



**City Council Questions and Answers for  
Thursday, April 17, 2014**

These questions and answers are related to the  
Austin City Council meeting that will convene at 10:00 AM on  
Thursday, April 17, 2014 at Austin City Hall  
301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX



**Mayor Lee Leffingwell  
Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole  
Council Member Chris Riley, Place 1  
Council Member Mike Martinez, Place 2  
Council Member Kathie Tovo, Place 3  
Council Member Laura Morrison, Place 4  
Council Member William Spelman, Place 5**

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

## **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

1. Agenda Item # 12 - Approve recommendations related to the purchase of a wildfire detection system by the City and recommendations to establish coordinated operations of wildfire detection systems owned by the City, Travis County, and the City of Westlake.
  - a. QUESTION: This action approves the recommendations related to the purchase of a wildfire detection system, although no fiscal note is attached and it will require funds for staffing in the future. 1) Please describe future actions that will be taken for this program, e.g., 2) how and when the financial requirements for purchase and staffing will come before Council. COUNCIL MEMBER MORRISON
  - b. ANSWER: 1) It is the recommendation of the Austin Fire Department to partner with Travis County, who we have been in discussions with, to each make a purchase of one sensor system. Then we would then coordinate with the City of Westlake for a total of three sensor systems for Travis County. We believe we are able to locate at least three suitable tower locations, complete the tower engineering, and place these sensors without adding expensive towers for this program. 2) A second issue is the staffing required by these semi-automated systems. We do not recommend adding this to the current fire dispatcher work environment if this system were staffed 24/7 with full time employees, we would require six total staff members for a cost of approximately \$348,000 annually. Instead, we recommend a modified staffing model that follows the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS), staffing only on high to extreme index days. This modified method would require a staff of two to four total members, at an estimated cost of between \$116,000 and \$232,000 a year. Further savings may be achieved by cost-sharing overtime staffing with county and city employees and it is possible the staffing costs could be lower than what is listed above.
  - c. QUESTION: The backup says no fiscal note is required, but this appears to commit us to a purchase. Please provide information about the cost of the purchase contemplated in the item. COUNCIL MEMBER SPELMAN
  - d. ANSWER: In 2013, West Lake Hills became the first American city to employ the FireWatch America system at a cost of approximately \$180,000. Based on our research, the Austin Fire Department recommends a joint purchase of a FireWatch America system between the City of Austin and Travis County whereby each entity would purchase one sensor and strategically place it to work in conjunction with the existing sensor in West Lake Hills. We believe

this will provide coverage of the more remote areas while providing the opportunity to evaluate the cost/benefit of the technology. The cost of this purchase to the City of Austin would be in the neighborhood of \$180,000.

2. Agenda Item # 37 - Authorize award and execution of a 36-month requirements service contract with TEXAS DISPOSAL SYSTEMS, INC., or one of the other qualified bidders for IFB-BV No. JRD0100, to provide refuse and recycling collection and hauling services within the Downtown Central Business District of Austin in an amount not to exceed \$6,234,879, with three 12-month extension options in an amount not to exceed \$2,078,293 per extension option, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$12,469,758.
  - a. QUESTION: The backup states that this is a 66% price increase over the last contract and lists a few factors. Please provide some additional information on the factors that led to this significant price increase. COUNCIL MEMBER SPELMAN
  - b. ANSWER: 1) A new specification was added to the scope of work requiring dedicated routes for the CBD for both trash and recycling. This new requirement was added to prevent comingling of materials collected pursuant to this contract with materials from the vendor's other customers. This is necessary to ensure accurate weight reporting. The department needs accurate data in order to calculate reliable waste diversion statistics in support of the City of Austin's Zero Waste initiatives. This new requirement will increase transportation costs for the vendor. 2) New specifications were added to the scope of work prescribing detailed procedures for cleaning of dumpsters. These new specifications require the vendor to conduct dumpster cleaning procedures at a separate location away from the CBD in order to prevent contaminated runoff from entering the sewer system. This new requirement will increase transportation costs for the vendor. 3) A new specification was added to the scope of work reducing required response times for requests to deliver/remove/relocate dumpsters from 48 hours to within one business day. The Downtown Austin Alliance and CBD customers expect this level of service.
3. Agenda Item # 38 - Authorize award and execution of Amendment No. 4 to the contract with CHASE PAYMENTECH SOLUTIONS, LLP, for credit card processing services, in an amount not to exceed \$424,338 for the first extension option and \$474,343 for the second extension option for a revised total contract amount not to exceed \$6,839,647.
  - a. Please provide a status of efforts to make online payments available for more than the 3 currently listed on the City's website (APD Alarm Permits, Utilities, Municipal Court). COUNCIL MEMBER MORRISON
  - b. ANSWER: See attachment.
4. Agenda Item # 44 - Approve an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 12-5-5 to

add a new section establishing regulations authorizing commercial service vehicles to conduct loading and unloading activities from a metered space, commercial loading zone, or curb-side travel lane.

