop our areas. This is unacceptable. My writing staffs are not staying in their proper place to watch over us, to make sure we and our belongings are safe as things have been stolen in water jugs being filled by the from the janitor room carried by the people living there to make coffee. All all of this is in danger to my health. Chronic illnesses. It can also cause my

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illnesses. It can also cause my lupus to get worse. I could even be hospitalized. And this is not what I expected. When I came to stay at Marston yard, I came to get housed with permanent housing because of my disability and limited income. >> Thank you. Speaker. Your time has expired. Sam Duong les antin , aunt lily les and tilly Gloria Chapa, your name is called. Please make your way to the mic. Let me know when to start. >> Okay. Good morning, city council. My name is Lester and tilly. I am a member of vocal Texas. I've been unhoused for six months, and I've been staying at the marshaling yard for two months during my time of being in housing in Austin, it was extremely difficult to find a public shower and public bathrooms, and I thought that

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bathrooms, and I thought that being in the Marshall marshaling yard that this actually this, this stress of mine would be relieved. Well, let me tell you, that was not the case at the marshaling yard for 200 men. We share a for showers. Not only are the showers full of build up, the shower curtains that were once white are now brown due to lack of cleanliness by endeavors in its staff, subject to the lack of sanitation, I personally contracted cellulitis. It's a severe bacterial infection on the skin, which resulted in multiple lesions, painful lesions on my left leg. So I did go to the doctor immediately after my doctor visit. The conditions of the showers had not changed. Although vocal Texas had raised concerns to zo, I took it upon myself personally to clean a shower each time before I used it, and having someone homeless, staying in a shelter, needing to buy their own cleaning supplies. I feel that that just isn't right. Seeing as how they were quite staffed. Fortunately for myself, I have found housing, but there are still hundreds of people living in these conditions. Okay, I want you guys to consider that if the city wants to do something right, you should listen to

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right, you should listen to people like me and the residents of marshaling yard because we know what it takes to make shelters a caring, safe, and compassionate place. Thank you. >> Good morning everyone. Gloria Chapa, I've been at the Marshall yard for five weeks today, and, the staff is not very nice. They discriminate and they have their favorites. And at night time, you can't even sleep because they're too busy fighting the security guards are too busy on their cell phones. So there's a lot of violence, drugs coming in. Bacteria is terrible. Nobody cares. In order to get attention , you have to have an affair with the security guard. It should be investigated because it's not right. I don't want to die there. I got liver cancer

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die there. I got liver cancer and I don't want to die there. And it would be nice if somebody would care about how we live. Thank you. God bless. >> Sam Duong, if you are here, Barry Jones, Vernon German, Kathy Mitchell. >> Hello. City council. Thanks for this opportunity to testify. My name is Barry Jones, and I've been homeless for nine years. I stayed at the marshaling yard for three months. Excuse me. Two minutes really isn't adequate to describe the marshaling yard, but I'll give it my best shot. I particularly wanted to talk about access to health care and the ejection policies. So I have major depression. I take six medications for that condition. My medications take six weeks before they begin to work. And about that time to stop, at the

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about that time to stop, at the marshaling yard, I was denied, trips to the promised trips to the my medical doctors, my medical appointments. I was also denied access to my medications. My medications were stolen out of my backpack. I told the manager of the shelter. He said he would check the security tapes. There were security cameras all over that place. He never got back to me about that. I was, told that I would get, could get a replaced medications. I was kept strung along with that line for weeks. I was off my meds for about four weeks, and then I had. I told my caseworker I'm going to be having problems if I don't get my medication soon. I told him that early in the situation after four weeks, I had a incident with a staff worker where we got into an argument. I

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where we got into an argument. I threw some food on the floor. I lost my temper. And APD was called, before APD got their security handcuffed me and dragged me across the floor by the handcuffs. I was left lying in the floor until APD arrived, when APD arrived, they said that I was going to be charged with assault for pushing the staff member for. I told them to look at the security cameras because everything was on the security cameras. >> Thank you, speaker. Your time is expired. >> Austin needs to take more responsibility for their shelters. They can't just let everything shut off to the police, contractors. >> Vernon Jarman at these shelters. Cathy Mitchell Pauletta Soltani. >> My name is Vernon Jarman and I'm a leader of vocal Texas. Thank you all for letting me. Thank y'all for letting me speak today. I was unhoused for a year and a half to two years. I first

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and a half to two years. I first got housing with a rapid rehousing voucher. I wasn't able to work because of my disability , so my case manager helped me get permanent housing choice voucher. And now I have

a place to live permanently. What? Our case manager? No one get houses. I want to speak today against the 2 million Mackenzie study, and I urge you to spend these dollars on case managers instead, because we want to get people housing you need case managers, not Mackenzie. Thank you. Have a blessed day . >> Good morning. Committee members. Thank you for having

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members. Thank you for having us. My name is Paulette Soltani. I'm the co-director of a grassroots organization called vocal Texas. I want to start by saying we've been raising concerns about the marshaling yard and most of the responses that we've received have been around the temporary nature of the marshaling yard. So I want to start by saying no, it is not okay to make excuses, because this is a so-called temporary shelter. No better than nothing is not good enough for people in the city who are unhoused. And the documents that are being passed out to you have been given to have been given to residents of the marshaling yard when they enter the shelter. I've highlighted one specific area on the front page about the appeals process around discharges, which some some of the people have already mentioned. So you'll see it mentions members can appeal their discharge by emailing their appeal to esd endeavors. Org, their shelter manager, will be responsible for delivering the appeals to endeavors, leadership whenever that next meeting happens. With endeavors

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meeting happens. With endeavors leadership, then the person will find out within 24 hours what the outcome of it is. I want to ask the members of the committee here how many clients do you honestly think have been able to utilize this appeals process successfully to get back into the shelter? The second printout is a photograph of a list of rules posted on the shelter. These rules are open ended. They state that you can be discharged from the shelter for 24 hours, 48 hours, or even permanently. They're open ended and really subjective to what we've learned is they're subjective to whatever the staff think. And so I give these to you today because this is a massive issue that we've been hearing over and over again, people being discharged. We don't know at what time these are happening. We don't know what the policy is. And there's really no oversight. We understand that the city has no discharge policy for cities, for shelters across the city. And so, along with that, I think at a very minimum, we need to be asking for data, to understand how many

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to understand how many discharges are happening across the city. How many? Thank you. Speaker >> If you if you can finish your sentence, please. >> Okay. >> Then there is a lack of understanding. And if we're going to have a conversation about the marshaling yard, we need to understand how many

discharges are happening when they're happening, who are they happening to? Our housing placements happening as often we believe that discharges are far outpacing the number of housing placements that are happening through the through the marshaling yard. There's so many other questions that we have around food quality. Quality and understanding whether there's a new vendor that's being vetted so that people can actually eat healthy food if they're staying at this shelter. For how many Ada bathrooms are available for people? We've heard over and over again that the accommodations at the shelter are not good enough for people who have disability, as we understand, there's a grievance box for people to file grievances. If they have suggestions or concerns. Who's reading those? What's happening to those grievances? We can't

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to those grievances? We can't just allow hundreds of people to be put in a warehouse and not ask these questions. And if we're going to have a conversation about this today, those are the expectations that we have as a community is to have that information here today. Present for this committee and for the community and the public to hear it. Thank you. >> Hi. My name is Cathy Mitchell. I'm so glad to see you all here today. This is a really great committee. I, I would encourage you to hear everything you're hearing today. I think there's certainly a need for the city to investigate its own services and make sure that they are meeting basic human needs. However, I am here today to remind you that McKinsey is not a group that anyone trusts to do that kind of work in this community. I would suggest that

