



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2024**

The Early Childhood Council convened in a regular meeting on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at Austin Energy Headquarters, Capital Training Room #1133, 4815 Mueller Boulevard in Austin, Texas.

Vice Chair Hamilton called the Early Childhood Council Meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Vice Chair Hamilton and Members McIllwain, Menard, Navarro, and Selig

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Members Green-Otero, Hedrick, Schennum, and Vargas

Staff in Attendance: Cindy Gamez, Caitlin Oliver, and Donna Sundstrom

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

The first five speakers to register prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

Brooke Freeland, representing United Way for Greater Austin provided public comment regarding the proposed City of Austin Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Freeland shared that the Success By 6 Coalition plans to submit a letter of support for the budget amendment form submitted by Council Member Fuentes that would allocate \$195,408 for cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for the early childhood social service contracts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. **Approve the minutes of the Early Childhood Council Regular Meeting on June 12, 2024. The minutes from the meeting on 6/12/2024 were approved unanimously on Member Menard's motion and Member Navarro's second, on an 9-0 vote.**

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

2. Discussion and possible action to approve a recommendation regarding the City of Austin Economic Development Department's Place-Based Enhancement Program recommendations **Member Hedrick moved to approve the recommendation regarding the City of Austin's Place-Based Enhancement Program recommendation. Member Menard provided a second, and the members discussed the recommendation.**

Members Schennum and Navarro asked for clarification on what it would mean to not include a living wage requirement in the recommendations. Members Vargas and McIlwain expressed concern about not having a living wage requirement since child care workers often get paid low wages. There was a discussion about whether the living wage requirement applies to the developers who are creating an affordable place from which a child care program would operate or whether it applies to the wages the child care program provides to staff.'

Member McIlwain moved to amend the recommendation to remove the last "whereas" statement; remove the semicolon above the removed "whereas" statement; and to remove the "without requiring a living wage standard for all employees" from the last sentence of the recommendation. Member Menard provided a second. Member Hedrick agreed with the suggested changes, and the motion to approve the recommendation as amended passed on an 8-0 vote. There was one abstention from Member Schennum.

3. Updates from Vice Chair Dr. Choquette Hamilton about the Affordable Childcare Now Coalition and vote to approve a recommendation to endorse the Affordable Childcare Now Coalition **Vice Chair Hamilton presented an update on the Affordable Childcare Now initiative. At the ECC meeting in March 2024, members received a presentation about the Children's Funding Project. Then, at the meeting in April 2024, the members passed a recommendation endorsing the Children's Funding Project Workgroup recommendations. The Affordable Childcare Now Coalition's goal is that Travis County passes a ballot initiative that would approve a public funding stream to support the Children's Funding Project Workgroup recommendations. On May 14th, 2024, Travis County Commissioners approved the Travis County CARES Resolution (Creating Access for Resilient Families), which includes the childcare strategies recommended by the Children's Funding Project Workgroup. On August 13, 2024, the Travis County Commissioners will be voting on whether to put the CARES Resolution on the November ballot.**

Member Hedrick moved to approve the recommendation that the Early Childhood Council endorse the Affordable Childcare Now Coalition. Member Green-Otero provided a second, and the motion did not pass on a 6-0 vote. There was one recusal from Vice Chair Hamilton, and there were two abstentions from Members Navarro and Schennum.

4. Possible action to appoint a new liaison to the Joint Inclusion Committee
Member Vargas expressed the need to step down from her role as liaison to the Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC). Member Vargas moved to appoint Member Eliza Gordon as liaison to the JIC. Member Menard provided a second, and the motion passed unanimously on an 9-0 vote.
5. Vote to update the ECC Quality-of-Life (QoL) Study Workgroup membership
Member Vargas moved to approve Jana Douglass, community organizer at Go Austin/Vamos Austin (GAVA), as a community member of the ECC QoL Study Workgroup. Member Hedrick provided a second, and the motion passed unanimously on an 9-0 vote.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

6. Updates from the ECC QoL Study Workgroup regarding the first meeting with the study vendor and next meeting with the vendor on August 16, 2024
There were no additional updates provided regarding the QoL Study.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Updates from Member Tom Hedrick about the early childhood-related items included in the proposed City of Austin Fiscal Year 2025 budget
Member Hedrick shared some updates regarding the proposed City budget, including the Early Childhood Council recommendations that were included in the budget. All ECC-recommended property tax and fee reductions were implemented into the budget. All recommended program investments were incorporated into the budget. Hedrick also raised a concern about early childhood staffing needs at the Economic Development Department (EDD). Current staffing right now on child care-related projects is one full-time employee and one temporary employee. He recommended that the Early Childhood Council invite EDD to present on the recent reorganization of Austin Public Health (APH) and EDD resources regarding childcare-related services. Hedrick also shared with the members that Council Member Fuentes has submitted a [budget amendment form](#) allocating funds for cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for the early childhood social service contracts.
8. Updates regarding the Success By 6 (SX6) Coalition strategic plan
Vice Chair Hamilton shared that the SX6 Coalition continues to work on the strategic plan materials that will be published. There will likely be multiple rollout events and engagement opportunities.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

9. Updates from Caitlin Oliver, Austin Public Health (APH), regarding related local early childhood groups such as Austin Chapter of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, Austin ISD, Child Care Regulation, and Travis County

Caitlin Oliver, staff liaison, gave the following updates:

- **The 2024 Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXAEYC) Annual Conference for early childhood professional in the state is taking place October 10-12, in Frisco.**
- **The Texas Health and Human Services Commission adopted amendments to rules concerning the pre-employment affidavit requirement for child care facilities, which requires that prospective employees, substitutes, contractors, and volunteers disclose whether they have ever been charged with, adjudicated for, or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor. The rules are effective Aug. 14, 2024.**
- **Travis County has finished their evaluation process for the Early Childhood Services RFS. They are in the contract development process with the selected organizations. Before information can be released about who was selected, the contracts need to be formally approved at the Travis County Commissioners Court, tentatively on October 1.**

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Members listed the following future agenda items:

- **Presentation and discussion regarding the transition of child care work from Austin Public Health to the Economic Development Department**
- **Discussion about the Travis County CARES (Creating Access for Resilient Families) Resolution**

Vice Chair Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m., without objection.

The minutes were approved unanimously at the September 11, 2024, meeting on Member Green-Otero's motion and Member McIlwain's second, on an 11-0 vote.