- a. QUESTION: The RCA backup information noted that “Commercial Service loading/unloading in the Downtown Austin Project Coordination Zone (DAPZC) and along critical arterial corridors will be prohibited from 7 A.M.-9 A.M. and 4 P.M. – 6 P.M.” However, the draft ordinance does not address the prohibition. Please explain how the prohibition will be instituted if not in the ordinance. COUNCIL MEMBER MORRISON
  - b. ANSWER: The loading/unloading time prohibitions will be instituted administratively, in that the permit will only be valid within that area during specified times.
5. Agenda Item # 49 - Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to identify City-owned properties suitable for development of affordable housing and provide this inventory to the City Council by June 12, 2014. (Notes: SPONSOR: Council Member Kathie Tovo CO 1: Council Member Laura Morrison)
- a. QUESTION: Has staff been asked to do this type of analysis before? If so, when? What were the results of any past analysis? COUNCIL MEMBER SPELMAN
  - b. ANSWER: Pending

**END OF REPORT - ATTACHMENTS TO FOLLOW**

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### Council Question and Answer

Related To	Item # 38	Meeting Date	April 17, 2014
Additional Answer Information			

**QUESTION:** Please provide a status of efforts to make online payments available for more than the 3 currently listed on the City's website (APD Alarm Permits, Utilities, Municipal Court). COUNCIL MEMBER MORRISON

**ANSWER:** On December 6, 2012, Council authorized the negotiation and execution of a contract with JPMorgan Chase Pay Connexion for online payments capability that would allow customers of City services to pay for some services online. The contract was signed on March 20, 2013. CTM and Financial Services are leading the project with the intent of implementing City systems in a phased approach.

In May 2013, CTM, Financial Services, and APD began work on the implementation of the Pay Connexion solution with APD's Cry Wolf application for alarm permits. In order to ensure the safety of our citizen's information (name, address, credit card/bank account information, etc.), the communications between the City's host applications and Chase Pay Connexion must be mapped and tested thoroughly. APD had to contract with their vendor to develop the interface connections between the applications. It took some time to bring all the right parties together to begin development of the connectivity. Once the connectivity was developed, APD began testing the application leading up to the go-live date. On 12/16/13, the APD Cry Wolf Pay Connexion site went live. Since go-live, APD has seen nearly 20% of their business move online.

In May 2013, CTM, Financial Services and PARD began work on the implementation of the Pay Connexion solution with PARD's RecTrac application; however, the vendor for RecTrac was not able to develop the required interface between the applications at this time. In the interim, Financial Services is working with PARD to implement an alternative temporary solution until RecTrac can be integrated with Pay Connexion. PARD expects to go-live with their alternative solution in late summer 2014.

In November 2013, overlapping the APD implementation, CTM and Financial Services began working with PDR and Library to move their individual online payment projects forward as well. These projects required that City staff research and perform tasks related to their departmental application or work to establish contracts with their systems' vendor to interface with Pay Connexion. During the duration of these projects, staff turnover, staff workload (i.e. staff working on more than one project at the same time) and vendor staffing/workload issues have had an impact on our progress.

In addition to the Pay Connexion implementation itself, PDR had to negotiate and finalize the implementation of a new portal for AMANDA (Portal 2). It took several months longer than anticipated to get the contract in place and begin moving forward. Progress on the installation and configuration of the Portal 2 has been slow and is currently not complete. Portal 2 must be in place prior to the implementation of online payments. Due to the many outstanding items yet to be resolved, our best estimate for implementation of the PDR project is mid-to-late summer 2014.

In the case of Library, hardware and software purchases were required to finalize the City's environment to enable online payment activities. In addition, negotiations with their vendor have been slow and have forced City staff to begin work on developing the interfaces between the systems. Our best estimate for implementation of the Library project is June or July 2014.

CTM and Financial Services have also been meeting with other City departments to determine the next departments that will be ready to move their businesses online. Since signing the contract, we have met with Convention Center, Office of Vital Records, EMS and Austin Energy. Part of our readiness assessment includes a review of the online capabilities of each department's systems, including the vendor's willingness to develop the connectivity needed for the integration with Pay Connexion. Staff plans to simultaneously to run two implementations with plans for future implementations to begin as soon as one completes.