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community. I would suggest that our county has put us on a different timeline, and it is a reasonable timeline on one of the concerns that I have about this whole process with McKinsey is that many of the programs that presumably are would be studied as part of this, that are happening in our partner arenas, haven't even rolled out yet. So I would suggest that for example, there's an item coming to you anytime soon. I'm not sure when, but I hope you will vote for it. That is the mental health diversion pilot coming from the county. The mental health diversion pilot is another multiple funded multi-party project that is intended to provide a better outcome for people with mental illness than going to the jail, which is where they still go. There was a downtown Austin

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There was a downtown Austin alliance forum just this morning on this topic in which it was made clear that that, you know, we still have a very serious forensic mental health problem in our county and that the county jail is still our largest mental health provider here. And so in a moment when that project is literally coming towards you, I hope I, I would like to see it on the next agenda to be approved in that

moment, it is not the right time to start a conversation about what everybody else is doing in this town. We have plenty that we need to study in Austin about what we're doing, and we can wait to let the county actually roll out its most important programs and just so you know, I was on the working groups for the creation of this, program for mental health diversion. So I do remember how long ago those meetings were. We've been

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meetings were. We've been meeting on this since 2022. So thank you. >> Speaker. Next speaker up is Beverly manning, Chris Harris, Anna Harris. >> Good morning. My name is Chris Harris. I'm with the Austin justice coalition. I live in district nine. Now that the county has voted down partnering with the city on the McKinsey study, the council has the chance to right the wrong of this contract and force city manager Garza to revisit the deal, as he promised he would if there were not partners. The contract doesn't work without partners. The study is unnecessary and the vendor corrupt. The study is an improper use of precious arpa dollars. The arpa program was designed to help address less covid and remake our society in ways that really make substantial improvements for the long term. Long term

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long term. Long term investments. This does not do that. We urge this committee to recommend revisit this contract immediately, something that can and should be funded is the mental health diversion center in partnership with the county. This provides new resources to people with mental health diagnoses, promises to keep people that need care out of the jail and the legal system, and more effectively and efficiently addresses public health and safety and most importantly, treats people humanely. We urge this committee to immediately put the \$2 million the city promised on the council agenda, so that this important work can begin. Finally, it's the literally the least you can do. After spending over \$9 million on a subpar shelter with no mental health services, I'm here to echo the serious concerns with the marshaling yard brought to you by those directly impacted. Listen to community before investments and expensive boondoggles that seem more designed to hide unhoused folks on the east side. As usual, more than actually about addressing homelessness. Thank you. Beverly manning and Anna Harris and Anna

[10:40:02 AM]

manning and Anna Harris and Anna Romero, if you're here, please make your way to the mic. >> Hi, my name is Beverly manning, and I'm. >> I'm just here to speak about being homeless because I used to be. About a week ago, I finally got my apartment. And I'm here to speak about other people like me that has

no place to go. So need a place to go and. When I was there, I seen a lot of things that wasn't right. That should be correct and is not being corrected. But. I just want to speak on behalf of the

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want to speak on behalf of the other people like me that that's still out there. And need a place, want a place, and can't get a place right now. But. It's very sad because it took me. On a waiting list a year and a half and still nothing. And then I got to advocate. It took me five months. That's when I got mine. And, I just want to say I'm very thankful and grateful. And I hope you all do the same for others very quickly. Thank you. >> Hi, my name is Anna Romero.

[10:42:08 AM]

>> Hi, my name is Anna Romero. The time I spent on the streets was very scary. I am part of, Rina renters an unhoused neighbors alliance. My mother and I were previously unhoused and living in the streets for three years before we received much needed help from volunteers . Was a,. The time I spent on the streets was very scary and dangerous, especially with my mother, who was diagnosed with kidney failure during our time unhoused. We went through two sweeps where we lost personal belongings. Being unhoused was tougher when than one might think. Even though I was working to support my mother and self, the weather conditions were brutal. Summer days were nightmares and relief from heat was almost nonexistent. Winter nights felt hopeless, and staying warm in a tent was nearly impossible. Getting food usually meant eating expired or unhealthy food, which caused stomach issues and other health issues, and without access to restrooms oftentimes meant accidents happened, and it was only through the grace of volunteers that we were able to get off of the streets and into

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get off of the streets and into housing. Many people who believe that the unhoused don't want to work, is false. And I was proof of that. I spent I've now been at my job right now for four years. Three of those years was unhoused. Thank you. >> Anna Harris soul praxis Daniela silva. >> Good morning. My name is soul praxis. I'm here on behalf of the renters and unhoused neighbors alliance and community, part eight. We support local Texas efforts to get transparency and accountability from the homeless strategy office and to demand investments in permanent housing . There's this false narrative that people want to stay on the streets despite sheltering options. But vocal Texas is raising some of the many real reasons people don't go to shelters. There's no compassion, respect, fairness, or even

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respect, fairness, or even competency. When I've offered spots to the marshaling yard to unhoused neighbors, I know no one has wanted to go because of experiences as shelters in general, and because of what they've heard about the marshaling yard. One Ann friend on the streets of north Austin, who chose not to go for those many reasons, raised, also declined shelter during the freeze. I checked in with him before and after the freeze to see if he needed support, and if he had survived, he said, quote, could be better. Could be worse. My friend that camped near me caught himself on fire and died. He was a cool dude in the reporting about the loss of this person's life on the news, it said that city officials would like to remind residents of the cold weather shelters available as if he had died because it was his choice not to take advantage of this resource. Let me say that this death was preventable through action by the city and the homeless, strategy office. First, make shelters safe, compassionate, and fair. Second, there's no excuse. After years of freezes to not have effective outreach and freeze responses. I volunteered during every freeze this year with Austin mutual aid to distribute warming and survival supplies to unhoused neighbors trying to survive the

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neighbors trying to survive the cold. Many people did go to the cold weather shelter, but many choose not to. They're incredibly resourceful and surviving together in freezing conditions. For those who. Chose not to go, this was most often because it would mean losing all of their belongings. The city should fund roaming survival check ins, not by cops with warming supplies and medical checkups in the way that mutual aid organizations do every year. The city should have provided robust storage options, offering transportation and storage for folks belongings. This would take building relationships and trust and explaining that these resources are available. But the city doesn't do any of that. There's a lack of trust and credibility because the city sweeps camps alongside the police. In fact, there were sweeps the week before the freeze and provide permanent supportive housing. I'll end all the rest of my notes to y'all. >> Daniela Silva, Selene Rendon and Rita Thompson. >> Good morning council. My name is Daniela Silva. I'm a resident of district three. I'm here today to amplify and uplift the

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today to amplify and uplift the messages that you're hearing from people with lived experience. But most of all, I'm really frustrated because many of the same people who are in this room today were here last year telling you how bad of an idea this was and how wasteful of spending it would be. And it's frustrating that we have to come here again and say, we told you so. So I'm not going to you know, repeat a lot of what was already said today. But what I am going to ask is that lived experience was not listened to and advised last year. And so I asked that you actually pay attention to what these folks are telling you today and act accordingly. It's so frustrating that \$9 million was spent on this subpar plan,

when it could have gone so much further had it been distributed to boots on the ground. Organizations that do this work day in day out. I mean, if you had even chosen

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mean, if you had even chosen nine nine of the you know, most outreaching organizations and given them each \$1 million, it would have done 500% better than the marshaling yard has done thus far. So please take into consideration what these folks are telling you. Try and implement the changes that they are asking that you make, because this poor decision has already been made. So try and improve it as much as possible. And I also would like to address the Mckinsey study, which I asked that you not move forward with. We went through a massive shelter assessment process already, so why are we doing it again? It's such a wasteful use of spending after this government acted so fiscally conservative by massively increasing the amount of our tax dollars that are set aside into the reserve fund. So how are we going to be this wasteful in our spending? The homelessness summit plan from 2021 is still being implemented. Ed and Mackenzie is an awful organization, and we don't want our money going to that firm. So please fund the items that that

