

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, Austin Energy's mission is to deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and excellent customer service; and

WHEREAS, the customer satisfaction rating for Austin Energy has declined from 82% overall satisfaction in 2008 to 65% overall satisfaction in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Austin Energy has the responsibility for the Customer Care and Billing (CC&B) system which manages over 5 million customer bills per year for electricity, water, wastewater, solid waste services, and drainage and street services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin initiated work on the CC&B system in 2009 and implemented it in 2011 to replace the existing billing system, in order to use more advanced technology, reduce errors and billing costs, provide more detailed billing information, and improve customer service; and

WHEREAS, evidence of billing errors and customer disputes continue under the new CC&B system; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 15-9, Article 12 of the City Code allows customers who dispute actions and decisions of the utility related to billing to get an administrative review and hearing as a customer right; and

WHEREAS, Code Chapter 15-9-193 stipulates that an administrative hearing will be before an impartial hearing officer who is not an employee of a utility but who is appointed by the City Manager; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 20131107-052 directed the city manager to work with the Discount Steering Committee to develop an arrearage management plan and to solicit the recommendations of the Electric Utility Commission, Resource Management Commission and the Water and Wastewater Commission and to report to council within six months;

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to propose an appointment process for utility hearings officers and necessary code amendments that ensure the highest levels of impartiality and customer service in the dispute process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager work with the Discount Steering Committee, consumer advocates including the National Consumer Law Center, the Electric Utility Commission, the Resource Management Commission, and the Water and

Wastewater Commission for their review and approval of rules governing the administrative hearing process, the availability of customer rights information regarding billing disputes, and the reporting of these activities.

ADOPTED: _____

ATTEST: _____

Jeannette Goodall

City Clerk

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