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please fund the items that that these folks are are really needing. And the money would be used for better. Thank you. >> Selena Rendon and Rita Thompson. >> Hi, my name is Ricky Leyva. I'm in district one. I've been experiencing housing insecurity for the past three years, and it has been only by the grace and kindness of other people that I have managed to avoid living on the streets. I've been working with Austin mutual aid for the past couple of months, and while reviewing my talking points in the lobby for the past hour, I learned how, frankly disgusting and untrustworthy Mckinsey is. And it made me wonder who in their right mind would want to give \$2 million to a firm like that? It really makes me think, y'all must think we're stupid or not paying attention. But I promise you that we are. And I think that money would be much

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think that money would be much better suited for people who actually want to help, who in good faith, want to give resources to people and help because cause I've lived in Austin my whole life and I shouldn't have to worry about living on the streets. Sorry. Thank you. Last speaker is Rita Thompson. >> Thank you. >> That's that's hard to follow. You know, I'm home secure, and I can't I can't handle it. You know, it's disgusting what's happening in our community. I want to start by saying, who's counting how Mackenzie hyped California housing crisis. So I see how it is they, in their

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see how it is they, in their similar thinkers, create a crisis, a problem they gentrify my east Austin, which we have to make amends to over and over. And then we hire somebody who creates that and touts that and says, now you get more money and clean up the homeless crisis. Are you kidding me? I've been a social worker since 1980. I've worked in residential outpatient and inpatient agent, and I know what a good intake looks like. And I know what a good discharge looks like. And a good discharge does not happen in the dark of night. I remind the caseworkers and those who are social workers with endeavor, who hold a license that we have a code of ethics to adhere to and endeavor is not your client. These residents are your clients. These people are your

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These people are your constituents. One more point. I just want to make disruption of medication in. Can cause psychosis. Is death with aggression suicide. It is inexcusable if that occurred for that to not be seen as a crisis and immediately addressed Ryan alter I am in your district. Please if nothing else today, make sure that endeavor assures you that if medication is not secured or accessible to clients, that something will be done immediately. Thank you. >> We have one more speaker, Andy Brower. Thank you. We have one more speaker, Andy Brower. >> Okay. Thank you. Good morning. >> My name is Andy Brower. I am the neighbors program manager at central presbytery church. I appreciate the efforts of cold weather shelter that the city

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weather shelter that the city has made. Also, the shelters that have, come up to help people. I understand that there's still a lot of issues, but most of the people I've talked to have appreciated having a bed in three meals a day and a shower, even though there's not enough of them. I know that there's a lot of people that it's a warehouse and it's not the best setting, but I am concerned about thousands of people being left out in freezing cold, heat and an unsafe conditions. However, our shelter system is still clouded by a lack of coordination, transparency and barriers for people experiencing homelessness. The shelter process intake should be clear and understood by all and consistent across all three city owned shelters. Leadership has not provided consistent information about this, and there's a lot of confusion. It comes down to it comes down to who you know in order to get into a shelter, people who are homeless know best what they need, but they're not allowed to walk up and say, I need a bed tonight, even if they're suicidal, if they're having a crisis. And that's not right. I

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crisis. And that's not right. I want to point out a national Wyatt's and homelessness report, that they that was done in collaboration with Austin in 2018 and they said a community wide decision making process should be used to determine prioritization while the system needs a consistent prioritization process for matching people to housing, the system has to also have a prioritized prioritization process for people who get shelter beds. That doesn't happen. People need that are fleeing unsafe situations, need a safe and decent place to stay, and an effective homeless crisis response system. Anyone experiencing a housing crisis should easily access shelter. We know that's not the case. I walked someone down to eighth street last week and they were told, this isn't the way to get in, she was fleeing domestic violence. Six years after this report comes out, we still haven't implemented best practice despite a year of asking our leaders to bring all shelters to the table, it's still not being done. The city desperately needs to define its role in homelessness and desperately needs a plan that's done by the leaders and people

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done by the leaders and people who know the system, not an outside contractor. Thank you. That is all. >> Thank you. Thank you to our clerk and thank you to everyone who joined us for our committee meeting for your remarks. And we'll certainly want to dig in to some of the concerns that were raised here shortly. Colleagues, we will now move on to approval of the meeting. Minutes this is item number one. Can I get a motion and a second to approve the December 13th, 2023 meeting minutes? Vice chair Velasquez makes the motion, seconded by council member Ryan alter. Any objections to approving the meeting? Minutes. Seeing none, those stand approved. All right. Now we will move on to receive a briefing on the marshaling yard. Temporary emergency shelter operations, cold weather shelter operations and the healthier partners initiative. And for my understanding, our city manager, Jesus Garza, will be kicking off that briefing. Thank you .

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. >> Council members, I'm, let me tee this up. I know that David is going to get into the specifics of some of the issues that were raised over the course of the last half hour or so, but there's been a lot of questions about the review we want to do of the contracts. >> Relative to the issue of people who experience homelessness, I think that it is safe to say that my position has been since arriving almost a year ago is that this requires a multi jurisdictional effort, and that means that we need all our partners at the table with us on the administrative side. So we can sort through these specific issues that are necessary so that we can have homelessness be rare, brief and non-recurring. This fiscal year we have, have allotted \$80 million out of the general fund for this issue. And I can say that over the last three fiscal years, that is fiscal year 21, fiscal year 22,

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fiscal year 21, fiscal year 22, and fiscal year 23. We've allocated almost in excess of \$200 million to this issue alone in at in that course of that time, the number of homeless have not decreased. But in fact have increased. And that's why this review is so essential. So we can understand from what the leading indicators are so that we can do more preventative work so that people experience that experience. Homelessness is rare and brief, and most of these funds that I've just mentioned are on direct services. They're direct services to the people that experience homelessness. And it's important for the public to know that the city and our partner agencies allocate resources so that we can make wise policy decisions, decisions to allow more effective and efficient services for the vulnerable population in this community. That's why the city of Austin and our partner

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of Austin and our partner agencies met in October of this year so that we could begin discuss that process that we would undertake together to ensure that we were all moving in the right direction and making the investments where we where they could be the most effective representatives from all those agencies, including Travis county, met multiple times over the last months to discuss the comprehensive review . We all understood the current fragmented approach to addressing homelessness is inadequate, and we need a cohesive, integrated strategy to achieve meaningful, sustainable and noticeable outcomes for our community. And during these multiple meetings, our partners with our partners we reviewed provided feedback on the scope of work that would be done. We discussed the launch of the third party contractor and made plans for the working group to begin to review this work. That was absolutely essential, and we used the process by which we landed on this, through a competitive process where Mckinsey was chosen and approved

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Mckinsey was chosen and approved by council. We explained in January to each of the partners for them to be part of this working group. They would need to have some funding level, some skin in the game, if you will, for this review. Central health, integral care contributed our contributing monies toward this contract and the and the county for decisions that they made a week or so ago. They decided not to participate late and in spite of this effort, I've made calls to that those agents, those the commissioners to some of the commissioners, not all of them, as well as to some of the folks that are in in leadership positions that they are welcome to be at our table, that we do need to work as a working group on this issue. And part of the reason we need the work to be done quickly is you will be beginning the debate on fiscal year 25, and I would want the council, I'm sure the council would want to have this

information so that when you make policy choices for fiscal year 25, you're investing the dollars in the area that is that will be the most effective to achieve the best results for our

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achieve the best results for our community. And let me reemphasize what I said just a minute ago. It has always appeared to me just in the year that I've been here, that our approach has not been coordinated. We've had a fragmented we have a fragmented system that doesn't pull the pieces together and the intent of getting these partners together is so that we have a cohesive approach. Understanding how to be much more effective and what it is we do not just with our governmental partners, but those obviously, those private nonprofits that do valuable work in this community. And I wanted you to have that feedback and I know David's going to have some information for you in terms of some of the issues and comments that were raised. Just a minute ago, but it is our intent to be able to serve the poor and vulnerable in a more effective way. And I think the current system and the way we've approached it has not met those objectives. >> Thank you. Thank you manager, real quick, since we have you here, I really appreciate you providing that that background and sharing with our community. About how the healthy partners

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About how the healthy partners initiative came to be. And, you know, there has been conversations going on with the other institutions with central health, Travis county, integral care, part of when city council approved the health, the contract with McKinsey, it was with the stipulation that the city's portion would be 1 million. Is that still the case? >> The contract that was approved was a \$2 million contract, and the and the issue that was raised during council was to say, should the funding not materialize, what would we do? And I think my comment was, if that happened, we would sit and regroup. We would figure out how to change the scope of services so it would fit into the available funding. Okay. So that work is not complete yet. >> That work's not complete. So with with your comment, there is there a scenario here that the city would be paying more than 1 million? >> If it is, it would only be a fraction, a small amount above 1 million. And the number for you yet would that I'm going to provide a memo to the mayor and council to say, this is what we've been able to change in terms of scope of work. This is

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terms of scope of work. This is the number that that, is the total. This is the funding we get from central health. This is the funding we're getting from, integral care. And we may be required to put a little bit more money into this. >> Okay. >> I definitely want to talk that through and perhaps, you know,

certainly will be on the lookout from the memo and maybe we can have a work session conversation on this. You know, I certainly my support for the McKinsey contract was based around that. This was a joint venture that Travis county would also be helping fund, given their change in stance. You know, I would be I have some concerns about the city putting more than 1 million, but we can talk more about that offline and the only thing I'd say is for you to think about, that there this the important the work that's being the work that will be done is so you can have, as policymakers the information you need when you make investments for fiscal year 25 and beyond, the, the approach has been. And has been reinforced over the

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has been reinforced over the years prior to many of you being on council, it's been a pretty fragmented approach. >> And there's no and it's not a it should not be a mystery to anyone. Why we have now we experienced more people with homelessness than when we started this, this effort to try to deal with this issue. So I want to make sure that you have that information. So that it is, informed as it can be. >> Yes. >> Councilmember Qadri, I mean, I just want to echo a lot of things that councilmember Fuentes had said. >> I had abstained from the vote, along with councilmember Harper-Madison, because of the funding. You know, coming from one time ARPA funding and I still have that concern. And hearing that it might we might have to throw a little bit more money, even though it might be a fraction. It gives me a lot of pause. >> I understand, councilman Alter, I, I think, you know, I went back and watched the meeting about this item. >> And, you know, you brought up the conversation that was had and, and the resolution on that, that was stated and where I thought we left off was,

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where I thought we left off was, is that if things did not go as planned, the promise given to us was that it was going to come back to council. >> No, it's not the promise I made, sir, that it is. >> And you said if we get jammed up, we'll come back to council. So this is where we're at and get further direction and so I, I understand the memo idea and I appreciate it. I really do. You know, I've talked about, being able to, to have that advanced notice. I think it's if the lay of the land has changed since we approved that contract. And I think it's important that we understand as a council what what the new what this money is going to be spent on, right. If the original idea was for all the partners to have the assessment, which I think is incredibly important, I share your your desire to get everybody in the right lane and achieve results because we're, we're it's not about spending money. It's about getting the

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money. It's about getting the results. But if Travis county is not coming back till June and if we are going to be more inward focusing and utilizing potentially staff to do that, I think that's just a different notion than where we started. And so I think it's worth the council being able to have that discussion again. And so my request is that it would come back. I don't have that authority to just put it on the agenda. But I just want to voice that, here today and. I just think it's really important and I think we this is an important conversation that we should continue to have, so that we get it right, because it's a lot of money. So that's, thank you. >> Okay. Now we will have David gray, our homelessness strategy officer, who will provide an update on the marshaling yard, cold weather shelter operations

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cold weather shelter operations and more. Thank you. Great >> Thank you very much. Good morning. Commissioners. Good morning, madam chair. First and foremost, I want to thank you all for being here today and giving us an opportunity to update you on the operations at the marshaling yard. More importantly, I also want to thank the clients who are serving, who are here today to voice their thoughts and opinions with our staff about the marshaling yard. I also want to thank our community partners. I'm very proud that our office has a track record of working with local Texas and other organizations to identify challenges that are happening in our shelters and to work to fix those challenges and you heard some of that testimony today about how we've been able to work in partnership to mitigate challenges that have been brought to our attention. We're committed to doing this work. We're committed to standing in that gap and receiving the honest feedback. And I'll be sticking around after today's committee meeting for as long as it takes to meet with anybody who wants to talk to me about what's going on at marshaling yard and with our other shelters. With that, we'll bring up the presentation, and we'll launch

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presentation, and we'll launch into today's discussion. It's the blue one. There you go. Thank you. So today, we'll provide the quick updates on where we're at with our marshaling yard emergency shelter, as well as an update on how we did with cold weather shelter performance. Thus far this year. Just as some background, the marshaling yard opened in August of 2023, endeavors was selected as our facility operators for this site. The site currently serves 300 clients, but you might recall that when we first opened, we capped intake at 200 clients per council direction. That was to give ourselves and endeavors the opportunity to assess the operation, figure out what changes we needed to make in order to best serve our clients, before we increase the maximum capacity. We're also capped at 300 clients. And because we need to reserve some space in the marshaling yard for

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space in the marshaling yard for ongoing convention center activities, as well as mutual aid relationships that we have with the city of galveston, Texas. If there's a hurricane in the gulf, we have a mutual relationship with that city that would allow, galvestonians to come to Austin to seek refuge until the hurricane passes. And so we're capped at 300 clients so far. As of January 15th, which is when this data was compiled, we had a total of 577 calls. Clients cycled through our facility, and just as a reminder, our shelter provides a number of services to the clients that are entrusted to our care. This includes daily transportation, including door to door transfers. So if clients need help getting to doctors appointments, getting to job sites, I was there a few nights ago where we scheduled a 4 A.M. Van to get a number of clients to a day labor center. And even for today's conversation last week, we told endeavors if clients want to come to today's, today's meeting, that we would

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today's meeting, that we would make sure that they had transportation to do so. So we do provide that door to door transportation. We also provide three meals a day. And as you also heard from the public testimony, outside of those three meals, we do provide snack, which we try to make fresh fruit available as well as other meals. And then we now have microwave on site, which is a new addition for clients to warm their own foods. If they'd like. We have pet friendly on site boarding facilities as well as pet food that's offered and so this is to ensure that our clients are able to come in with their friends, their furry friends, as well as with their service animals. We do offer on site wash, dry and folding services, so this is laundry services. The clients take their their laundry items to, a shelter worker. We do the laundry, we fold, and then we provide the clothing back. We do have onsite showering facilities. I do want to be clear that those facilities are cleaned and sanitized each and every day, as well as sprayed down after each clients use. We

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down after each clients use. We also have on site access to case management, case managers from our network of providers do come on site and can come on site to meet with their clients, and we have confidential meeting spaces on site where they can meet with their clients for one on one appointments. We offer a host of wellness activities, including a television area, an open wi-fi network. Next week, we'll start healthy living classes in partnerships with Austin public health. And then we do also have a patio access for outdoor activities, for folks to play with their pets and also to serve as a public smoking area. In terms of our daily census, I just want to give you a sense of, our capacity, and how the utilization of the shelter has evolved over time. Current we are at capacity and we've been at capacity now for the last couple of months. And so what you'll see is a trend line, beginning back in August, when we first opened, it was a relatively slow intake. And then we leveled off at around 200

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we leveled off at around 200 clients. Again, we, stopped intake at 200 clients for a certain period of time to make sure that our operation were up to par. We also reserved some beds during that time, to bring in clients who were residing in high wildfire risk areas, and other areas that were not safe for habitation. And then around the October time we opened, to maximum capacity to 300, we very quickly reached that mark. We are no longer reserving beds for wildfire risk areas. We do have beds for men, women, transgender clients and clients that have Ada needs. In terms of that, January 15th population snapshot , just to give you a sense of what our composition looks like inside the shelter, on January 15th, we had 193 male clients and 94 female clients, seven clients who identified as gender diverse. And we were also providing shelter to 20 pets and service animals. In terms of length of stay, I was really heartened during the public

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heartened during the public comment to hear clients who talked about how they've been with us for two months, three months, five months, it's a great thing. We want people to stick around as long as they need to find refuge in our care. What we're seeing is that on average, our current participants are staying with us for 70 days. For those who've exit, it's around 44 days. Our positive exits are usually about 49 or 50 days. Negative exits, which are people who are exited from shelter or people who self exit from shelter. That usually occurs right around 40 to 43 days to dig a little bit deeper into exits. I know this is data that a lot of people have requested, and so it's data that we wanted to make sure we presented and shared publicly. When you look at the January 15th data, at that point in time, we had 298 people in our shelter. In terms of those who've exited, we had 27 who successfully exited into a permanent housing destination. Then we had 57 who we've confirmed had returned to

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confirmed had returned to homelessness. And that's for a number of reasons that I'll dig into in a second. We have 190 clients who exited to an unknown destination. And so this could be a number of factors, but with this really means, is that these clients left the shelter without us having an opportunity to do an exit interview and to collect some data on, why they exited or more importantly, why they haven't returned. And then we have five clients who exited to some other, shelter or an institution institution could be a hospital. It could be a jail. Or it could be another shelter in our system or in another system in terms of the reasons for exits. And again, this data is from our inception. Through January 15th, 11% of those exits have been what we call positive. It's either people who've completed our program, which means that they exited directly into a permanent, permanent supportive housing resource or some other resource provided by our clients. I'm sorry, by our

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our clients. I'm sorry, by our partners, or they exited into another potential housing opportunity that was deemed positive. We have 5% who have been exited for criminal activity or violence towards shelter staff. I want to be clear that, you know, we don't take exits lightly. We really try everything to not exit clients. You saw in the handout that in oftentimes what we'll do is give somebody a 24 hour cooling off period or maybe a 72 hour cooling off period. And oftentimes the cooling off period is a lot less. It's just go take a walk, come back when you've calmed down. But violence of any form towards other clients or towards shelter staff or my staff is not tolerated. And for the safety of our staff and for the safety of other clients, we have to make a discharge. And that's unfortunate, but we have 2% who have told us that they've exited because they've disagreed with the rules. We have 12% who have exited for repeat noncompliance with the rules. So we do have a process at the shelter where we give clients warnings. Warnings

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give clients warnings. Warnings are documented. We explain to the clients why they've received the warning, endeavors. And our staff try to make every consideration to help clients improve behaviors. But again, after so many warnings, we have to make the unfortunate decision to exit a client and then to offer that bet to somebody else. 66% of our clients who have exited, there was not an exit interview completed. So I, I can't confirm to you why those folks have exited. I can maybe offer some reasonable guesses. Sometimes people unfortunately pass away. Sometimes people self exit. They decide that this is not the opportunity for them. They don't want to be here. And so, they go to another destination that we don't know of, whether that's another shelter that's back on the street, that's reuniting with family. And so with this, 66% really resembles folks who, left one day, did not return Ann. And after 72 hours, we make those beds available to additional clients. So this concludes the portion on the marshaling yard I

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portion on the marshaling yard I will touch really briefly on cold weather shelter operations. But I'm happy to return to this slide at any point. If you all have further questions for me regarding the marshaling yard, just really briefly on cold weather shelter. As a reminder, our cold weather shelter system is designed to provide temporary overnight relief from unusually cold conditions. Burns. The way this works is we take facilities that are used for other purposes. Typically their park and recreation centers. We take those facilities, we take them offline from their other uses, and we use them to provide the overnight cold weather accommodation because we're using Singh city facilities and we

have to prepare those city facilities for the overnight accommodations. We do have a central point of registration. It's called our central embarkation station, and that's at one Texas center. When residents come to one Texas center to get registered for shelter, they are provided with a snack, warmth. We make sure that they that they are taking care of, that their pets are

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care of, that their pets are taken care of. And then we partner with capmetro to load those clients onto busses and then to take them to the shelter. That's available for that night. Because we are using those recreation centers, the locations of our cold weather shelters will sometimes rotate depending on whether or not the recreation Ann facility has other activities going on. If there's significant repair work being done. And so that's why we don't just send people directly to a site, because oftentimes the sites might need to rotate and change in terms of our thresholds for activation, we do activate at 32 degrees or colder . And we're also activate if the temperature is 35 degrees or cooler with some other factors such as overnight precipitation, whether that's rain or snow, as well as with the wind chill that brings the fields like temperature to 32 degrees or below. We do maintain a contract with the Austin area urban league. They do provide the initial, wave of cold weather shelter coordination and

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shelter coordination and support. And so they'll serve up to 300 clients on a typical cold weather shelter activation. We might see anywhere between 80 to 150 clients. And so this contract is suffices for our typical needs. January was totally not typical. And I will talk about that in just a moment. But again, we do central embarkation from one Texas center from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. We load folks onto busses to get them to the shelters. And during the daytime, when it's still cold outside, we do activate our libraries as well as our recreation centers for our warming centers. During the daytime hours. I do want to touch a little bit about our most recent winter storm in January 2020. For because, as I mentioned, this was anything but typical for our operation. So on a typical cold weather shelter activation, we might activate eight, two sites most of the time we're activating one site, and one site is able to accommodate 82 or 100 guests during January 2024, we saw

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during January 2024, we saw record levels of utilization of our system. We had at our peak seven sites that were operational at one time. Again, our standard is one. So we had to significantly scale up the operation with staffing as well as with food and water and other accommodations. On a typical event, we might activate for 1 or 2 consecutive nights in January, we activated for eight consecutive nights. We typically again might serve 80 to 100 clients at our peak utilization in January, we had 659 people,

staying with us in our overnight accommodations. And over the course of the eight consecutive nights, we had nearly 3000 shelter stays. So I do want to commend my staff as well as our partners with the urban league and other city staff, staff at pard and heesom and other city departments that worked really diligently and quickly to help us scale up our operations.

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us scale up our operations. Multiple times over to meet the demand that we saw in our community. We also took steps to modify our operations to be nimble and flexible and responsive to this event. I think that these modifications are really the reason why we were successful. First we provided two days advanced notice of our shelter activations. This early communications was critical not just for our clients, but more importantly for the nonprofit, nonprofit partners that we work with because it allowed them and their street outreach to engage with their clients and let their clients know about the cold weather that was coming and actions that they were able to take to keep themselves safe. We also delivered our text message alert notifications. That notification goes out whenever we have extreme weather forecasted in our city. It is a bilingual notification, so it goes out in English and in Spanish, and it also goes out with a digital flier. A map, an information on bus route information, and that text alert was distributed to nearly 5000

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was distributed to nearly 5000 recipients. I mentioned before that typically our cold weather shelter operations are overnight only for the January storm. We shifted to provide 24 hour accommodations, beginning that first day and going through day seven, and then on day eight, it was an overnight accommodation. Ann. This is a huge because, again, these recreation centers are used for after school. I have kids in aisd schools. They're after school care is at a recreation center. I'm sure some of you have been there, so we had to pivot and work with our childcare and after school care operators to move those locations. Part also does other activities at recreation centers , such as programs that feed seniors. And so these are these types of things are usually the reasons why we can't do 24 hour accommodations. But again, given the extent of the code and the willingness of our partners to be nimble and flexible, we were able to pivot and to provide that 24 hour accommodation. We began our embarkations from one Texas center an hour earlier.

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Texas center an hour earlier. This was designed to make sure that people didn't have to wait until 8:00 to take a bus. We wanted people to get on the bus as soon as practically possible. So we did it at 5 P.M. When there was still sunlight outside, and hopefully it was a little bit warmer. We also provided direct

transportation from our warming centers to our shelters. I really want to commend and thank our partners at capmetro, for pivoting and finding operators to help us move clients from the warming centers to our shelters. And not just from one Texas center. So huge team effort really shows what we can do. And we have, multiple agencies working together. We did cease encampment cleanups and closures in the days leading into the weather event, as well as during the weather event. And then for several days following the weather event. In fact, the weather event, I believe, ended on a Monday or a Tuesday. We didn't know cleanups or closures that whole week to give people time to get back to their encampments, and reorganize and get their stuff together. I know there was one highly publicized, cleanup activity that happened,

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cleanup activity that happened, I think the day or two before we did an encampment. I'm sorry, day before we did the cold weather shelter operations. That encampment was in a public right of way. And for the safety of those, campers and also for the general public, we did have to clean up that site. And typically, that's what we'll do, is we'll cease our normal operations. But if there is, an imminent public safety risk, then we do take it upon ourselves to make sure that that we mitigate that risk, try to help move people into shelter, and then conduct the cleanup accordingly. And then last but not least, we opened our warming centers early here. We also opened additional warming centers. That Monday was an mlk day holiday. And we had city staff come in on their holiday break to provide warming accommodations. And then when we demobilized, our friends at the Austin public library opened up a few facilities at our earlier provided coffee and other snacks for folks who were coming out of shelter, so we could help them transition back to their encampments or to other

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encampments or to other resources. So that concludes my update on the marshaling yard, as well as on our cold weather shelter operations in general, as well as for January, again, I will be sticking around for the public in case they have any questions for me or for my staff, and to receive their additional feedback. But madam chair, at this time, I'll yield back to you for any questions from the committee. >> Thank you. I appreciate the update. One of the questions I want to dig in on, is the incidence of theft regarding belongings, particularly around prescription medications. Ann. What what what's our policy at the marshaling yard regarding when that happens, knowing that a disruption of medication can have severe consequences, you know, can you speak to that issue that was raised? >> I can yes, ma'am. >> So I do want to begin by saying that endeavor staff are not able to administer medication. It's not in their contract. And frankly, they don't have all the professional licensure to do so. We do provide accommodations for clients to keep their medicines safe and locked up. And secure, whether that's in a storage space that's attached to their

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space that's attached to their bed. We do have our violet keepsake bins at marshaling yard, where people can lock up medication and for medication, it has to be stored cold. We do provide that accommodation as well by storing it. Cool in an area that's monitored, when these claims come up to staff, I know endeavors investigate dates. I also have staff who are on site nearly every day who also look into the matter. When we can, you know, we'll try to make sure that the medication is returned. If not, we will work with that client to make sure that they're able to get back to their doctor's office and refill that prescription. >> Okay. >> So it's more of our endeavor doesn't have that, within their contract. >> Right? There's it's number one. It's not in their contract. Number two, there there are certain, trainings and kind of procedures that people need to go through to properly administer medication, the work. That's the worst thing we want to do is improperly administer somebody medicine, give them a dose that's too high or too low. And now we've further

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And now we've further complicated a medical issue. And this is pretty standard across most of our shelters. It is something that my staff is looking into. But right now, that's not something that endeavors are. My team is able to accommodate because I know central health is involved. >> And now with the marshaling yard, they have some beds. From my understanding that they're on site, that they are, facilitating or helping with. >> We were and I believe we still are have have respite beds on site for central health referrals. I would have to invite. Right. Well that's a it's more would you like me to have one of my staff who's on site come speak to that? >> Well, it's more of if central health is already partnering with the city on the marshaling yard operations, can they utilize their capabilities, staff, personnel to help with the medication? Is that an opportunity for us to potentially right? >> We do have central health that comes through. We have Austin public health sends clinicians also to do health screenings and health checks. And when they're there, they could do that kind of those kinds of things. But that's when

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kinds of things. But that's when they're there, obviously. Right so this is something that that I'll look into further with my team to figure out how we can accommodate this request. It's just we don't have the staffing to do it. >> Gotcha. Okay >> The other question I have and then colleagues, I'll turn it over to committee questions is, is regarding the, the grievance box or is staff or endeavors looking at the grievances that are being submitted and Ed from. >> Yeah. So endeavors does have a grievance process. >> And you saw that that that was included in the policy document that you were provided before Shaw. And one of our early meetings with the community organizations, they identified the grievance process as something that they wanted us to investigate and look into and frankly, provide clients with more

opportunities and different opportunities to provide feedback. And so that's where the grievance boxes came into play, so that people didn't have to send an email. They can drop in a comment. Anonymous or self-identified, and we will

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self-identified, and we will look into it. I have staff on site every day who look into those grievances. I know endeavor staff and the site manager is also look into the grievances. What I will say though, is more importantly, we try to establish the relationships with our clients so that they don't have to resort to a box to let us know the challenges that they're having. They know that they could walk up to my on site person, or one of the endeavor staff, and talk about the issues that are happening. If endeavors is able to, to address it as the site operator for that, they will do so if they feel like they need a decision from my team, then I have somebody on site who can make those calls, and then ultimately, if everybody there feels like they need approval from higher up, then my team will call me neither. I'll make the call or I'll run it by our city leadership to make sure that we're able to address the concerns. But every I want to be clear, every grievance that is filed, we look into. Okay, very good. >> Thank you. Yes. Vice chair Velasquez, thank you, madam chair. >> I have a few questions. Thank you. David, for being here with

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you. David, for being here with us. I also want to thank, vocal Texas and all the folks that are at the marshaling yard that came to testify today. What is the ratio of staff to resident, as well as case manager to resident at at the marshaling yard? >> Do we have that data or that data? Councilman? I'll have to get back to you with the specific numbers on staff to clients. I just don't have that information in front of me right now. >> Okay, regarding the individual discharges, what current policies are in place for discharging residents? So this is a three part question. Is there current data available on the amount of discharges with reasons included. And if there is no data, will there be for future efforts to track that data? >> Sure. So we do collect and track the data. And that's the data that I presented earlier around the reasons for the discharges. I think you have a copy of the of the discharge policy that was distributed by a member of the public today. What I will say is, as these contracts are coming under 20,

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contracts are coming under 20, we are looking into discharges. We're also looking at some of the findings from our shelter assessment, and we're currently working towards a unified discharge policy so that the way that discharges are conducted is happening in a uniform manner, whether you're at marshaling yard, the bridge, shelters or some other shelter like H street or arch, that's a city operated

shelter. So that unified policy hasn't existed before. It's something that our office identified as a gap. And now that the management of these contracts is shifting over to us, we're meeting with our operators across all of our sites and letting them know that we're digging in to having a unified policy around discharges. >> Okay. What data is available on the housing placements from the marshaling yard? And are those individuals housed again, this is this is the data from marshaling yard. >> This information is tracked in our system wide hmis tool that's managed by, our leadership council and our local clc. So we do have that data.

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clc. So we do have that data. What I also want to note, just because you asked is for the individuals where you see unknown destination or the exit interview is not completed. Oftentimes those individuals Ralls, although they're exited from shelter, they're still engaged in their service. They're still meeting with their case manager. Or they might meet with my outreach team. So as we have the opportunity to engage with people and learn about where they've exited to, we go back into hmis and update the data. So the data is updated on an individual basis. >> Regarding you heard some questions about the, the concerns around food. Our office has received and heard numerous concerns about fast food being the primary meal provided at the shelter. What efforts are being made to ensure that the food provided meets special dietary needs of residents, as well as fulfills you know, the average nutritional needs? >> Yeah, this was something that was raised as a concern to us. And for the past few weeks, we've been working with endeavors and a local nonprofit organization that can provide healthy food and a variety of healthy food. This is actually

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healthy food. This is actually what this organization does. Every day we're rounding third base on finalizing finalizing the agreement that would shift our food operations from where they're currently at to working exclusively with this nonprofit that has the capacity to provide three meals a day, a variety of food, hot and cold options, as well as healthy options and options for folks that have dietary restrictions. >>. Thank you. We you'd heard earlier also about the about the restrooms. Is there an adequate, availability of restrooms as well as Ada compliant restrooms? Yes. >> So when we first opened, remember we were serving 200 clients. And because the marshaling yard was constructed to be a warehouse, one thing that we did is we brought in restroom facilities, restroom trailers, so that we were able to provide restrooms and shower accommodations for folks at this facility that we're leasing for a year. When we increase the 300, the shower capacity was fine. We never had a line for showers up until the January event, where one of our pipes froze, and so we had to take

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froze, and so we had to take some of the showers offline temporarily. However, we did double the number of restrooms that were available. And according to my staff who were on site, every day, there's not a line for restroom facilities. We do also have Ada restroom facilities in the marshaling yard. Okay >> And switching to, to the cold weather. Activation with the centralized registration. I know, last year, council member Vella council member Fuentes and I, we met with the former city manager's office about working on changing this. Can we make it so that people can register each of the cold weather, shelters? Because I know, I mean, we've talked we're talking about storage, we're talking about accessibility and equity. And again, we met with them last year. It was, this was before you were in charge of the office. So I wanted to see if there's been any movement on that. >> Yeah. So this is another contract that's sliding under our office's purview. And so we were able to pivot and do a lot of great things in January that, you know, frankly, the city

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you know, frankly, the city hasn't done before. And I think that that's a demonstration of our commitment to go the extra mile to serve people where they are. One of the special projects that I've tasked to a member of my staff is actually doing some research on how other cities organize and operationalize their cold weather shelter activations, and then figuring out of those national best practices, which things can be applied here to Austin. I will share. One of our major constraints continues to be the fact that we use our recreation facilities as our cold weather shelters, and that is not intended to be a negative towards pard because pard staff are going above and beyond to make those resources available to us. It's just we share that use with other uses such as the childcare and the senior feeding programs. And so that's why we have one Texas center as the center embarkation. Our fear is that, you know, for one activation, montopolis might be the cold weather shelter. And for the next activation, it won't be. But because we chose somebody for that first activation Ann to go with them on topolice, that person now goes to montopolis for the second activation. It's not open and they wasted their time and

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and they wasted their time and we broke a promise. So for now I get that the one embarkation town is not preferred. It really is the optimal solution for what we have today, but we are digging in ways for us to modify that contract and modify the operation. So that we can provide a better service for our clients regardless of where they're at in the city. >> Thank you. When you, when you uncovered those findings, can you report back to this council? I mean, to this, to this body on that? Yes, sir. >> We'd be happy to come back and do a briefing on that. Once we finish that data collection. >> And, one of the other things that. Thank you for that, one of the other things that was that was, there was a question about was storage. Do we have any ability to provide storage for folks that we that we do bring into the shelters for

the cold, cold weather, shelters for cold weather, shelters specifically? >> Currently, we do not and that's one of the gaps in our systems that we're trying to resolve. And again, you know, we don't have large scale violet keepsake bins at these recreation facilities because they're used for other purposes.

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they're used for other purposes. If folks come into our shelters such as H street marshaling yard or the arch or the bridge to one of the healing initiatives, we do have on site storage that's available for clients. >> Thank you. My last question is, can we look to increasing the activation threshold to 40 degrees? I think as other cities have done, I believe it's Portland that's currently doing that right now. >> So that is something that we're investigating. And we actually got some some really good community feedback in that regard. One thing that we have to keep in consideration is the cost. I only have so much funding going into this contract that I inherited right now for cold weather shelter activation. So we're exploring that. We want to make sure that we're not letting the lack of money be the excuse for why we don't do something. We really want to understand how we provide this service optimally. But what I do anticipate is that there's going to be a pretty significant cost impact. So we will have to come, which is why I would be coming back to council anyway. If we ever pivoted the strategy, because I would, I would probably need some more

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probably need some more resources to do so. >> Thank you. And thank you for your service on this. >> No problem. Thank you. Sir >> Councilmember qadri great. >> I have a few questions, but I just, you know, I want to touch on, you know, when this was first presented to us, a marshaling our, our office spoke to a lot of folks from the from the unhoused community. We spoke to folks that Texas harm reduction alliance. I voted against the marshaling yard because a lot of the concerns that were brought up, and my hope was that I was that I was wrong. Unfortunately, there's a lot of work to be done to make sure that this project is up to the, standard for the folks who live there, for the folks that it affects. And no one knows the good and the bad of the marshaling yard more than the people that are that are residents of the marshaling yard. So, you know, going off of not even a question, just a statement that councilmember Velasquez had made or vice chair Velasquez. On the food. I think it's so necessary not to just keep giving folks fast food. You know, I get guilty of eating out quite a bit. It's. I feel like,

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quite a bit. It's. I feel like, complete. The next day. And if you're giving food to folks over and over again, I mean, it's just not. It's just not healthy. So I think it's just extremely important to make sure that, you know, we're able to give folks, good food, you know, food that's good for their body. And a lot of folks

who might have any preexisting, you know, conditions or any health issues, just getting fast food day in and day out isn't great. I know one thing that one of the residents had made me, one of the things that the resident, a resident, had mentioned was interactions between residents and staff and some sometimes that becoming contentious. Could you comment on that? And what normally is done to alleviate any, any concerns, that, you know, residents might have? >> Sure. Yeah. I'm happy to address that. And also just just again, on the food topic, you know, I feel like if this meeting was at the end of the month versus now, I probably would have been able to disclose more and share. We have an agreement with this nonprofit

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agreement with this nonprofit organization to provide more diverse food. That's not all fast food. So I really look forward to getting that press release out in the coming days. Yeah. About this new this new service in terms of relationships between, our, our staff as well as with our clients, our clients, our staff do undergo training. I've been there and I've also heard reports about how we will work with our staff to de-escalate. If we do find that a staff has crossed the line, that staff is let go. All right. And we don't condone just like we don't condone violence from our clients towards our staff. We also don't condone our staff being aggressive or disrespectful to our clients. The marshaling yard can only work if there is mutual respect and mutual trust among everybody. That is there. So it's the 300 clients plus all the staff on site, plus the security personnel that we contract with, so on and so forth. So we do look into that. When a client does complain about an aggressive staff member, that's something that we do take seriously. And we're on the phone with endeavors to, to

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the phone with endeavors to, to make sure we address the concern . >> Yeah. Out of curiosity, has there been an instance where a staff member was let go for any aggressive behavior? >> Not to my knowledge. Although I know we do have our endeavor staff. I'm sorry. Our endeavors partners who are here, who might be able to speak to that, but not to my knowledge. >> Okay, great. >> Just got three more. Three more questions. What is, you know, what is the zo doing to help reduce, discharges that at the marshaling yard. >> So we've established a new process again, this is a contract that's recently shifted from Austin public health to hsf. And so as part of our conversation with endeavors as well as with all of our shelter operators, wouldn't that we're doing is establishing a process where for, if a client is being exited for repeat violations that before that exit occurs, that exit, the discussion around that exit comes through my office first and that we sign off on that. And so as we've been renegotiating our bridge contracts, we've been inserting that as a firm into those contracts. I had mentioned also

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contracts. I had mentioned also earlier that we're doing a unified, shelter policy. I'm sorry, unified exit policy for all of the shelters across our system. And that policy speaks to that as well. I also have staff currently at marshaling yard who are there nearly every day. And so when exits occur because of repeat violations, my staff on site are notified by the by the site supervisor. If it's an exit that's due to violence, I mean that that's an exit that that has to happen. And clients are notified on the front end of their process that if they fight, if they engage in physical conflict with each other or engage in physical conflict with one of our staff, that that they will be exited. So those exits do do occur. >> Got it. Thank you. >> My second question. I think there was a question asked by vice chair Velasquez, but it has to do with restrooms or I guess restrooms and showers. How many restrooms and showers do y'all currently have for men, for women? For folks who are gender non-conforming.

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non-conforming. >> Sure. I can get the exact figures from my staff who's here today. Okay they've. Oh, thank you, Charles. Charles, do you want to speak to this? Because I have bad eyesight and I cannot read that. >> Thank you. Sure good morning. Charles Lewis. In community engagement with the homeless strategy office. So for showers, we have a ratio of, one shower stall to 44 clients. Male clients, one shower stall. To for every 23 female clients and one shower stall to every, 15 clients that require Ada accommodations. Okay. And for restrooms, we have, one restroom unit available to every 15 client that requires Ada accommodations, one to every 12 women and one to every 18 men. >> And then just out of curiosity, we giving ratio. But how many? So how many bathrooms are there and how many restrooms are there?

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are there? >> Sure. So for sorry, how many showers are there and how many bathrooms. >> Understood. Yeah. >> Yes. So for male showers, there are four, for showers, for female showers, for four and for Ada two. And then for restrooms. Ada two two. Female eight. And then for male four stalls and six year Olds. >> Great. Thank you. And then I do want to highlight we still have executive session. >> Yeah. >> Last question and then I'm done. I think this is something that you had said you're gonna figure out final numbers, but I know someone. I heard someone say there's five, potentially just five caseworkers at the marshaling yard. I guess the math of that would be one caseworker for every 60, 60 people. Is that the case? If you know, and if it's not or if it is, do you guys see an needing an increase of caseworkers for the amount of folks that are there? >> So I want the exact numbers in front of me. What I will speak to is that in addition to endeavor's caseworker, we have sunrise navigation that has case

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sunrise navigation that has case management on site every day. And then oftentimes the folks who are coming into our shelters have case managers through other organizations that aren't directly affiliated with marshaling yard, which is why I'm saying let me return to the data, because I think what's most important is understanding the number of clients that actually have a case manager tied to their service, and so we can return with that information. >> Great. Thank you. >> Yes. Councilmember Ryan alder, thank you very much. >> And I'll try to be quick here. The this slide shows that there are 27 people that exited to permanent housing. Can you go to the slide right before it. Somebody nope nope no nope. On. This one okay. There was another slide that maybe one more before okay. Well there's another slide that that had I think it said 40 something people had positive exits.

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exits. >> So our positive exits, I think you might be referring to this slide. This is the average length of time in shelter. So there were four. So for positive exits they spent about 49 days in our shelter. Whereas this one speaks to the number of people, individuals who have, moved into housing. I do want to say, I mean, I always want this number to be greater. This is typically what we see nationally for this style of shelter is around a 10% successful move rate from a congregate setting into a housing setting. And so we're we're on par with that national standard that being said, I want to blow that national standard out of the water. >> Sure. Okay. And as we look to the future of this, facility, when we had originally discussed, it was for a year in length and there was going to be a ramp down period if it was not to be renewed. So can you briefly just do we have a ramp down plan in place? When will

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down plan in place? When will that start? Just so. >> So we are approaching that critical decision point as to whether or not marshaling yard will be extended for certain period of time, or if we are going to wind this facility down in August. That decision has not yet been made. However, if that decision is made to wind down, we will begin ramping down in late April. Early may, will ramp down, looks like. Excuse me, is for the clients who we have in shelter, doing our darndest to get them connected to a housing resource. And having them positively exit the shelter into housing. And for new intakes, that the new intakes are more or less restricted to people who are coming in with a voucher and with a real opportunity to get housing, because we don't want to have happen as we close in August and people have to walk out of our shelter and back onto the streets. If the decision is made to extend the operations for a period of time, that would be great. We're prepared to do that. Shaw endeavors is prepared to do that as well. However, that's a decision that's going

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that's a decision that's going to have to be made by city leadership. And if we do extend the operation, we'll have to come back to you as council, to appropriate funding for that purpose. >> And so, I think this ties into to, you know, this decision point is going to happen in and it's going to happen sooner rather than later. And and councilmember qadri had a, a resolution some number of months ago about our shelter need as a city to do an assessment. And I know at the last meeting you presented on a numeric need. And that was really helpful to see kind of how we're imbalanced and where our need is in terms of what types of beds. But where it was. The information we didn't get is the geographic basic need. Right. We know that where we have some of these shelters and where we don't. And so I would really like for us to get that information before we're making a decision on the marshaling yard about where your office recommends us. We should have an additional shelters

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have an additional shelters where the it would be best our population would be best served, and I think also as it related to that item, there was an element about navigation centers and how that that resource also, what kind of need do we have across the city. So my request here today is just that over the next couple months at this committee, we get that piece of the information so that when we are making a future decision, we have of the full picture in front of us. >> Yes, sir. And I believe at our next work session with all of council will be providing an update on our shelter system and our shelter capacity. But I'll just say briefly on geographically is with the passage of proposition B, this population, our folks experiencing homelessness, they move around a lot. So if I gave you a geographic snapshot of January 15th by today, it could look very different at a high level. I can say that we see a lot of folks in and near the south Austin area without a

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south Austin area without a shelter. There but there's also a lot of factors that go into where we place our shelter, such as the availability, the availability of land. Whether or not it's a city owned site or we have to buy the site, and then our ability to stand up shelter quickly and do so in the best possible format for the community. But I'm happy to dive into that deeper, either at the work session or come back to this body and do a presentation on that. >> That'd be very helpful. I have one question as it relates to the cold weather shelters, do we have any kind of mobile pickup, like if there's an individual who, whether they have a physical disability or some other need, can they this is actually a change that we're in the process of discussing with the urban league. >> Now, is offering. A version of a mobile embarked option for folks who can't make it to the one Texas center or who can't make it by the 8 P.M, cut off time to one Texas center. And so we're discussing that with the urban league right now to figure

out the feasibility of that. Is there an intake line people call? How many vans should we prepare to deploy? Just kind of what that looks like. But we I'm

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what that looks like. But we I'm happy to say that we're working towards that and making that resource available. Well thank you. >> And y'all did a really, you know, huge improvement over what we had seen before. So I just want to recognize that and thank you for all the work you're doing. Thank you sir. >> Thank you. >> Thank you, madam chair. >> The update. Charles, did you have anything you wanted to add? >> Charles was reminded me that central health does not have beds at marshaling yard. But community care has five respite beds at marshland yard. So I think we just wanted to clarify that for the record. >> Okay. Very good. >> Well, but still, if we can have the conversation with community care. Yeah. Okay. Great. Thank you. All right colleagues, such a great conversation. I think it really highlights the importance of this as a topic and why our public health committee will continue to have a dedicated, spot for us to discuss our homelessness service outreach efforts. We still have a lot more to discuss. Not a lot more, but we still have a couple of items to move into executive session. On. And that is the discussion. And possible action

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discussion. And possible action on appointments to the central health board of directors. And the sobering center board of directors. So I'm going to move us into executive session. The committee will now go into closed session to take up two items pursuant to section five, 51.074 of the government code. The committee will discuss personnel matters related to the item. Five discuss the selection of members of the central health board of directors. Item six discuss the selection of a member to the sobering center. Local government corporation board of directors. Is there any objection to going to executive session on the item announced? Hearing none. The committee will now go into executive session and we're going into the executive session room .

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. Oh allow me a with a sweep we are out of closed session and

[12:06:24 PM]

we are out of closed session and closed session. We discussed personnel matters related to items five and six. Resuming to item two. Thank you all for the great discussion. The committee will hold interviews for selected candidates at the March 6th public health committee meeting. No further action will be taken at this time. Moving on to item three. This is a discussion on the sobering center appointment. We will also we talked about candidates and Ed. We'll take that up at the March committee meeting. Let's see at and colleagues last item, any future topics that we want to discuss at the public health committee meeting? I was thinking it might be good for us to get an update on the mental health diversion center to see where we're at on that process. Given the urgent need that we have in our community to ensure that that pilot program moves forward. Any other thoughts? Okay everyone, thank you for your participation and

[12:07:25 PM]

your participation and contributions to today's important conversations. If there's no further business, I adjourn this meeting at 12:07 P.M. Thank you. Thanks.